

# PRAYING ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD

**TEXT: LUKE 11:1—13**

## **Introduction:**

1. Last week I preached on knowing the perfect will of God, and I stressed that prayer plays a big part in knowing the will of God.
2. In the Bible we find many instances of believers asking God to show them His will. Last week I referred to the wonderful story of Abraham's servant finding a wife (Rebekah) for Isaac (Genesis 24:12-21).
3. Notice, the servant kept on praying (Gen. 24:26, 27, 51, 52).
4. Note also that the servant was not praying for himself. He was praying for his master Abraham, Abraham's son Isaac, and Rebekah.
5. Likewise in Luke 11:5, 6, the man is not asking bread for himself but for his traveling friend. Praying in the will of God is not selfish prayer.
6. James 4:2, 3 says, "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."
7. Intercessory prayer is praying for others. HA Ironside said, "It is a very blessed privilege to know God in such intimacy that we can go to Him on behalf of others" (*Luke*).
8. We saw last week in Romans 8:26, 27 that the indwelling Holy Spirit intercedes for us and in us. The Holy Spirit turns the heart of the believer toward the heart of God. The Holy Spirit motivates us to pray and helps us to pray.
9. Romans 8:27 says, the Holy Spirit "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." We may not know God's will but God certainly does, and it is through fervent praying that we find the perfect will of God.
10. This morning we will look at an important passage of Scripture. Luke 11 begins with one of our Lord's disciples asking Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).
11. Our Lord was "praying in a certain place." And we see that He was teaching His disciples by example. A preacher can preach often about prayer (and he should), but he will be far more effective in teaching by example.
12. Also, we see here that John the Baptist was a great man of prayer, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (11:1).
13. This morning's message is called, "Praying According to the Will of God." Jesus said to pray to our heavenly Father and to ask, "Thy will be done" (Luke 11:2).
14. We know God has a perfect will for us. And we know God wants to reveal His will to us. Ephesians 5:17 says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

15. The Bible teaches us that God reveals His will to us through His Holy Spirit, and we respond to the Holy Spirit by praying. When God answers our prayers, His will is accomplished.

### **I. THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER**

### **II. THE PERSISTENCE OF PRAYER**

### **III. THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER**

#### **I. THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER**

1. As Christians, we have the privilege of talking to God. We have the privilege of knowing that God wants us to pray (Luke 11:9, 10).
2. And we have the privilege of knowing that God hears our prayers and will answer our prayers (11:11-13). He wants to give us “good things” (cf. Matthew 7:7-11).
3. And the very best thing is His Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).
4. We need to understand that God wants us to pray, and that He wants to answer our prayers. If we do not believe this, we are not praying effectively.
5. James 1:6 says we are to “ask in faith, nothing wavering.”
6. Our Lord said in Mark 11:24, “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”
7. “And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him” (I John 5:14, 15).
8. God invites us to pray. And God expects us to pray. Our Lord says in Luke 11:2, “When ye pray...” Not, “if you pray...”
9. First Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.” When God gives you a strong burden to pray about something or someone, you will understand what it means to pray without ceasing.
10. Romans 12:12 says, “continuing instant in prayer.”
11. What is important to understand about Luke 11:9 is that these words, “Ask...seek...knock,” are commands. So our Lord is not only giving us a gracious invitation – “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you...” – He is giving us a command that He expects us to obey.
12. Referring to Luke 11:9, 10, Andrew Murray, in his great book on prayer called, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (named after Luke 11:1), says that in this six-fold repetition our Lord “wants to impress deep on our minds

this one truth, that we may and must most confidently expect an answer to our prayer.”

## II. THE PERSISTENCE OF PRAYER

1. Evangelist RA Torrey said, “When we have decided that we should pray for something, we should keep on praying until we get it.” This is what our Lord is saying in Luke 11:9, 10.
2. The Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest says the Greek language can say more one in word than the English language can in half a dozen words. He writes, “In the imperative mode, the Greek tenses are very definite in their distinctions” (*Wuest’s Word Studies*).
3. Here in Luke 11:9, 10, our Lord is using the imperative mode in His command to pray. The force of the words literally means, “Keep on asking...keep on seeking...keep on knocking...”
4. In other words, don’t give up. Don’t be impatient. Don’t get discouraged. We must persist until the answer comes (Luke 11:5-10).
5. Praying in God’s will requires perseverance. This kind of prayer requires determined effort.
6. “Importunity” (11:8) is a strong word. It literally means “shamefacedness” or “shamelessness.”
7. It means to be persistent and not to give up (cf. Luke 18:1-8).
8. God moves in response to persistent prayer. Praying according to the will of God always brings a response from God (cf. I John 5:14, 15).
9. In Luke 11:11-13, our Lord stresses this important truth by means of three illustrations from daily life. When a son asks for bread, will his loving father give him a stone? (Luke 11:11).
10. “Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?” (Luke 11:11b). “Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?” (11:12).
11. To do so would be contrary to human nature. Even “evil” men love their children. “How much more” does our heavenly Father love us? (11:13).
12. Arguing from the lesser to the greater was a popular teaching technique and our Lord is using it here. He also used it in Matthew 6:26. “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”
13. If God feeds the little birds, He will certainly feed His disciples. “Are ye not much better than they?”
14. “Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Matt. 6:30).

15. Praying according to the will of God takes faith because without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).
16. No loving father would deceive his child by giving him a stone for bread, a serpent for a fish, or a scorpion for an egg (Luke 11:11, 12).
17. And God is no deceiver. He does not invite us to pray and then deceive us. The devil is a deceiver, but God would never deceive.
18. There is an interesting verse about prayer in Ezekiel 36. Verse 24 says, “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”
19. In the following verses God says He will clean them from all their filthiness, and from all their idols, and He will cleanse them, and give them a new heart and a new spirit.
20. Verse 28 says, they shall dwell in the land that God gave to their fathers; and they shall be God’s people, and He will be their God.
21. Many other wonderful promises are given, and then in verse 37, God says, “Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them...”
22. In other words, God already said He would do it, but still He wanted them to pray for it.
23. God has spoken, and he will do what He said He would do. And yet he wants His people to ask Him for it. He requires that His people should humble themselves and seek His face.
24. And what is wonderful about all this is that God will incline our hearts to do seek His will and to pray for His will to be done. We must pray, for by persistent prayer God is sought unto, and enquired after (Ezek. 36:36, 37).

### **III. THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER**

1. God’s will and purpose is carried through prayer. In the days of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, God raised up the prophet Elijah to stop Baal-worship from taking over Israel.
2. God used the drought to get wicked King Ahab’s attention. God’s purpose was put forward through Elijah’s prayers. James 5:17, 18 says, “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”
3. God wants you and I to pray earnestly like Elijah. James 5:16 says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
4. When we pray, we put all our dependence upon God. We believe God and we expect God to answer our prayers because He promises us He will answer (Luke 11:9, 10).

5. The conclusion of this wonderful parable on prayer is found at the end of Luke 11:13 – “how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”
6. Those of us that are saved are already indwelt by the Holy Spirit. God, our heavenly Father wants for us the fullness of His Spirit. This is His will for us. This is His purpose.

**CONCLUSION:**

George Muller: “I never remember, in all my Christian course, a period now (in March 1895 – he died 3 years later) of sixty-nine years and four months, that I ever sincerely and patiently sought to know the will of God by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the word of God, but I have been always directed rightly.”

[www.biblebaptistelmont.org](http://www.biblebaptistelmont.org)