

Catechism Story 26

*The Lord's Prayer Introduction and First Petition
Memory Verse and Catechism Prayers from Congregation at Prayer*

BIBLE STORY: JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY

Luke 11:1-13

Central Thoughts

- Prayer is taught by Jesus who gives us God's Word and promises to hear.
- We pray because we trust in our heavenly Father because of God's promises to us.
- We can be certain that our heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers because He loves us.
- We can be certain that our heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers because each petition of the Lord's Prayer is a promise of God to us.
- When we pray according to the promises of God's Word, His answer is always YES!

Discussion Questions

What did the disciples observe about Jesus?

He prayed regularly every day.

What did the disciples ask Jesus?

"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

How did Jesus answer them?

He gave them the Lord's Prayer

Whose word is the Lord's Prayer?

The Lord's Prayer is God's Word. Every petition is a promise of God to us.

Why do we pray to our heavenly Father?

We are His dear baptized children in Jesus. He loves us. We trust in our heavenly Father to hear and answer our prayers just as children trust in their fathers (see the Introduction to the Lord's Prayer).

Why did the midnight caller continue to cry out to his sleeping neighbor for bread?

He knew that his sleeping neighbor would eventually get out of bed and give him whatever he needed.

Did the sleeping neighbor get out of bed because he loved the midnight caller?

No, he just wanted to get back to sleep.

Is our heavenly Father like the sleeping neighbor?

No, our Heavenly Father loves us and wants to hear and answer our prayers.

Why should we be eager to pray?

Because our heavenly Father is NOT like that sleeping neighbor. We should be all the more eager to pray to our heavenly Father often, precisely because He does love us and has made many precious promises to us in Jesus.

Will God hear and answer EVERY prayer that is prayed according to His promises to us?

Yes! This is why Jesus says, "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."

What are the answers to the questions in verses 11 and 12?

Even an earthly father knows how to give good things to his children.

If an earthly father knows how to give good gifts to his children, how much more can we depend upon our heavenly Father?

Our heavenly Father can be depended upon even more than our earthly fathers.

At the end of Jesus' catechesis on prayer, what is the gift that Jesus promises from our heavenly Father?

The gift of the Holy Spirit.

What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

The Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith in Jesus and bestows upon us every gift of salvation that Jesus won for us upon the cross.

Meditation on the Bible Story

The disciples observed that Jesus prayed every day. On one occasion they finally asked Jesus to teach them how to pray as John the Baptist also had taught His disciples to pray. To be a disciple means that we not only “follow” our Savior, but that we also do the things that He did. Jesus’ answer is very specific. “When you pray, say: Our Father who art in heaven...etc.” Jesus taught them that the foundation for prayer was God’s Word. Every petition of the Lord’s Prayer is a promise of God’s Word. Prayer is the voice of faith that claims the promises of God’s Word. We cry out to Him as dear children because He has made many great and precious promises to us. We learn to trust in our heavenly Father because of His faithful promises to us in Jesus. God always keeps His promises. We can depend upon Him without question. His promises are always based on His love for us in Jesus. Though we don’t deserve it, though we daily sin much, still He delights in hearing the prayers of His baptized children who cry out to Him for help and for everything that He promises to give us. God is always motivated to hear and answer our prayers because of His love for us in Jesus.

The sleeping friend who is awoken by his midnight caller is NOT like our heavenly Father. The sleeping man did NOT get out of bed to help his neighbor because of friendship. Instead, the sleeping man got out of bed because he wanted to get back to sleep. The midnight caller knew that if he badgered his neighbor enough, his neighbor would eventually give in and give him whatever he needed. God is not like that sleeping neighbor. Our heavenly Father truly loves us and every promise of the Lord’s Prayer is His pledge to us that He wants to help us in every need. If someone would badger a neighbor to get what he needs, even though the neighbor doesn’t care for him, how much more should we be eager to pray to our heavenly Father precisely because He loves us and has promised to answer our prayers.

Every petition of the Lord’s Prayer is a promise. We can pray with certainty when we pray on the basis of God’s promises to us in Jesus. This is why Jesus says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” Praying in Jesus’ name and according to God’s promises to us guarantees that we will receive what God promises to give. Again Jesus used an argument from the lesser to the greater: “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!” At the end of Jesus’ catechesis on prayer, He reminds us that the greatest gift of all is the gift of the Holy Spirit who gives and strengthens our faith in Jesus. The answer to prayer is always “Yes! Yes! It shall be so” whenever we pray in faith on the basis of God’s promises to us.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Heavenly Father, we give thanks to You for every word and promise of the Lord’s Prayer. Teach us to pray with confidence, knowing that You love us and that You always hear and answer our prayers when we pray for what You promise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray
Luke 11:1-13