

LOOKING AT LUKE
PERSISTANT PRAYER

Wednesday, August 26

Reading: Luke 11

Luke 11:5 *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 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."*

Some years ago, Dr. Robert A. Cook, president of The King's College, told an audience at Moody Bible Institute that he had talked with Vice President George Bush the previous day. Two hours after that, he spoke briefly with President Ronald Reagan. Then, smiling broadly, Cook told the crowd, "But that's nothing. Today I talked with God." ¹

We often get nervous when in the presence of powerful and influential people. Sometimes we can't even get any words out of our mouths. And yet God encourages us to come boldly to Him. In his gospel, Luke is always interested in prayer. The disciples had seen Jesus' powerful prayer life and they wanted the Master to teach them how to pray. Jesus responded with the model prayer that we often call "the Lord's Prayer." But Luke does not stop there. He continues by recording several lessons and parables Jesus taught to reinforce the importance of prayer.

In the parable of the reluctant friend (11:5-10), Jesus is not teaching that God is like a grouchy neighbor who only answers because his friend won't stop bothering him. He is teaching just the opposite. If that grouchy neighbor will finally answer the request because of his friend's persistence, how much more will our loving heavenly Father answer the prayers of His children! It is important that we recognize the tenses of the verbs in Luke 11:9. They could be translated "keep on asking...keep on seeking...keep on knocking!" The point is that prayer should be a constant event in our lives. We don't come to God only in those midnight emergencies. We can be sure that God will answer us because we have built a consistent relationship with Him by "praying without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Why does God want us to be persistent in prayer? One commentator put it this way:

To practice persistence changes the hearts and minds of those praying, and it helps them understand and express the intensity of their need. Persistence in prayer helps them recognize God's work. By praying persistently, believers are not trying to get a reluctant God to answer their prayers; instead, they are showing that they are very serious about their request. ²

James 4:2 says "You do not have because you do not ask God." We can get so caught up in our own stuff that prayer becomes an afterthought. God wants us to turn our thinking around. Prayer should be our first priority! Our growing relationship with Him should be the driving force of our lives.

Have you talked with God today?

Keep asking...keep seeking...and keep knocking and see what God will do!

¹ Herbert VanderLugt. Our Daily Bread quoted at http://www.preceptaustin.org/luke_commentaries_3#11

² Life Application New Testament Commentary, Luke 11:7-8 note