



THE PARABLES

A 12-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

Week 9 – Prayer and Dependence on God (Sunday, July 5, 2026) *Persistent and Humble Prayer*

Introductory Remarks

The parables of the Persistent Widow, the Pharisee and Tax Collector, and the Friend at Midnight teach us important truths about prayer and dependence on God. Jesus encourages persistence in prayer, reminding us not to lose heart even when answers seem delayed. He also emphasizes humility, contrasting the self-righteous Pharisee with the repentant tax collector who approached God with honesty and brokenness. These parables reveal that prayer is not about impressing God with words or performance, but about trusting Him completely and approaching Him with faith. God honors persistence, sincerity, and humility because they reflect hearts that recognize their need for Him. In a culture that celebrates independence and self-reliance, these lessons remind us that spiritual strength begins with recognizing our dependence upon God in every area of life.

Lesson Outline

- Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1–8)
- Pharisee and Tax Collector (Luke 18:9–14)
- Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5–13)

Key idea: God honors persistence and humility

Questions

1. What do these parables teach us about God’s desire for us to pray consistently?
2. Why is humility such an important part of prayer?
3. What causes many Christians to stop praying persistently for something?
4. Have you ever experienced a season where God answered prayer in a way that strengthened your faith?
5. Why is dependence on God often difficult for successful, capable, or self-sufficient people?
6. What does your prayer life reveal about what you truly believe about God?





Luke 18:1-8

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Luke 18:9-14

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Luke 11:5-13

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity^[a] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

⁹ “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for^[b] a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

