



*Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus*  
*The Midnight Caller and The Persistent Widow*

**Luke 11:5-13 and 18:1-8**

**Lesson 15**

*Then He spoke this parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1).* In this lesson we will study two parables about prayer – specifically, the importance of persistence in prayer. All too often we faint and lose heart. Jesus is calling us not to do that, but rather to learn from those in these stories that continue to ask, seek, and knock until they have the petitions that they desire and that God so desires to grant to them. May you be encouraged.

**OBSERVATION: Read Luke 11:5-13 and Luke 18:1-8**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of these parables. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

**Key Words:**

**Luke 11: 5-13** words that refer to *Jesus, Father, Holy Spirit, the person asking for bread, and the person being asked for bread*  
*ask/seek/knock and given/find/opened/receives/offer*

**Luke 18:1-8** words that refer to *Jesus, God, the judge, and the widow*  
*justice/avenge*  
the phrase: *did not fear God nor regard man*

3. Three words of contrast are used in these parables: *but, yet, and nevertheless*. Mark each time the words are used. Choose one of the times a word of contrast is used. Record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.

4. The word *for* in Luke 11:10 is used as a term of conclusion. What is the conclusion stated?

**CONSIDER THESE THINGS:**

1. Why does persistence sometimes get results that asking only once does not?
2. How do you react to someone's relentless requests for something?
3. What opinions have you heard on how God responds to our prayers?

**THE MIDNIGHT CALLER: Read Luke 11:5-8**

1. The story of the midnight caller follows Jesus teaching the disciples how to pray. Read the story in verses 5-8 and summarize it.
  - a. Who does the *friend* who asks for *bread* represent? verse 5,13
  - b. Who does the *friend* in the house represent? verse 13
2. Why did the *friend* eventually grant the man's request?
  - a. List some synonyms for the word *persistence*.
3. Read the story in Matthew 15:22-28 about the Gentile woman's request that Jesus heal her *demon-possessed daughter*. Record the words of the woman's request.
  - a. How was her persistence rewarded?
    - 1.) What did you learn from this story?

**ASK, SEEK, AND KNOCK: Read Luke 11:9-13**

1. Jesus expressed the point of the story in these verses. Using Luke 11:9,10, record the promised results of each effort expressed:

*ask*

*seek*

*knock*

- a. What kinds of things do you usually ask God for?
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2. Using the following verses, record God's conditions for answered prayer:  
John 14:13  
John 15:16  
1 John 3:22  
1 John 5:14
    - a. Summarize what these verses teach us about prayer.
  3. Luke 15:11-12 remind us of how our earthly fathers do not give us gifts contrary to our requests. Earthly fathers do not give bad gifts in response to their son's request for a good gift. What awesome truth is revealed in Isaiah 49:15?
  4. Write Jesus' final thought regarding this parable from Luke 11:13.
    - a. Matthew 7:7-11 is a parallel passage. Record Jesus' statement in Matthew 7:11.
    - b. Jesus used the phrase *how much more* to reveal the abundant heart of God. What do Matthew 6:30 and Romans 8:32 promise us?
  5. After reading this parable, describe how you perceive the heart of God towards your prayers.

## THE PERSISTENT WIDOW: Read Luke 18:1-5

1. We are given Jesus' purpose in telling this parable before He told it. What does He want *men to do*?
  - a. In your own words, define the phrase *lose heart*.
    - 1.) What are some reasons why we *lose heart*?
2. David suffered many setbacks in his life. What did he declare in Psalm 27:13?
  - a. How have you discovered *knowing the goodness of the LORD* to be an antidote to *losing heart*?
    - 1.) What characteristics of God do you remind yourself of when your heart is faint?
  - b. How have you discovered *prayer* to be an antidote to *losing heart*?
3. How did Jesus describe the *judge* in this story?
  - a. Despite his character, why did the *judge avenge* (defend the cause of) this *widow*?
4. Consider the story of Samson and Delilah. Judges 16:17 tells us Samson *told her all his heart*. Read the words of the previous verses and describe her persistence.
  - a. Why do you think Delilah did not give up?

## AVENGING HIS ELECT: Read Luke 18:6-8

1. God, in no way, is as uncaring as this *judge*. Yet, even this *judge* eventually gave in to the *widow*. The point of the story is not to compare God to this *unjust judge*; but to encourage others to persist as the *widow* did. How is God unlike this *judge*?
  - a. Although we are to persist as this *widow* did, our relationship with the Lord is very different from her relationship with the *judge*. How are we described in Zechariah 2:8?
2. What can we learn from David's prayer in Psalm 54:1-7?
3. Reread Luke 18:7. What actions of the *elect* precede God's *avenging*?
  - a. Why do you think it's important to Him that we *cry out day and night to Him*?
4. Notice the phrase in Luke 18:7 *though He bears long with them*. God seemingly delays taking vengeance on behalf of His people. However, He does all things well. Record the promise of 2 Thessalonians 1:6
5. Record the word used in Luke 18:8 which describes God's *avenging* on the part of those who have *touched His elect*.
  - a. What does Jeremiah 20:11-13 say about this?
6. *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth* (Luke 18:8)? Considering the lesson of this parable, what kind of *faith* do you think Jesus would like to find when He comes?
  - a. What kind of *faith* is He looking for in you?



## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 11:5-13

And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup>for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup>and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? <sup>8</sup>I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. <sup>9</sup>So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup>If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup>Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

### Luke 18:1-8

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, <sup>2</sup>saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. <sup>3</sup>Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' <sup>4</sup>And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " <sup>6</sup>Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. <sup>7</sup>And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"