

PARENTING BY THE BOOK
“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”

1. **REVIEW:** IN LUKE 11: 1-13, THE DISCIPLES SAY, “**LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY**” ... AND JESUS GIVES A **TWO PART REPLY**:
 - A. **PART 1:** A **MODEL FOR PRAYER** (Luke 11:1-4).
 - B. **PART 2:** TWO **PERSPECTIVES** WHILE WE ARE **PRAYING** (Luke 11: 5-13).
 1. THE **FIRST PERSPECTIVE** IS **PRAY LIKE YOUR PRAYERS MATTER**.
 2. THE **SECOND PERSPECTIVE** IS **TRUST THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER**.
2. **FIRST PERSPECTIVE:** WE **PRAY LIKE YOUR PRAYERS MATTER**... WHEN:
 - A. WE **KEEP ASKING, KEEP SEEKING, AND KEEP KNOCKING**.
 - B. THE **IMPLICATION** IS THAT:
 1. THOSE WHO DO **NOT ASK**... DO **NOT RECEIVE**.
 2. THOSE WHO DO **NOT SEEK**... DO **NOT FIND**.
 3. THOSE WHO DO **NOT KNOCK**... DO **NOT HAVE DOORS OPENED**.
 4. **James 4:2c (NASB)** ... You do **not have** because you **do not ask**.
 - C. **GOD** GIVES MANY **GOOD GIFTS** TO HIS **CHILDREN BECAUSE OF HIS KINDNESS AND HIS LOVE**.
 1. **BUT, ACCORDING TO JESUS**... GOD **ALSO** GIVES **SOME GIFTS** TO **THOSE WHO “ASK”**.
 2. WALTER WINK SAID, “**HISTORY BELONGS TO THE INTERCESSORS**”.
 3. IN OTHER WORDS, **THINGS CHANGE**... **WHEN PEOPLE PRAY**.
 - a. **PRAYER SHAPES REALITY!**
 - D. **OBSTACLES** THAT **KEEP US FROM BELIEVING** THAT **OUR PRAYERS MATTER**:
 1. THE **FIRST OBSTACLE:** **IF** GOD IS **OMNISCIENT (ALL KNOWING)** **WHY TELL HIM?**
 - a. **BECAUSE... PRAYER IS NOT ONLY TRANSACTIONAL... IT’S RELATIONAL**.

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- 1) LIKE A PARENT TALKING/SPENDING TIME WITH THEIR CHILD.
 - i. THAT IS RELATIONAL... AND IT IS BASED ON LOVE.
 - b. WHETHER OR NOT GOD KNOWS IS IRRELEVANT... BECAUSE GOD DOESN'T WANT INFORMATION... HE WANTS YOU!!
2. THE SECOND OBSTACLE: IF GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND IN CONTROL... WHY PRAY?
 - a. BECAUSE... GOD DID NOT CREATE US TO BE ROBOTS...
 - 1) HE GIVES US A WILL.
 - i. GOD CHOOSES TO INVOLVE US IN WHAT HE IS DOING.
 1. BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE FOR US.
 - b. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT PRAYER IS ONE OF THE WAYS, MAYBE THE PRIMARY WAY, WE PARTICIPATE (RELATE) WITH GOD IN WHAT HE IS DOING.
 - c. THE VIEW THAT GOD IS GOING TO DO WHAT HE IS GOING TO DO IS UNBIBLICAL PACIFISM... AND IT WILL WRECK OUR PRAYER LIFE!
 3. THE THIRD OBSTACLE: I DON'T SEE ANY RESULTS WHEN I PRAY.
 - a. BUT... JUST BECAUSE WE DON'T SEE THE DIFFERENCE OUR PRAYERS ARE MAKING, DOES NOT MEAN THAT OUR PRAYERS ARE NOT MAKING A DIFFERENCE!
 - 1) OUR VISION AND OUR UNDERSTANDING ARE LIMITED.
 - b. WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE OUR PRAYERS ARE “HITTING THE CEILING” THE INVITATION IS FOR US TO TRUST THAT OUR PRAYERS MATTER.
- E. WHAT WE ARE TO TRUST IS THE SECOND PERSPECTIVE JESUS TEACHES.
 1. TRUST THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER.
3. TRUST THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER.

