

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Luke 11:1-13

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, January 4, 2015

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 4, 2015**, is from **Luke 11:1-13**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses the questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Luke 11:1-13

(Luke 11:1) He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”

Jesus prayed on mountain tops alone; He prayed to cast out demons and for other reasons. The disciples often heard Him pray, and they saw the results of His faith and His prayers. The disciples may have heard John the Baptist and his disciples pray, because some of them had at one time been disciples of John. We do not know the true motive behind their request that Jesus teach them how to pray, but they certainly saw the effectiveness of Jesus’ prayers.

(Luke 11:2) He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

Jesus taught them, and all who follow Him as disciples, that true believers in Him can call God “Father,” and go to God as their “Father.” They go honoring God and His Name as “Holy,” rather than going to God in a disrespectful and irreverent way. To pray for God’s kingdom to come means expressing the desire to live under God’s rule as King and to obey His commands. The King James Version adds to this verse: “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth,” which was added by scribes to later Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus added this teaching to the prayer He

taught His disciples in the Gospel of Luke: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Perhaps some later scribes added this from their memory of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew.

(Luke 11:3) Give us each day our daily bread.

After praising God for His fatherly love and divine power and rule, Jesus’ disciples can pray for the needs they have each day – trusting God to meet their needs. Daily bread means daily needs given one day at a time, because we live one day at a time. Disciples can work and prepare for the future without being anxious about the future. When we pray this prayer, we are encouraged not to worry: “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ . . . So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today” (Matthew 6:31, 34).

(Luke 11:4) And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

When we miss the mark or command or objective God has for us, we sin: sin can be defined as “missing the mark (as in archery).” God’s objective for us is our loving God with our whole self and our neighbors as we love ourselves. We will commit sins that need to be forgiven by God and others, because we do miss the mark sometimes even when we aim carefully not to miss and do right. Others will miss the mark too and do what should not be done to us; some have not done to us what they ought to have done – they are indebted to us – in our prayers to God we forgive them. We also can pray that God will not allow Satan to test or tempt us, and this prayer has probably kept us from many trials and tests unknown to us.

(Luke 11:5) And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;

Jesus told His disciples that He was their Friend and how they should be His friends (see John 15:13-15). Just as His disciples could go to God as their Father, they could go to Jesus as their Friend. Jesus gave His disciples an example to illustrate how they could go to their Father and come to Him repeatedly in prayer, especially when they went to God to meet the needs of others. Notice in the illustration that the friend asks a friend for a “loan” of bread. The good things God gives or does for us through others we can repay, if possible, or we can pass good things on to help others (perhaps in answer to their prayers or the prayers of their friends).

(Luke 11:6) for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’

In the illustration, your friend has a need, but you do not selfishly expect another friend to meet the need of your friend in your place. You ask to have three loaves of bread with the understanding that the next day you will bake three fresh loaves to repay your friend for what he has loaned you. You become indebted to your friend to help another friend. God expects us to share our gifts with others, especially with our friends in need. Of course, we cannot repay God for answering our prayers, but we can become God's faithful friends and servants in love and appreciation for what God has done for us, and we can be ready to meet the real needs of others when they come to us for aid. When we have nothing, we can ask God to give us what we need; especially when we need something (perhaps the right words to share or comfort another) to help someone else.

(Luke 11:7) And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'

In the illustration, your friend has a good excuse for not giving you what you ask; there are probably other excuses than this that could be given, but this excuse is sufficient. The emphasis is the friend's delay in granting the request, and perhaps a preference not to be bothered at night, even though he has bread he could share. The excuse given was "cannot get up," when in reality it was, "do not want to get up," because he really could help his friend in the time of need. Jesus is not trying to make the point that God is this type of a hesitant Friend that does not want to be bothered; rather, Jesus wants to encourage us to persist in prayer. God certainly has good reasons for not answering our prayers immediately or according to our timing, and persistence in prayer is appropriate (sometimes we will learn why God knows it is best to not give us what we ask in prayer).

(Luke 11:8) I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

Jesus did not teach that God would rather not be bothered by us as the friend in His illustration might have felt. Rather, Jesus wanted to emphasize that we can be persistent and continue to tell God our needs, and God will meet our real needs, especially the real needs of those we pray to help – the three loaves were really needed. God will respond to persistent prayer and sometimes requires persistent prayer in order for the timing of all things to be right and best for all concerned. Jesus wants to encourage, rather than discourage, persistent prayer. Notice the emphasis: "whatever he needs."

(Luke 11:9) "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.

In addition to Jesus teaching a general truth consistent with the Lord's Prayer, that God will give us what we truly need when we ask Him; God will teach us what we need to

know and answer our questions when we make the effort to search for the truth; God will open the door into His presence when we make known to Him that we want to spend time with Him.

(Luke 11:10) For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

If we ask God why He has not given us exactly what we have requested, as our Father and Friend at some point in time He will reveal the reasons to us. If we search for more truth about and from God so we can have a deeper relationship with God and/or be better prepared to serve God and others, we will find what we seek. Jesus teaches the same truth twice to emphasize the fact. Everyone who seeks the truth and the true God will find the truth and God in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

(Luke 11:11) Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish?

If you are a caring and loving father, if your child asks for something they really need and you can provide it, you will give it to them. Since God is the loving and caring Father that Jesus has perfectly revealed, God will give us everything that He wisely wills to give us in our best interests while also considering the needs of others. Compared to fish for food, giving a snake for food would be evil when someone has asked for fish for food and really needs fish for food. Only a truly evil heart would give someone something evil, especially a child, when they ask for and need something good to sustain their lives (such as food to eat). God is not evil.

(Luke 11:12) Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?

An egg for food is helpful and harmless; whereas the sting of a scorpion can bring great pain or worse. When we ask God for something good; God will not surprise us by giving us something evil that can hurt us or others. A snake may or may not be poisonous, and some may eat snakes. A scorpion can definitely inject poison into someone who grasped it like we would grasp an egg to eat. We should never expect God to give us anything evil when we pray to Him to meet our real needs or the needs of others.

(Luke 11:13) If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

All of us have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. Compared to our holy and all perfect Father, there is no question that we are evil and have committed sins. Yet, unless we are totally and perfectly depraved and selfish, we will give good gifts to our children instead of evil. What do we who are prone to evil and sin really need in this life to live pleasing to God and helpful to others and ourselves? We need forgiveness for

our sins, cleansing from our sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. When we recognize our great need of the Holy Spirit, and ask our heavenly Father for the Holy Spirit, He will give us the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. If you were disciple of Jesus, why would you want to learn how to pray from Him?
2. Read again how Jesus taught His disciples to begin their prayers in Luke 11:2. How might your prayers be different if you began all of your prayers with this or a similar request?
3. What might you say to someone who said to you, “I just cannot forgive them because. . . .”?
4. What difference does it make to you when you remember that as a follower of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior that God is your Father and Friend?
5. From Luke 11:1-13, what truths do you think are the most important to you personally?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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