SMALL GROUP



FOR THE WEEK OF

lce-breaker: Which person(s) would

you

be

most likely to

ask for something you desire/need greatly?

JANUARY 12, 2014

BIBLE DISCUSSION

TOPIC: PERSEVERING PRAYER

Lesson in a Line: God has guaranteed that He will give His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Points to Make:

- In verses 9-10 of Luke 11, Jesus tells us to request persistently and that we will receive a response.
- Early in the chapter, just as Jesus finishes praying, His disciples ask Him to teach them to pray as John had taught his disciples. He recites for them the "Our Father" prayer (what they should pray), and then tells the story of a man whose neighbour gives him bread, not out of friendship, but to get peace because the man asks persistently (how they should pray).
- Jesus uses a play on words to stress the theme of persistence.
- Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you (v.9) (active).
- Verse 10 reverses the sense of verse 9 by stressing what will happen to those who ask, seek and knock. They will receive, find and have the door opened to them (passive).
- So, our persistent prayer gets results, not because of any skill on our part, but because of the nature of the One we are praying to.
- Jesus uses the example of a human father who does not withhold good from his son (vv. 11-12):
- If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?
 We feed our children the bread of truth designed to set
 - them on a firm and healthy base.

 If he asks for a fish, will be give him a sement?
- If he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? We feed our children "fish" that multiply when Jesus' Word is applied (see Matthew 14), so that their lives can grow and not be barren.
- If he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? An egg is tasteful to the tongue and nourishes the body. We want what is good for our children.
- So if we who are evil know how to give good gifts to our children, what would God – who is good – do for His children when we petition Him?
- God's gift of the Holy Spirit is more certain to those who ask than is a human father's gift (v. 13).
- Jesus' guarantee is that your heavenly Father will give you the Holy Spirit when you ask Him. We must recognize that receiving this gift it does not mark an end, but a beginning: we are now empowered to seek, for we shall surely find what we need.

Key Scriptures: Luke 11:9-13; 18:1-5

- In John 13:16 Jesus says that when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide us into all truth. Yet many times we are discouraged with life's results.
- So the Holy Spirit comes as our comforter, and He abides with us forever (John 13: 16). The world cannot know Him, but we know Him because He dwells in us.
- Comfort is a state of being that does not occur outside of us, but inside. If we allow them to, external circumstances will affect our state of being. But the presence of God's Spirit in us has more influence if we will allow Him to.
- He shows us how to be while we are handling whatever situation comes to us. Paul states that none of these situations can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:38–39), for we cannot be separate from what is in us.
- So let us persevere in prayer daily. Let's keep asking, seeking, knocking; for "...the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep [our] hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Discussion Tools

- Share times when you have been disappointed because you were promised/expecting something that did not happen in the end. Share the emotions that you felt at the time(s).
- ► How have those disappointments possibly affected your ability to trust God to keep His promises?
- What does God's word say about His promises and/or answers to prayer? Share as many verses as you can remember collectively.
- When you say, "Lord, help my unbelief," what do you think happens?
- ► Identify something including the baptism of the Holy Ghost for which you have asked God in the past. Ask again as the group prays right now.

PRAYER TIME

Lord, I believe; please help my unbelief.

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