

Study Series: When We Say Father

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 Lesson Title: “Ask, Seek, Knock” (pp. 155-166)

Session 13

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The main point of this lesson is: When we pray, we need to express our desire, explore God’s direction, and exercise determined persistence.

Focus on this goal: To help adults exercise persistent determination in their pursuit of God’s will in prayer.

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 7:7

Before the Session

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Organize the group into teams.

Instruct teams to compile a list of quotes that encourage persistence (do an Internet search if desired).

After a few minutes invite teams to share their lists.

Declare: A saying every believer should take to heart is: It’s always too soon to give up on God and give up on prayer.

Read the main point of this lesson statement (p. 167).

Step 2. Day 1 – The Promise of the Prayer

**Use** the first paragraph of Day One (p. 155) to **review** the person, priority, provision, pardon, protection, and praise of prayer.

**State** Jesus gave the promise of prayer in Matthew 7:7-11.

**Invite** a volunteer to read that passage.

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (p. 156).

**Request** adults identify the obvious first step we need to learn to do in prayer. (Ask!)

**Evaluate** why we should ask God for things when He already knows what we need.

**Request** a volunteer read the Day One paragraph (p. 157) beginning with “Prayer develops you.”

**Inquire:** *What are we expressing when we ask? Why might some struggle with asking God for what they desire? How can we determine whether a thing is right or wrong for us?*

**Discuss** Day One, activity 3 (p. 157).

Step 3. Day 2 – When We Seek, We Explore Direction

**Consider** why our asking must be linked with seeking.

**Invite** responses to Day Two, activity 1 (p. 158).

**Discuss** the margin/pull quote in Day Two (p. 158).

**Read** the author’s definition of prayer (p. 158).

**Ask** how the margin/pull quote and definition both emphasize the need to know the mind of the Spirit when we pray.

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 2 (p. 159).

**Guide** the group to discuss from Day Two the three “Ps” we need to seek in prayer (p. 159).

Step 4. Day 3 – When We Knock, We Exercise Determination, Part 1

**Read** the margin/pull quote in Day Three (p. 160).

**Request** adults identify from Matthew 7:7 how Jesus teaches us to pray with determination.

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 1 (p. 160).

**Consider** why we must exercise persistence in prayer.

**Invite** volunteers to share examples (personal if they desire) of prayers God answered directly, differently, and delayed.

**State:** We may use quotes to encourage us to persist, Jesus used parables to encourage us to persist in prayer.

**Invite** a volunteer to read Luke 11:5-13.

**Consider** why the man’s reluctance to help his friend is understandable.

**Ask:** *Why did he finally give in and give the neighbor what he asked for?*

**Assert** understanding this parable requires understanding what Jesus was not saying. He was not saying God is like the neighbor who was reluctant to give what was needed or whom we can wear down into giving us what we want if we pester Him long enough. Jesus was using a “lesser to greater argument” to emphasize that bold persistence pays off. The CSB Study Bible notes (p. 1629): “If bold persistence is rewarded even by someone who is disposed against granting our request, how much more so will God, who cares about His children, delight in responding generously to our persistent prayers.”

**Ask:** *Was Jesus giving us a blank check in verse 9, promising to give us whatever we want if we keep asking? How does verse 13 help clarify the promise of prayer in verse 9?*

**State** God’s delays in answering our prayers and our persistence in praying results in God’s answering our prayers in ways that are best for us and bring Him glory. The gift of the Holy Spirit makes that happen as He works in the delays and the prayers to make us more like Jesus.

Step 5. Day 4 – When We Knock, We Exercise Determination, Part 2

**Discuss** the first part of Day Four, activity 1 (p. 162).

**Guide** the group to determine the lesser to greater argument Jesus was using in this parable.

**Ask:** *How can we keep from losing heart or being discouraged as we continue to pray about a matter God has delayed in answering?*

**Read** Matthew 15:21-28.

**Ask:** *What do we learn about persistence from this woman? What do we learn about Jesus?*

**Use** remarks in Day Four (pp. 162-163) to **add** to the discussion.

Step 6. Day 5 – When We Knock, We Exercise Determination, Part 3

**Ask:** *Is repeatedly asking God for the same thing an indication of strong faith or a lack of faith? Explain.*

**State** sometimes not persisting in prayer means we’ve given up too easily. Other times continuing to pray for something may indicate our inability to see, or refusal to accept, God’s answer.

**Request** adults identify from Day Five (pp. 164-165) three times we need to stop asking, seeking, and knocking.

**Invite** volunteers to share a time God led them to stop praying about something.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Ask** how the biblical examples examined in this study are reminders that it’s always too soon to give up on God and prayer.

**Ask:** *What can we be confident of “When We Say Father”?*

**Read** the margin/pull quote in Day Five (p. 165).

Close by **reciting** the Model Prayer in unison.

After the Session

