

## Di122 Essentials of Christianity

### *Lesson Di122-14 Prayer: Petition*

Is there something you have asked God for, over and over again? Have you felt like giving up? Jesus told a parable to show believers that they should always pray and not give up. His story was about an unjust judge, who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. A widow in his town kept coming to him with a plea for justice. At first the judge refused, but he finally granted her request because she was persistent in asking. Jesus ended the parable by saying, “Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly” (Luke 18:1- 8). Jesus’ words encourage us to keep asking and believing that our prayers will be answered.

After healing the son of a royal official in Galilee, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there was a pool there near the Sheep Gate. It was surrounded by five covered porches. Here a great number of disabled people used to lay—the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed—and they waited for the moving of the waters. From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had. One man who was there had been an invalid for 38 years.

Everyone needs help once in a while. Sometimes only God can meet a person’s need and change their life. This was the case for the man by the pool. For 38 years he had been so crippled that he could not help himself. He lay near the healing pool but could never reach it in time to be healed. He longed for someone to help him. He kept praying for God’s help.

The story of the healing pool was that occasionally an angel would stir the water in the pool. There was healing only for the first one who could enter the water. This crippled man had tried many times, but had never reached the pool first. He only saw others receive their miracle. Healing was always just out of his reach. He would work himself to the edge and ask others to help. There was nothing more that he could do. No one helped. But he continued to pray and remained near the pool where God’s power was revealed.

This man’s situation was such that over the years, hopelessness had invaded his spirit. He could do nothing but keep praying for help. He continued to trust God for his healing. Then he began hearing the news about this prophet Jesus. Maybe Jesus could be the answer to his need. Perhaps Jesus would help him into the pool.

He was in his usual spot by the pool the day Jesus came walking by, but he didn’t know it was Jesus. The lame man looked up and saw a loving and compassionate man approaching him. Jesus was looking intently into the crippled man’s eyes. He may have thought to himself that this would be the day of his healing. Perhaps God was answering his prayers. Those eyes, so full of compassion, seemed to see everything about the man by the pool. And the love he felt was amazing. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

The man could only get out, "Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." The man did not see Jesus as a potential healer, and his mind was set on the powers of the water. But Jesus was like no other man the cripple had ever met. Christ was not limited by the man's lack of faith. The lame man heard the unbelievable words, words that would answer the prayers he had prayed all those years. God had heard his plea and had sent Jesus.

Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man by the pool was cured; he picked up his mat and walked (John 5:1-9). Heaven had come down and met the man by the pool in his need. He knew that all those prayers to God had been heard. He now knew that God was compassionate and heard the prayers of all his people.

This lesson is **important** because we learned that God answers prayer on our behalf. He desires us to ask him about all our needs.

The **main point** of this lesson is that the man at the pool had a need beyond his ability to solve, but he continued to pray. God heard and answered as Jesus came to heal him.

Your **review** questions are:

1. In this biblical account, did the man by the pool have any reason to believe that he would be healed after 38 years? [Pause]  
A. If you answered that his only hope came from outside his circumstance and this meant that God would have to solve his impossible situation, you are correct.
2. How faithful was God to the man by the pool? [Pause]  
A. If you answered, "God was faithful to him and actually protected him until the moment that Jesus would heal him and be glorified," you answered correctly.
3. What is our privilege when it comes to praying to God for our own needs? [Pause]  
A. If you said that we have the privilege of asking God for all our needs, both the possible and seeming impossible, you are right.

Your **assignment** is to listen to the story until you understand the lesson about prayer as petition for all our needs. Your homework is to begin praying regularly with a small group for all your needs, remembering the God answers petitions, according to his will.

Memorize these verses from Matthew 7:7-8: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Prayer: Father we pray that you will remind us of the miracles you have brought into our lives, that we might honor and glorify you. In the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, Amen!