

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
NNN. Christ's Instruction On Effective Prayer
(Luke 11:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. Jesus' disciples knew that the prayers of Israel's leaders lacked spiritual quality, for godly John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray in contrast to the wayward praying of Israel's religious leaders, Luke 11:1b.
- B. Thus, one of Christ's disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray like John had taught his disciples (Luke 11:1a,b), and Luke 11:2-13 reveals Jesus' teaching on effective prayer.
- C. We view this instruction by the Lord for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Christ's Instruction On Effective Prayer, Luke 11:1-13.

- A. In teaching us how to pray, Christ's giving of "The Lord's Prayer" was not meant to be used as a ritual, but a model for general prayer (J. D. Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 303) as follows:
 - 1. Prayer should be addressed to the Father, "for prayer is basically the attitude of dependence of a child toward a father," Ibid.; Luke 11:1-2a. [The phrase, "who art in heaven" (KJV) is not in the best mss, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 255; Bruce M. Metzger, A Text. Com. on the Grk. N. T., 1971, p. 154]
 - 2. The first request involves an act of worship where the believer seeks to uphold God's reputation as One to be revered by man (Luke 11:2b; Ibid.; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 234-235).
 - 3. The second request of "Your kingdom come" calls for God's work that will culminate in the arrival of His Kingdom to be furthered; Luke 11:2c. [The KJV words "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth" do not appear in the best mss, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., loc. cit.; Metzger, op. cit., p. 154-155.]
 - 4. The third request is for the daily livelihood needs of believers to be met as "our daily bread," Luke 11:3.
 - 5. The fourth request deals with the confession of sin for restored fellowship with God, Luke 11:4.
 - 6. The fifth request, "lead us not into temptation" (Luke 11:5), does not imply that God leads His people into temptation, but "that Jesus' followers are to pray that they be delivered from *situations* that would cause them to sin" (Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, op. cit., p. 235).
- B. Jesus then gave a parable in Luke 11:5-8 to teach His disciples to pray with perseverance:
 - 1. Jesus taught that a man who had need of bread at midnight to feed a guest who had just arrived went to a friend to ask him for bread, Luke 11:5-6.
 - 2. At first, the man in the house refused to get up and get his friend the bread lest he disturb his sleeping children and his door was locked, so he did not want to be bothered, Luke 11:7.
 - 3. However, the man at the door shamelessly continued to knock, so the man in the house eventually got up and gave his friend the bread due to his persistence, Luke 11:8.
 - 4. Similarly, God's people are to pray with persistence if they sense that they are in great need.
- C. Christ then taught the need for God's people to function in practical ways in their lives to match their persistency in prayer, Luke 11:9-10:
 - 1. Translated literally, this passage should read, "'Keep on asking and it will be given to you, keep on seeking, and you will find, keep on knocking and the door will be opened (cf. v. 9) . . . Everyone who keeps on asking receives. He who keeps on seeking finds. To him who keeps on knocking the doors will be opened (cf. v. 10).'" (Ibid., p. 305)
 - 2. If a believer then has an intense need and he prays persistently about that need, such a prayer should be coupled with the believer's seeking and knocking in his practical life as God may have the answer to his prayer available through the means of circumstances that arise in one's daily experience. In other words, if we pray persistently, we need to be just as persistent in keeping our eyes and ears open for the Lord's answers that may come our way in our daily lives.
- D. Christ's Luke 11:11-13 directive instructs God's people to pray with the awareness that God is good and that He will give only what is good to His people when they pray. We should then be motivated to pray!

Lesson: For effective prayer, Christ taught us to rely on the Father, to uphold His reputation, to ask that His work be furthered, to ask that our daily living needs be met, to confess our sins and to ask for His deliverance from overwhelming temptations. We should pray persistently, looking for God's answers in our daily lives, and trust that He will do what is good for us.

Application: May we heed Jesus' teaching on prayer to pray effectively in our lives.