

GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: PRAYER

Lesson: JOHN 14:6-7

Goal: to see that the ability to pray is a gift of the Holy Spirit

1) Read John 14:6-7

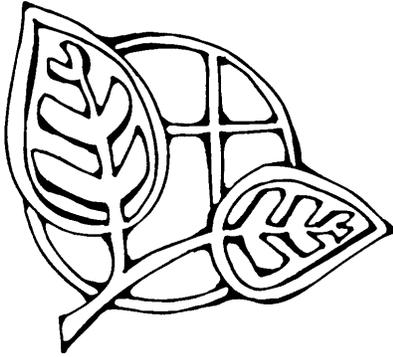
- According to Jesus testimony, is it possible for someone to reject Jesus and still approach God?
- What, therefore, would we have to say about the prayer of a Muslim? One who practices Judaism? An agnostic who is trying to play it safe?
- It is common to close prayers by saying, “in Jesus name. Amen.” Why is that a great way to close a prayer?

2) Look up 1 Corinthians 12:3

- What is the only way someone can believe in Jesus?
- Put two and two together. We saw that the only way to approach God (including in prayer) is through Jesus. And we saw that the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the ability to believe in Jesus. What can we call prayer, therefore?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Imagine this situation. You are trying to encourage Jim to come to church more often. You tell him, “It is important that we be in church regularly because we need our faith to be strengthened.”
Jim snaps back at you, “I don’t need church for that! I pray all the time!”
How would you respond to Jim?



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Lesson: **MATTHEW 6:9-13**

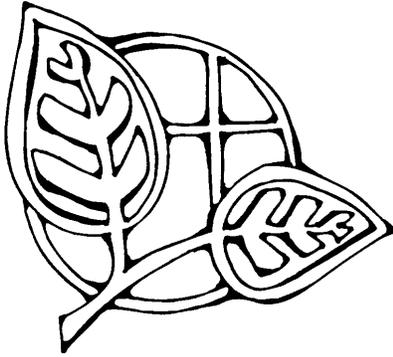
Goal: to look at Jesus' model prayer

1) Read Matthew 6:9-13

- “Hallowed” means “to keep holy.” A person’s name is more than the word used to refer to them (John, Carol, Sam, etc.). We often use the word “name” to refer to one’s reputation. With that in mind, what are we asking when we pray “hallowed be your name”?
- We understand God’s “kingdom” to be wherever he reigns. Underline the word “kingdom” and write “see Luke 17:20,21” in the margin of your Bible. Now look up those verses. Where are we asking God to establish his reign when we pray, “your kingdom come”?
- List some things that are God’s will. (For suggestions, look up 1 Timothy 2:3,4; Matthew 22:37,38; 2 Peter 3:18.)
- Why do you think Jesus tells us to pray for “daily” bread? Why not pray for a month’s worth of bread and be done with it?
- In light of the rest of Scripture, what is the proper way to understand verse 12.
 - a) God will forgive our sins only after we forgive the sins of others.
 - b) God forgives our sins because we forgive the sins of others.
 - c) If someone understands God has forgiven them, they will naturally want to forgive others.
- Underline the word “temptation” and write “see 1 Corinthians 10:13” in the margin of your Bible. Now look up that verse. What does God promise us about temptations we may face?
- “Deliver us from evil” and “Deliver us from the evil one” are both grammatically acceptable translations of the last half of verse 13. Evil is Satan’s work. Look up Hebrews 2:14. Why do we need not fear the devil?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- We sometimes refer to the seven requests made in the Lord’s Prayer as “the seven petitions.” Look at those petitions again. In how many of those petitions do we ask God for spiritual blessings? In how many of those petitions do we ask God for physical blessings? Why do you think this is the case?



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Topic: **PRAYER**

Lesson: **LUKE 11:5-13**

Goal: to understand why God wants us to be persistent in prayer

1) Read Luke 11:5-10

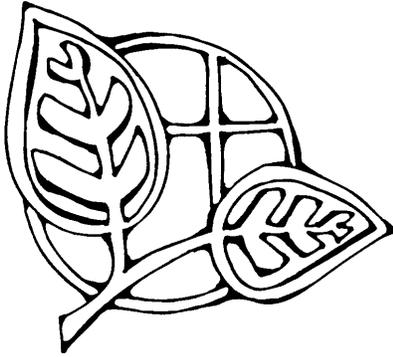
- We often call stories that Jesus tells to teach a point “parables.” When interpreting parables it is important to look for one main point. What is the main point of the parable that we read about in these verses?
- Underline the word “persistence” in your Bibles. What are some other words that mean the same thing?
- In Matthew 6:7 it reads, “When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” What do you think is the difference between being persistent in prayer and “babbling”?

2) Read Luke 11:11-13

- List at least five ways that our Heavenly Father is better than an earthly father.
- What do these verses tell us God intends to do for us when we pray to him?
- Underline the phrase “give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” In the margin next to that phrase write, “See Matthew 6:33.” In that verse Jesus says, “Seek first [God’s] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” How are Matthew 6:33 and Luke 11:13 related?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Imagine this situation. You have a twelve-year-old son whom you find pouting in his bedroom. When you ask him what’s wrong, he says, “I prayed that God would make me a better baseball player. But today at recess I struck out twice! I guess God didn’t listen to my prayer.”
On the basis of our lesson today, what are some things you might say to your son?



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Topic: **PRAYER**

Lesson: **ROMANS 8:26-32**

Goal: to see why we can be confident in our prayer

1) Read Romans 8:26-27

- What does Paul tell us is the reason that we don't always pray well?
- What are some of the weaknesses that get in the way of our prayer life?
- Why can we be certain that our weaknesses don't get in the way of God hearing about all our concerns and troubles?
- In your Bibles underline all the places you find the word "Spirit" in verses 26 and 27. In the margin write, "Prayer is a fruit of the Holy Spirit."

2) Read Romans 8:28-32

- Paul lists a string of things that God did for us:
 - a: Our predestination — Before time began, God chose to save us.
 - b: Our calling — Through the Word and Sacraments, God called us to be members of his family.
 - c: Our justification — God declared us to be not guilty of our sin.
 - d: Our glorification — The Holy Spirit has begun sanctifying us, enabling us to live lives that give God glory, and will bring this to perfection when we reach heaven.

What does the fact that God did all this assure us of when we bring all our cares and concerns to Him in prayer? (verse 28, 31,32)

3) Applying what you've learned

Imagine you have two friends who admit to you they don't like to pray. Your friend Mark tells you that the reason he doesn't pray is because he doesn't know what to say. He says, "When I pray I stammer over words or get stuck half-way through."

Your friend Lisa tells you she doesn't like to pray because when she was a young girl her father, who was Christian, became sick with cancer. Both Lisa and her father asked God to take the cancer away, but her father died anyway. So Lisa doesn't believe God places that much weight on prayer. "It's just not worth the time." she says.

Has this lesson taught you what you might say to Mark? What you might say to Lisa?