

# Are You Serious About Your Prayer Requests

by Anton Bosch

---

*This sermon delves into the importance of persistence and intensity in prayer, emphasizing the need to ask, seek, and knock continuously for God's provision. It highlights the comparison between earthly fathers giving good gifts and how much more our heavenly Father desires to give us the Holy Spirit when we ask. The focus is on seeking spiritual blessings and aligning our prayers with God's will, rather than solely material desires.*

**Scripture:** Luke 11:5, Matthew 7:7, James 5:16, James 4:3, Luke 11:11, Acts 1:14, John 14:13, 1 John 5:14, Acts 2:1

**Topics:** "Persistence in Prayer", "Seeking Spiritual Blessings"

---

## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of persistence and intensity in prayer, emphasizing the need to ask, seek, and knock continuously for God's provision. It highlights the comparison between earthly fathers giving good gifts and how much more our heavenly Father desires to give us the Holy Spirit when we ask. The focus is on seeking spiritual blessings and aligning our prayers with God's will, rather than solely material desires.

---

## Transcript

Luke chapter 11 5 through 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. For a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him. 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. 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. 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. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? If he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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? And so this is obviously in the context of the teaching on prayer. In verse 11, you remember we began when we started on the model prayer, which took us, I don't remember, six weeks. It begins, and it came to pass as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, that one of

his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray.

Teach us to pray. Remember, we emphasized that they didn't say, Lord, teach us how to pray, but teach us to pray. And that really is at the heart of this whole passage.

Lord, teach us to pray. We need to know how to pray, and we're going to deal with some of that this morning, but we also need to be taught to pray. We don't pray enough.

And so Jesus then gives them the model prayer, and then he comes to verse 5, and he now explains some aspects of the teaching on prayer based on a couple of parables. And so the first parable he says, and I'm just going to make a few brief comments on the verses, and then find the application at the end of each section. And he said to him, Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves? For a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him.

And so it was customary then, as it is today, to give visitors something to eat. Eating was more important to them than it is to us in some senses. It was important because it was a display of love and of fellowship and of companionship.

To not give someone something to eat was an insult. And to sit down and eat with someone was an expression, more than just filling your stomach, was an expression of fellowship and of love and of association. And we do the same thing today.

Well, we did when the restaurants were still open. We would invite someone to a meal, either in the home or in the restaurant, and it would be an expression of fellowship, an opportunity not just to eat, but an opportunity to have fellowship. And so it would be insulting if someone invited you to a restaurant, and the waiter came, and I'm sorry if I can't keep the politically correct expressions for all of these things.

They're still waiters, as far as I'm concerned. But the waiter comes and sets the menu before you, and your host says, Well, no, he doesn't need a menu, and he proceeds to order for himself, and he has his meal, and you sit there watching him eat his meal. That would be incredibly rude.

And we wouldn't even begin to think about doing something like that. And yet, this is exactly the same. Somebody comes on a journey, and they come to stay with this guy, they may be passing through or whatever, and they've been walking all day.

Remember, they're not riding motor cars, they're walking. And so he's walked all day, obviously arrived late, and the guest is hungry, and the host didn't expect him, he didn't get the text, and so he needs to give him something to eat. But he doesn't have anything, because for some reason, he's run low.

This was not an uncommon thing those days, to not actually have enough food in the house. So he goes to his friend next door, and he bangs on the door, and he says, you know, give me, lend me. And it's interesting, he doesn't say give me, but lend me three loaves of bread.

He's not asking for caviar, he's not asking for meat, he's not asking for dessert, he's just asking for bread. And remember, this is in the context of the model prayer, give us today our daily bread. And we emphasize the fact that we're not asking for extras, we're asking for our basic needs.

So he's just asking for the basic needs. And the man says, I'm in bed. And remember, again, they didn't have big houses like we have.

He says, and my kids are in bed with me. To us, that may be a little strange today, but that was the way they lived. They had a one-room, most of them had a one-room house.

They lived and slept in the same room, and at night, they would roll out a mat, and they would sleep on the floor, and the whole family would sleep together in the one-room house. And so he's saying, if I get up, I'm going to wake up the whole family. Just unbarring the door is going to make a noise.