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- A. **GOD IS NOT SOME GRUMPY MAN LAYING IN BED WHO SAYS, “DON’T BOTHER ME”!**
- B. **IN FACT, HE IS JUST THE OPPOSITE.**
1. **ACCORDING TO JESUS, GOD IS A GOOD FATHER WHO IS NOT ONLY WILLING, BUT EAGER, TO GIVE GENEROUSLY WHEN WE PRAY.**
 2. **R.C. TRENCH SAID, “PRAYER IS NOT US OVERCOMING GOD’S RELUCTANCE... BUT, IT IS US LAYING HOLD OF GOD’S WILLINGNESS”!**
 - a. **LET ME REPEAT... PRAYER IS NOT US OVERCOMING GOD’S RELUCTANCE... BUT, IT IS US LAYING HOLD OF GOD’S WILLINGNESS**
- C. **NOTE JESUS WAS CONVINCED THAT GOD’S INTENTIONS TOWARD US ARE GOOD.**
- D. **CONSIDER SOME REASONS WHY SOME OF US STRUGGLE WITH THE FACT THAT... GOD IS A GOOD FATHER:**
1. **NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH:**
 - a. **CHURCH,**
 - b. **RELIGION, OR**
 - c. **OUR PARENTS.**
 2. **THOSE NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES OFTEN CAUSE US TO VIEW GOD AS:**
 - a. **DISTANT AND DISENGAGED.**
 - b. **CRITICAL AND CONDEMNING.**
 - c. **MOODY AND MYSTERIOUS.**
 - 1) **DISCUSS: POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH CHURCH, RELIGION, OR PARENTS.**
 3. **HOWEVER... NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH CHURCH, RELIGION, OR OUR PARENTS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER!**

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a. HE IS ALWAYS **LOVING** AND HIS **COMPASSION** IS **UNWAVERING**.

E. DOUBT “**IF GOD IS A GOOD FATHER, WHY DID _____ HAPPEN?**”

1. **BACKGROUND: JESUS IS THE ONE WHO SAID THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER... YET:**

a. HE GREW UP IN A WORLD OF **SUFFERING**.

1) HISTORIANS SAY THAT THE **AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY** IN JESUS’
LIFE WAS **35 YEARS OLD**.

i. JESUS DIDN’T EVEN LIVE TO 35!

2) JESUS WAS **TORTURED** AND **KILLED** ON A ROMAN CROSS
DESIGNED FOR **PAIN** AND **HUMILITY**.

b. **Isaiah 53:3-4 (NASB)** He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

c. **THE BOTTOM LINE: JESUS WAS NOT NAIVE ABOUT THE PAIN AND SUFFERING AROUND HIM.**

1) **YET... HE WAS CONVINCED THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER!**

2. **SOOO... I BELIEVE THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, “IF GOD IS A GOOD FATHER, WHY DID _____ HAPPEN? ... IS THIS:**

a. **IF THE EXPERIENCE IN YOUR LIFE ISN’T GOOD... IT’S NOT FROM GOD!!!**

4. **AGAIN..... IF THE EXPERIENCE IN YOUR LIFE ISN’T GOOD... IT’S NOT FROM GOD!!! (WHY ARE CHRISTIANS SO QUICK TO BLAME GOD?)**

A. **WHEN GOD DOESN’T SEEM GOOD... SOMETHING IS MISSING.**

1. **WE’RE NOT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE BROKENNESS OF THE WORLD,**

2. **OR, CONSIDERING SATAN’S INFLUENCE,**

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3. OR, CONSIDERING OUR OWN POOR CHOICES.

- a. **REMEMBER:** JUST BECAUSE **BAD THINGS HAPPEN** TO US DOES **NOT** MEAN THAT **GOD CAUSED THEM!**

B. IN THE GAP BETWEEN OUR EXPECTATIONS AND OUR REALITY JESUS INVITES TO TRUST THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER.

C. AND... IN THE GAP BETWEEN OUR EXPECTATIONS AND OUR REALITY WE WILL EITHER:

1. **PUT OUR CONFIDENCE IN OUR ABILITY TO EVALUATE GOD'S GOODNESS... OR**
2. **PUT OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S GOODNESS, EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T UNDERSTAND IT AT THE TIME.**
 - a. **THOSE ARE OUR CHOICES!**
 - b. **PERIOD ... END OF SENTENCE!**

D. PROBLEM WHAT SOME OF US HAVE YET TO GIVE UP IS OUR CONSTANT NEED TO UNDERSTAND.

1. **SO WE CONTINUALLY ASK WHY, WHY, WHY?**

2. **PERHAPS WE HAVE FORGOTTEN?**

3. **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)** For by **grace** you have been saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

4. **Romans 10:9-10 (NASB)** that if you **confess** with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and **believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

