

Dear Partner,

As the disciples followed Jesus for his three and a half years of ministry on earth they began to notice patterns in His life. He would often retreat to the mountains or the desert to spend time alone in prayer. He would emerge from those times of fellowship with tremendous demonstrations of miracles and healings for the people. Repeatedly they would see this pattern. First, times of fellowship in prayer, and then times of tremendous power in ministry. They asked Jesus to teach them to pray like He prayed. No doubt they wanted to have the same kind of miraculous results when they ministered. You can read His entire answer in Luke 11:1-13.

To summarize His teaching to the disciples, He said if they were to have the same results He had after prayer, their whole concept of the nature of God would have to change. Jesus compared the "answers" to prayer ... the healings and the miracles ... to delivering "bread" to those who were in need. He said most people think God is stingy and unapproachable and that He is very reluctant to give out the "bread," even though people desperately need it. He taught them God is not like that stingy man at all. Jesus was saying, "If you are going to have the same results I have in prayer, you are going to have to know your heavenly Father better than that." Then He told us the truth about the Father:

Luk 11:9-13 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?

What makes us think that God is stingy with His miraculous answers to prayer? It is because of our life's experiences. We pray so often and it seems our prayers either go unanswered ... or else the answer is a resounding "No!" Over time a false inner conception of the nature of God emerges in our minds. We come to believe he is stingy with His power and reluctant to answer our prayers. Jesus flatly denies that attitude. He says God is not like that at all! He says God is above all else ... a Father ... a Father who delights in giving good gifts to His children.

Recently I decided to start writing myself some little psalms of my own to use in my times of personal worship. After all, we are exhorted to do that very thing by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians:

Eph 5:18-19 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (19) Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

My psalm went like this, "Lord, you are not like that stingy man behind the door who heard me knocking but would not let me in to get the bread. You are not just a friend or a neighbor to me. You are my Father and you delight to hear me knocking at your door in prayer. You always open the door and receive me into your presence with joy. You delight to see me and when I ask for the bread to deliver to those in need, you send the Holy Spirit with me to manifest the bread in whatever form they need. You

delight to answer prayer and to give good gifts to your children. I love you Father and I thank you for adopting me into your family through the blood of Jesus Christ."

The very first time I began to worship the Father in this manner I heard the familiar voice of the Holy Spirit say, "**Now you are beginning to worship in truth.**" I immediately remembered what Jesus had said to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well:

Joh 4:23-24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (24) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

That woman had been concerned about "where" to worship, whether on a mountain in Samaria or in Jerusalem. But Jesus knew what really mattered was not "where" we worship, but rather "WHO" we worship. God has always received worship from those who love him down through the ages. But the truth is that ever since the fall of Adam, no person born on earth before Jesus had the very nature of God within him. Jesus is truly called the "only begotten" son of God when He was born of the virgin Mary. But after his death, burial, and resurrection He is called "the firstborn of many brethren." Through His finished work at the cross, He made it possible for those who believe to become literally the sons of God, born of God's own spirit.

Joh 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We are truly born of God. We are those who can worship Him in spirit, because we are born of His very own Spirit. We also have the capacity to worship Him in truth. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. God our Father is who Jesus declared Him to be, no matter what circumstances say, and no matter what preachers of religion say. We shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth!

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