And, you know, just leave me alone. I think that it's not an unreasonable response. I think all of us know what it feels like to be woken up in the middle of the night.

A couple of nights ago, I woke up, and the wind was banging the shade thing on the side of the house. And I tried to ignore it, and I tried to go back to sleep. And I think this is very much what this guy did.

He tried to ignore the neighbor. He tried to just make it go away. But eventually, the banging for me got so loud that I actually had to get up and go out and tie the thing down to stop the noise.

And this man finds himself in the same place. Eventually, he gets to a point where he has to get up, and he helps his friend out. And verse 7 says, 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. And 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. All right, now here's where we get our first little technical problem.

Because of his persistence. The Greek word there is really not so much about persistence, but the word there has to deal with boldness or shamelessness. If you looked up the Greek word, it generally is translated shameless.

Shameless. So is this guy being shameless to wake his neighbor in the middle of the night? Yes, he is. Does he have a real problem? Yes, he does.

What does he do about the problem? Well, the only way out was he thought was to wake the neighbor. Was that a very nice thing to do? No, I don't think that was particularly a nice thing to do. But because he is shameless, because he is bold, and because he is banging on the door, the man gets up and he meets his need.

Now, we're going to see at the end that this is an argument that the scriptures call from the lesser to the greater. From a smaller thing to a bigger thing. And so basically what Jesus is saying is that if this man will hear his neighbor, then how much more the greater will God hear us when we pray.

Verse 9 says, And so I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Now, I'm going to go through these very, very quickly. We could spend weeks on this, but I want to deal with this in one go.

So, I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened unto you.

Those three words, ask, seek, and knock. Notice that the first letter of those three words spell the word ask. Ask, seek, and knock.

So that proves that the English translation is inspired. No, it's not. It's just one of those coincidences.

And it is. It's really not inspired. It doesn't work in the Greek.

It doesn't work in any other language. And in fact, it doesn't even work in every English translation. So we don't want to build a big thing about that.

But at the same time, it's an easy way to remember. A for ask, S for seek, K for knock. But what is important and what is inspired is the increase in intensity between asking, seeking, and knocking.

And again, remember, it's in the context of the parable. He's just told the man is asking. He is pleading.

He knocks on the door. So from asking to seeking. And remember, there is a difference between looking and seeking.

Husbands ask their wives, where's the milk? It's in the fridge. No, it's not in the fridge. Did you look? Yeah, I looked.

Now, I'm sure this doesn't happen in any other home. And then she comes, there it is. Now, the problem was that I didn't seek.

I looked. I had a quick squiz around. I had a quick look, and it's not here.

If I was seeking, then I would go item by item, shelf by shelf, until I find it. You remember the woman that lost the coin? And she brings out the broom, and she brings out the lamp. And in fact, this happened exactly like this for me yesterday.

I was working on something very, very small, and lost a very, very, very small screw. Fell down, and I saw it fall, and I couldn't find it. So I grabbed the broom, and I grabbed a flashlight, and I began to sweep the shop until I found it.

I was seeking. I first looked. I looked down.

I looked everywhere. I got on my knees. No, it's not there.

But then I got the broom and the flashlight, and I began to seek until I found it. And the thing is that many of the things of God that we're asking Him for, we just ask. And we say, well, yeah, it'd be good to have this.

But He doesn't answer immediately. And we forget about it. We move on.

I think as parents, we do that with our children. They say they want whatever it is, and we just ignore it. Because we know in many cases what will happen.

In five minutes, they'll forget about it. They didn't really need it. They didn't really want it.

So it'll go away. But then when we begin to seek, we begin to bring out all the tools that we have available. And we make a concentrated effort on finding and seeking what we're looking for.

And so if we seek, we will find. For God is not hidden from us. His truths and the glories of His word are not hidden from us.

They're all available to us. But sometimes we need to do a little bit of digging. Sometimes we need to do a little bit of seeking that we might be able to find.

This happens to me all the time. I read a passage, and I see that's what it says. But then when I spend a little bit more time digging into the passage, digging into the word, suddenly it opens up and shows me things that I didn't see at first glance.

And we need to seek God. We need to seek His truths. We need to seek His word.

And we need to learn to not give up when things don't happen for us the first time. There are many Christians who face challenges in their lives. And they say, well, when will my problems go away? Hold on.

