



Living the Christian Life Bible Study

Lesson 6b (NIV)

Understanding Prayer (Page 2 of 3)

Student's Name _____ **Unit** _____

Instructor _____

Comments _____

3.6 Submission (cont'd)

From these verses we learn several things about what it means to ask “In Jesus’ Name.”

1. We ask in His authority. It is only through Jesus’ sacrifice that we can approach the throne of God. Read Hebrews 4:14-16.
2. We ask according to Jesus’ character. In biblical times, a person’s name was reflective of his character. So what we ask of God, we ask with Christlike character: love, mercy, and compassion.
3. We ask according to His will. His promise to answer is based on our abiding in Him and His Word abiding in us. When this is true, we are being obedient to Him and our will has become one with His. This means that we believe we are asking for the same things He would be asking for in our situation.
4. We are seeking God’s glory. The ultimate objective of our prayer must be to glorify God, not ourselves.

A final thought: we must bring our requests to God and leave them there in faith; only as we do this do we find the real peace we are seeking. *Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Notice that the peace comes from the prayer, not the answer.

3.0 Elements of Prayer (cont'd)

3.6 Submission

When we finish our prayers, we commonly say “in Jesus’ name.” Why we do this and what does it mean? It actually comes directly from the words of Jesus when He was with His disciples the night before He was crucified.

John 14:13-14 *And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the _____ may bring _____ to the _____.* 14. *You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

John 15:7-8 *If you _____ in me and my words _____ in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you. 8 This is to my _____, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

The Apostle John then repeats the promise in his first epistle.

1 John 5:14-15 *This is the assurance we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything _____ to his _____, he hears us. 15. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.*

3.0 Elements of Prayer (cont'd)

In this lesson we continue what we began to do in the last lesson: consider the various elements of prayer. As we saw in the disciples’ prayer (Our Father in heaven Matthew 6:9-13), there are many aspects, or types of communication, when we talk to God. In the previous lesson we talked about confession of sin and worship. In this lesson we will talk about giving thanks, intercession (praying for other people), personal requests, and most importantly, submission to God’s will.

3.3 Giving Thanks

As we pray, we also want to thank God for specific blessings He has provided to us. This may be thanking Him for something as great as providing salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, or as simple as a good night's sleep (Psalm 3:5).

In Luke 17:11-19, Jesus heals ten lepers; only one returns to thank Him. Jesus commends Him for this.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 Paul tells us to *17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

The following verses give some things for which various people in the Bible were thankful. Read each verse and identify what the people were thankful for.

2 Chronicles 7:3 - *When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."*

Psalm 119:62 - *At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws.*

Daniel 2:23 - *I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power,*

Matthew 14:19 - *And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and they gave them to the people.*

3.5 Personal Requests (cont'd)

When we ask God for our daily needs, we are demonstrating our dependence on Him, and He is showing His love for us, much as a good earthly father will provide for his children. Read Matthew 7:9-11 to see how Jesus uses that relationship to teach us that God will always give us what is best for us. But that may not always be exactly what we asked for.

In telling us to seek, Jesus is teaching us a more intense level of prayer. Read Genesis 32:9-12 to hear Jacob pleading with God for protection from his brother Esau; he thanks God for His past blessing and reminds Him of His promises to produce a large family of descendants from Jacob.

In telling us to knock (literally keep knocking), Jesus is teaching us to be persistent in prayer. Read Luke 11:5-8 to read a parable showing how we should be persistent.

In all of this God is not promising to do anything and everything we ask Him to do. But He is promising to do what is best for us according to His unlimited wisdom and power. Read Matthew 26:36-46 to hear Jesus in Gethsemane pleading with His Father to take the cup of the cross away from Him. But after asking intensely and persistently, the answer He received was "no," and He submitted to His Father's will. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 for a similar incident in the life of the Apostle Paul.

Very often the greatest test of faith in prayer is to accept the answer we do not want to hear.

3.5 Personal Requests

In His model prayer for His disciples, Jesus tells us to ask God to “*give us this day our daily bread*”(Matthew 6:11) and to “*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*” (Matthew 6:13) In these lines He is telling us to pray for our physical and spiritual needs. And so our personal requests become a significant part of our prayer life.

But why do we ask for “daily bread?” Would God withhold bread from us if we didn’t ask? Don’t atheists also get their daily bread? Then why should I have to ask God for it?

Much of what prayer is about is communion with God. Communion is more than communication; it is a mutual fellowship, an expression of oneness, an evidence of our dependence on Him. At times we also pray for the extraordinary things: a miraculous healing, the meeting of a financial need, the restoration of a relationship, or an early release from prison. Do we always receive these things? Do we sometimes receive these things? Do we receive greater or lesser answers in response to the amount of our faith? Let’s look to the Bible for answers to some of these questions.

Read Matthew 7:7-8.

What three things does Jesus tell us to do in prayer?

_____, _____, and _____.

If we ask, we will _____,

if we seek, we will _____,

and if we knock, the door will be _____.

3.3 Giving Thanks (cont’d)

Romans 6:17-18 - *But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

Ephesians 1:15-16 - *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.*

Colossians 3:15 - *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

1 Timothy 1:12 - *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.*

3.4 Intercession

When we pray, we are very aware of the needs of others. We may have friends and family members that don't yet know Christ as Savior, some may be sick, others needing God's guidance for difficult decisions in their life. These and many others issues are things we can pray for in the lives of others.

- In Colossians 4:3-4, Paul asks the Colossians to pray for him as he carries out his ministry: *3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.*
- In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul tells us to pray for the rulers of our country: *1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone- 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.* Notice that his purpose is that we may live peaceful and quiet lives so we can better teach others about Jesus Christ.
- Most importantly, Paul teaches us to pray for the spiritual development of others: read Ephesians 1:15-20 and answer the following questions:

(1:15-16) What is Paul thankful for? *Their _____ in the Lord Jesus and their _____ for all the _____.*

3.4 Intercession (cont'd)

(1:18) What does Paul ask for them? *That the _____ of your _____ may be enlightened*

(1:18-19) Why does Paul pray this for them? *in order that you may _____ the _____ to which he has called you, the _____ of his glorious inheritance in the saints 19 and his incomparably great _____ for us who believe.*

For other examples of Paul's intercession for his friends, see Ephesians 3:14-21, and Colossians 1:9-10. For an Old Testament example of intercession, see Exodus 32:9-14.

Jesus' prayer on the night before He was crucified is recorded for us in John 17. Read this great prayer and meditate on it. Notice that Jesus prays for Himself (verses 1 - 5), for His disciples (verses 6 - 19), and for all who would later follow Him (verses 20 - 26), including us!