E. AGAIN... IF THE EXPERIENCE IN YOUR LIFE ISN'T GOOD... IT'S NOT FROM GOD!!!

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1. SOMETIMES WE **FORGET** AND **ERRONEOUSLY BLAME GOD** WHEN WE HAVE **MADE BAD CHOICES**, OR THIS **WORLD SYSTEM** IS TO BLAME, OR **SATAN** IS RESPONSIBLE.
- F. OPPORTUNITY IF YOU **STRUGGLE** WITH **TRUSTING** THAT **GOD IS A GOOD FATHER**, MAYBE TODAY GOD IS **INVITING YOU, NOT** OUT OF **CONDEMNATION**, BUT OUT OF **LOVE... TO JUST LET GO AND TRUST**.
 1. **PERHAPS** YOU'RE **NOT** GOING TO BE **ABLE** TO **FIGURE GOD OUT**.
- G. **OTHERS MAY ASK... HOW DO I KNOW IF I TRUST THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER?**
 1. THE **BIBLE** SAYS THAT YOU **CONTINUALLY ASK, SEEK, AND KNOCK**.
 - a. **THAT'S HOW WE SHOW** THAT WE **KNOW** THAT **GOD IS A GOOD FATHER!**
- H. THINK ABOUT A **CHILD** WHO **KNOWS** THAT THEY ARE **LOVED**.
 1. **CHILDREN ARE GREAT AT ASKING FOR WHAT THEY WANT** (... AND THEY WILL **SEEK** AND **KNOCK**, TOO!)
 - a. **CHILDREN KNOW** THAT THEY ARE **NEEDY** AND SO THEY **TRUST** THEIR **PARENTS** WHO LOVE THEM WITH THEIR **NEEDS**.
 - 1) **CHILDREN HAVE NO ILLUSION OF CONTROL**.
 2. MANY **ADULTS RESIST NOT BEING IN CONTROL... WE LOVE TO QUOTE:**
 - a. **Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
 3. BUT... **NOT SO MUCH:**
 - a. **Psalm 86:1** Help me, oh Lord, for I am poor and needy.
 4. **HOWEVER, CHILDREN KNOW** THAT THEY ARE **NEEDY**.
- I. FACT IF YOU HAVE A **HARD TIME BEING NEEDY... YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A HARD TIME PRAYING!**
 1. **BECAUSE... WHY WOULD YOU “ASK”, “SEEK”, AND “KNOCK”, IF YOU DON'T NEED GOD'S HELP?**

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- a. WHEN WE ARE **NEEDY** AND **WE KNOW IT**, WE ARE **PRIMED FOR PRAYER**.
 - 1) BECAUSE... **HELPLESSNESS BECOMES PRAYER THE MOMENT YOU TURN TO GOD!**
- J. IF YOU ARE **NOT** SPENDING MUCH **TIME** IN **PRAYER**, HERE ARE **TWO QUESTIONS** TO **CONSIDER**:
 - 1. **“DO I NEED ANYTHING”**
 - 2. **“DO I BELIEVE THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER”?**
 - a. BECAUSE... **HELPLESSNESS BECOMES PRAYER THE MOMENT YOU TURN TO GOD!**
- K. **WAYS** TO OVERCOME OUR **STRUGGLE** WITH **NOT BELIEVING THAT GOD IS A GOOD FATHER**:
 - 1. **SPEND TIME IN THE BIBLE READING ABOUT JESUS** IN THE **GOSPELS**.
 - a. MICHAEL RAMSEY SAID, **“GOD IS CHRIST-LIKE**. IN HIM THERE IS **NO UN-CHRISTLIKENESS** AT ALL”.
 - 1) **GOD IS LIKE JESUS... AND READING** TO KNOW MORE **ABOUT JESUS** WILL **HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND GOD**.
 - 2. **COMMUNITY**
 - a. **DETERMINE TO SPEND TIME** WITH **MATURE AND MATURING CHRISTIANS**.... MAKE IT HAPPEN... SEEK THEM OUT.
 - 3. IF YOU **DOUBT** THE **GOODNESS OF GOD... TAKE THAT DOUBT TO HIM!**
 - a. “God, I am **struggling** to see you the way Jesus says you are. And God, if you really are a good father with good intentions towards me, would you **reveal** that to my heart? Will you **help me to see you the way Jesus saw you?**”
- 5. SUMMARY
 - A. IN **RESPONSE** TO THE **REQUEST**, **“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”** **JESUS SAYS**:
 - 1. **COME TO GOD AS FATHER**.
 - 2. **ALIGN WITH GOD’S AGENDA... NOT MY WILL, BUT YOURS BE DONE**.
 - 3. **ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED** FOR **TODAY**, **NOT** WHAT YOU **WANT** FOR **TOMORROW**.
 - 6. IN CLOSING... SOME **THOUGHTS** FOR YOUR **CONSIDERATION**:
 - A. HAVE YOU **CONSIDERED** THAT A **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD** IS **BETTER** THAN **ANY GIFT** HE COULD GIVE US?

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- B. **WHAT IF... GOD KNOWS THAT PRAYER IS THE THING WE NEED FIRST AND MOST?**
- C. **WHAT IF... GOD’S MAIN OBJECT IN HIS IDEA OF PRAYER IS TO SUPPLY OUR GREATEST NEED... THE NEED FOR A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM?**
- D. **WHAT IF... THE PURPOSE OF ALL OUR NEEDS, GREAT AND SMALL, IS THAT THEY DRIVE US TO GOD?**
 - 1. **IN SHORT... THE GIFT OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS BETTER THAN ANYTHING ELSE HE COULD GIVE US!**
- E. **I WONDER... IF 500 YEARS FROM NOW, WHEN WE REFLECT ON OUR LIVES, THAT WE WILL BE GRATEFUL FOR EVERY NEED, TRIAL, AND TRIBULATION THAT BROUGHT US TO OUR KNEES... BECAUSE THEY BROUGHT US CLOSER TO GOD?**
 - 1. **James 1:2-4 (NASB) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**