In due time, they will. In due time, God will answer. If we ask, if we seek, and if we knock.

And obviously when we knock, it's another step, a greater step. It's one thing for the man to stand outside the other man's house and say, hey friend, I need some bread. Well, it's easy to ignore that.

It's another thing when he begins to bang on that door. And he begins to say, wake up, wake up. I need bread.

I need you to help me. And so we give up at the first step already. We ask, and we just don't get.

And then we say, well, that's fine. No, what Jesus is saying is you need to go the second step. You need to seek.

You need to go the third step. You need to bang on heaven's door, if you will, that you might be fine. Because he says, if you knock, it will be opened unto you.

So this section deals then with persistence. These words are in the continuous tense, just to put it in modern English. It doesn't just say ask, but it says ask and keep on asking.

Seek and keep on seeking. Knock and keep on knocking. Don't give up if you don't at first get what you want from God.

Sometimes it takes a long time. Someone here has been praying for, I don't know how many, five years, six years for his son. And today he tells me his son has returned.

Returned to the family. Returned to the, he is returning to the Lord. It's been a long time.

But as we continue to pray, God answers. My mother prayed for me for 16 years to get saved. For 16 years.

And even once I got saved, I kept messing up and she continued to pray for me. And by God's grace and because of my mother's prayers, I'm preaching the Word of God to you today. Not because of anything I have done, but because somebody was faithful in praying year after year after year.

Disappointment after disappointment. Heartache after heartache. Many of us have been praying for folk to get saved in our families.

Have been praying for other needs. And those needs don't get answered. Keep on asking.

Keep on seeking. Keep on knocking. And it will be opened unto you.

For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, it will be opened to him.

Now James tells us in chapter 5, I'm going to take a brief look at a couple of examples. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. James 5, 17.

He was just like us, it says. Remember, he knew about discouragement. He knew about the depths of despondency and depression.

Creeps into a cave and he says, God, just take me. Just kill me. Because this is just too hard.

He was just like us. But it says he prayed earnestly. Notice, earnestly.

That it would not rain. And it did not rain in the land for three years and six months. Now, what does it mean by praying earnestly? Well, if you go to the book of Kings, you'll find the story.

It says that he went up into the mountain, and it says he put his head between his knees. So he obviously wasn't my age. Somehow he got his... Now, why does he do that? Because he is so intense.

His whole body is curled up in intensity as he seeks God's answer to his prayer. And how many times does he pray? Seven times he prays. He prays the first time and he sends his servant out and he says, Go and look.

Is there any sign of rain? And the servant comes back and he says, No, there's nothing. It's just like today. Absolutely blue sky.

There's not a cloud in sight. And he gets his head between his knees again and he prays. And he prays earnestly.

And he sends the servant again and there's nothing. Seven times. On the seventh time, the servant comes back and he says, There's a cloud the size of a man's hand.

And he says, We better run because the rain is coming. And the rain returned. And so James tells us he was just like us.

But prayer changed the weather. James chapter 4 verse 13. Here's the... Sorry, before we go to James 4, you remember there was a woman called Hannah and she didn't have children.

There are many Christians watching online and here this morning who don't have children. And I don't mean physical children. I mean spiritual children.

Their lives are barren. They've never led anyone to the Lord Jesus. They've never even witnessed for the sake of the gospel.

But she says, Lord, I want to have children. And in the words of the prophet, Give me children or I die. Her whole reason for existence was wrapped up in having children.

The reason God leaves us on earth is that we might have spiritual children. And she prays. And the man of God looks at her and he says, This woman is drunk.

Because she is praying with such intensity. She is praying so fervently. And she's saying, Lord, I need to have a son.

I wonder how many of us have prayed with that kind of intensity. That God would give us spiritual children. Personally and as a congregation.

God, we need to have people saved. But that's the cry of my heart every day of my life. Lord, we need to see people born again.

We need to see lives transformed. We thank God for the ones and the twos. But Lord, we need more to be saved.

We need children. And yet what we do is we say, Well, Lord, by the way, You know, it'd be good if you saved a few people around here. Now, Lord, my most important things is I need a new car.

And I'm not so happy in my job. Help me with a new job. But Hannah prayed.

