

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #179

(Note: You can read the online Newspaper edition of this post [here](#).)

The Later Judean Ministry: Jesus Trains His Followers in the Basics of Discipleship

Jesus Teaches About Persistence in Prayer

Luke 11.5-13

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 "Then imagine that the one inside answers back: '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 persistence he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

9 "So I command you: Keep on asking and it will be given to you; Keep on seeking and you will find; Keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who keeps asking receives; the person who keeps seeking finds; and to the one who keeps knocking, the door will be opened.

11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

13 "Since you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Judea
Timeline	October (Month 33)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	D. Jesus Minister in Judea and Trains His Disciples
	I. Jesus Trains His Followers in the Basics of Discipleship
Title	v. Jesus Teaches His Disciples About Persistence in Prayer

COMMENT:

Jesus' second basic lesson about prayer concerned the crucial role of persistence. He promised that if we will continue to practice private prayer, without giving up and quitting our investment of time and energy, we will ALL eventually learn to pray with power. Persistence in prayer means never giving up, no matter how often we might have failed in the past, or recently, to pray as we should.

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Jesus used a verb tense in Greek that stressed ongoing, continuous action. **"Keep on asking...keep on seeking...keep on knocking."** This describes persistence in action.

In the first story, audacious persistence meant that the man wore out his friend's reluctance to give what was needed with overpowering tenacity. However, the point of the story is that when it comes to God, there is NO reluctance to give us what we need, there is only a pre-existing desire to provide for us, and all the resources are all ready and waiting for us to ask.

If persistence could obtain what was needed from a reluctant friend, how much more will it secure what a generous, infinitely good God literally died to give us? This confidence is the inexhaustible source of persistence in a life of prayer.

Jesus also gave a marvelous promise concerning prayer in these verses. Everyone--bar none--that is persistent will receive ongoing answers to their prayers (11.10). Persistence is something we can implement by choice, an act of our will. Faith varies from person to person; persistence is equally actionable for us all.

To further stress God's generous, waiting-to-give nature, Jesus gave the second illustration. Even the most evil, destructive criminals in the world know how to give good gifts to their own children. If evil people naturally give what is good to those they love, how much more will our perfectly loving and good Father give the Holy Spirit to those who keep on asking him.

Why talk about the Holy Spirit in the context of answered prayer? Every answer is delivered by the Holy Spirit to us on earth. The Spirit is the personal administrator, producer, and delivery agent of everything God the Father and Son give to us. This also gives us great hope in the potential of prayer, for the Spirit is present in every space and place in the universe--all the time. He is there, and possesses all the resources of God to deliver to anybody, any time.

The presence of the Holy Spirit makes the unlimited power and potential of answered prayer available to anyone who merely persists in prayer. This is the lesson that Jesus expected every disciple to learn from this teaching, and apply in a life of persistent prayer.

APPLICATION:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your own persistence in private prayer?

What do you need to do about that? When will you do so?