

Dear Partner,

As the twelve disciples would follow Jesus from town to town they would notice certain patterns in His life. For example, they would see Him often depart to a solitary place to spend time in prayer with His Father. Sometimes Jesus would spend all night in prayer. Then they would watch in amazement as Jesus would heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, and cast out devils. They saw that great power followed those times when Jesus would just get alone to pray to the Father. Finally, one day, they asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In other words, "Lord Jesus, we see that after you spend time in prayer, great power is manifested to heal and bless the people. Please teach us to pray like you pray." Jesus responds by teaching them what we commonly call the Lord's prayer [Luke 11:2-4], but then He goes on to teach them more specifically one of the secrets of power being manifested when we pray:

Luke 11:5-13 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; (6) For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? (7) And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. (8) I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. (9) And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (10) For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (11) If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? (12) Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? (13) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray and have results like He was having. Jesus begins talking about bread. Has He changed the subject? Not at all. He was giving them their answer using an analogy they could easily relate to. One time Jesus said, "Healing is the children's bread." [Mat 15:26]. He is talking about a key to serving the "bread of healing" from the heavenly Father's table. This is what He did continually as He "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." [Acts 10:38] In this teaching Jesus is explaining, "If you want to have results like I have when I pray, then your attitude about what the Father God is like is going to have to change first."

Most people think that getting answers to prayer is hard, because in our lifetime we seem to see lots of prayer "failures." I will just speak of my own experience. I have been in full time ministry now for over twenty years. I have literally prayed for thousands of people, without exaggeration. I have prayed for people in churches, on the streets, in grocery stores, at Walmarts, in America, in Europe, Africa, and Asia. I have seen amazing answers to prayers, some that would have to be called miraculous even by the most ardent skeptic. At the same time, however, I have to admit I have also seen many of those I have prayed for seemingly not get healed. Some of them have died as if my prayer had no effect at all. Because of those failures it sometimes seems like God is a little miserly and stingy, having the power to heal, but reluctant to release that power to heal people when we pray.

In the old days I heard many sermons as a young man where the minister would say things like, "We need to storm the gates of heaven until we receive the answer we seek." That paints a picture of God living within His heavenly castle, having all the answers for healing that we need, but holding them back

from us until we forcibly storm His gates and force Him to give us healing for our friends almost against His will. Jesus is teaching ... nothing could be farther from the truth. Our Father God is not like that ... at all!

Jesus asks the question, "Do you have a friend who would refuse giving you bread for someone if you asked at midnight?" As I thought about that question one day it dawned on me, "I don't have any friends like that." They might not be overjoyed that I was knocking on their door at midnight asking for bread, but every friend I have would give it to me anyway. All of them. Yet we think God is less gracious and generous than our earthly friends? God forbid! No wonder Jesus taught His disciples, "Your attitude about your heavenly Father has to change. He is not like that stingy, selfish person behind the door who won't give you the bread. Your Father loves you. He loves your friends. He is eager to give you all the bread you need both for you and for your friend. Answers to prayer come by faith and for faith to work you must know that if you ask Him, He will give it to you. If you seek Him, you will find Him. If you knock, the door into His presence will be opened to you."

And then notice, Jesus introduces how the bread (healing, miracle, etc.) is delivered ... "how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" The Father is seated in heaven, but He gives answered prayer by the agency of His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the actual "molecule changer." The power of answered prayer was manifested for Jesus by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Jesus says if we ask the Father for the bread of healing for our friends, He will give us the Holy Spirit to manifest that bread ... the healing, the deliverance, the answer to what we need. Hallelujah! Our faith is increased as we BELIEVE what Jesus taught us about our heavenly Father. He is good. He is generous. He loves us and He loves to answer prayer. Ask in the name of Jesus, that you may receive, that your joy might be full.

Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

Gary