God heard that prayer and gave her one of the greatest men of the Old Testament, Samuel the prophet. Now, I have to bring the balance before we move on to the next part. We cannot force God to do what He will not do.

Our prayer must be in line with the understanding that God is sovereign, that God does what He chooses to do, and that God does what is best. And at the same time that we can't hold a gun to God's head and force Him to do what we want. There are many who are preaching a message today that whatever you want, just ask and God will give it to you.

Well, as you know, I've been asking for that new Bentley for a long time. So if I apply these things and I pray earnestly enough, if I ask, seek and knock, will God give me a Bentley? No, He's not going to give me a Bentley. Oh, well, you're without faith.

And I know that's what they say. Where's your faith? No, I know God doesn't want me to have a Bentley because it's not going to be good for me. So He says, you ask, James 4, 3, you ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

How much of our prayers is wasted on our pleasures? I've spoken before about the gimme's. Lord, give me this and give me that and give me the other thing. And really at the end of the day, it's all about what I want.

It's about my pleasures. What do I want a Bentley for? For my pleasures. And He says, if you ask for your pleasures, you're asking amiss.

Now, understand, we said this before, God is gracious and He gives us many times things that we don't need, that we want. And He's good to us. We understand that.

But if we can't make demands on Him. Remember the prayer, give us today our daily bread, not my new Bentley. And so you ask amiss, you ask wrongly.

That you may spend in your pleasures. That's why, and we say, well, God doesn't answer my prayers. Well, what have you been praying for? If you're asking for the right things, God will answer.

John 5, 14. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will. You see, now, there are thousands of people who like to quote this verse.

But this is how they quote it. And you see it on Facebook, you see it everywhere. If we ask anything, He hears us.

No, it's not if we ask anything. If we ask anything according to His will. Is it God's will for people to be saved? Yes, it is God's will.

Is it God's will for us to become more like Jesus? Yes, it is God's will. There are other things that I don't know whether they are God's will. And there are other things that I know for sure are not God's will.

But here's the problem, is we pray more about the things that are not God's will, than we pray about the things that are God's will. And we wonder why He doesn't answer us. And I'm moving on.

Luke chapter 11, verse 11. 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? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? The answer is obvious. No father is going to do that.

I guess that there are people who are so perverse and so twisted that may do this. But that's not normal. That's not even normal for unbelievers, let alone for Christians.

If our son... And notice again what he's asking for. He's asking for food. He's asking for basic needs.

If he asks for bread, if he asks for a fish, or if he asks for an egg, will he give something that's going to hurt them? Because all of the things that he lists are things that are hurtful. Does God answer our prayers by things that are hurtful? Clearly not. Now here's the bottom line, verse 13.

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? If you then, being evil... Now he's speaking to his disciples. So he's saying his disciples are evil. Not really.

Again, he's arguing from the lesser to the greater. In comparison to God, our heavenly Father... Remember, the prayer begins, our Father. In comparison to God, the best Father amongst us is evil.

Doesn't mean that we're evil when we measure ourselves by one another. But God's goodness so far exceeds our goodness that the best Father amongst us... And I wouldn't want to take a vote and find out who we think it is. But the best Father amongst us is evil in comparison to how good God is.

That's the extent of the gulf between man and God. And he says, if you who are so weak know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more... How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Father, we're not coming to human fathers. We're not coming to government officials.

We're coming to our heavenly Father. And His very nature is good. He is loving.

He is kind. He is gracious. He's merciful.

He loves us. And Jesus is saying, don't you think that He wants the best for you? Don't you think that He will answer your prayers if you bother to ask Him? Now, as we've seen, it doesn't mean that you ask once and then say, well, that's it. In fact, there's a teaching which is erroneous, which says that if you ask a second time, it means you didn't believe when you asked the first time.

So don't ask a second time. That's clearly not biblical. We've seen that from this passage this morning.

If I only ask once, it means I wasn't really serious about it. And sometimes God wants us to put in a little bit of sweat equity. I think we all understand what that concept means.

You need to put in something. Now, we're not saved by works. We don't do things that things don't happen because we do things.

But God wants to see sincerity. God wants to see commitment. And so when we persist, it shows Him that we are serious about this thing.

That whatever it is that we're asking, we really do want it. Now, I'm going to draw a close because we could spend a whole session on this verse. Particularly, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? In Matthew, where you find a similar statement, it just says, how much more will He not give these things or good things to those who ask Him? But here, Luke is saying specifically the Holy Spirit.

Remember when we started the series on Luke two years ago, whenever it was, we spoke about the importance and the emphasis in the Gospel of Luke and in the Book of Acts on the work of the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit. Now, there's two things I'm going to say about this, because I'm running out of time.

The first is that we need the Holy Spirit. We need, and I'm not speaking about running around in circles and rolling on the floor and that kind of nonsense. But I'm speaking about that empowering, you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

And one of the reasons why people aren't getting saved is because Christians are not being motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit. They're trying to do things in their own strengths, using techniques and marketing and advertising and all those kinds of things. But we need the Holy Spirit.

No man comes to the Father unless the Spirit, unless He's drawn. The Holy Spirit needs to be working with us. Remember the Book of Acts, how many times we've emphasized the Spirit worked with them.

We need God to empower us to live the lives that we need to live. We need Him to empower us to be the witnesses, not just to witness, but to be the witnesses that we need to be. We cannot do it in our own strength.

And that's half the problem, is we try and do things in our own strength. He will give us the Spirit if we ask Him. And remember when the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles in the Book of Acts.

They had to wait for 10 days. Now, I'm not getting into tarrying meetings and that kind of stuff. But clearly, the Lord Jesus ascends and He says, now wait until you get the answer to your prayer.

For 10 days they're waiting. Doesn't this confirm what we've been saying all along in this passage? Ask and keep on asking. And then on the appropriate day, the Holy Spirit came.

But I want to bring another emphasis here also. Notice that He says, how much more will your Heavenly Father give you whatever you ask Him? No, it's not whatever you ask Him. Why does He say the Holy Spirit? Because it seems to be out of context with everything else that He's been dealing with in the prayer and in these 13, 14, 13 verses.

Because He's trying to get our focus on spiritual things. You see, the moment we speak about prayer, we think about material things. About my Bentley and about a new cell phone and this and that and the other thing.

But He's emphasizing spiritual stuff. And so He's saying, if you ask for spiritual things, if you ask for the Holy Spirit, will He not give it to you? If you ask for revelation or understanding of the Word of God, illumination, will He not give it to you? If you ask to be more like Jesus, will He not answer that prayer and make you more like Jesus? If you ask to be empowered to be a witness, will He not empower you to be a witness? And you can see that it's so easy to go through these 13 verses. And when we speak about prayer, we just think about my Bentley.

And we forget that it's not about Bentleys or about any of those kinds of things. This is about spiritual stuff. And yet, folk, our prayer life is filled with material things and not spiritual things.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the privilege that is ours of being able to come to You boldly, to that throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in a time of need. Thank You, Lord, that You do answer our prayer.

Not just that You answer, but, Lord, that You love to answer. The prayers of Your children. And yet, Lord, I pray that You'd forgive us for being so fickle.

Because we ask and we get on with whatever and we forget even that we asked. But, Lord, we pray that You would help us, that there may be an intensity in our desire for more of You, for more of Your Word, for more souls, for more being like Jesus, for the things that really matter. Lord, we pray that we individually and as a church, may be those people who are known because we pray, because we seek Your face.

Forgive us, Lord, for the many times that we come to You in the prayer meeting and we don't even once pray for souls. Lord, I pray that You'd forgive us for the many times that we come to You in our personal prayer and we don't pray for our family members who are unsaved. Help us, Lord, to get our priorities in line with Your priorities, because when we ask according to Your will, You hear us.

And so teach us, Lord, to pray. Teach us to pray. Lord, it's so easy to talk about these things.

It's so easy to read books like *Bounds* and other books about prayer. But, Lord, we pray that You would teach us through Your Spirit, create within us a desire and a hunger and a thirst for the things of God. I pray this in Jesus' name.

I pray that You'd continue with us in the rest of this meeting this morning and when we part that You'd go with us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

■ Music ■ The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down ■

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/i2h1Usw1Opl.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/anton-bosch/are-you-serious-about-your-prayer-requests/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**