

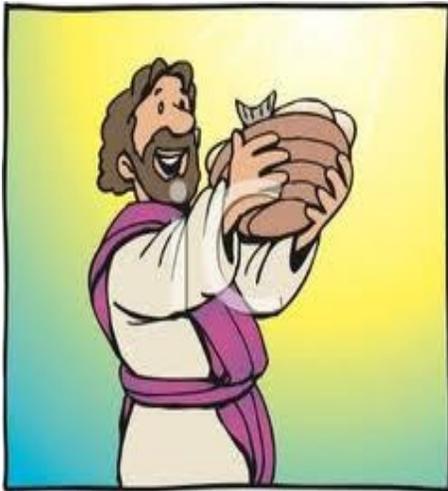
perfectly, give us when we come into His presence?

Jesus tells us to ask and keep on asking (Matthew 7: 7), and whatever we ask in God's will is assured to us. He had just taught the disciples to pray the Lord's prayer, which includes the phrase "Your will be done" (Luke 11: 2). So, putting it all together, we see that we are to be persistent in asking for God to work in our lives and answer our prayers according to His perfect will and timing, having confidence that He will do so.

When we pray without ceasing and have confidence in God, the benefits are many. We experience the goodness of God as we commune with Him. We become eager participants in the purposes of God, yielding our lives and

wills to Him. We enter His presence with boldness and security, knowing that he will bless us with His fellowship and love.

*(excerpted from: www.gotquestions.org)



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The Parable of the Persistent Neighbor



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THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT NEIGHBOR

A parable is a short, fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. Parables are never meant to be taken for the letter of their word. When taken literally, at face value, the entirety of its meaning is lost.

* "What is the meaning of the parable of the Friend in need (Persistent or Importunate Neighbor)?"

Immediately after teaching the disciples to pray the Lord's Prayer, Jesus told the story of the neighbor who was in need of bread for a visitor (Luke 11: 5-10). The disciples had just asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11: 1), and the lesson He is teaching through this parable is to be persistent in prayer. This is the first of two parables Jesus uses to drive this concept home -- the second is the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge in Luke 18: 1-8. Paul reiterates this same concept in 1 Thessalonians 5: 17.

The characters in the story are a villager who is in bed with his family at midnight and a neighbor with a need. Hospitality was a strictly observed custom in the Middle East, and a man caught without bread for a visitor would be in a shameful and desperately needy position. Only such a need

would drive the man to this level of persistence. The Greek word translated "boldness" and "persistence" implies imprudence and audacity. This is what Jesus is saying should be our attitude as we approach the throne of grace -- a confident boldness that persists in pursuing God until He grants us mercy and grace (Hebrews 4: 16).

A word of caution is appropriate here. Never are we to approach God with impertinence or a demanding or disrespectful attitude. James tells us that we do not have, because we do not ask, or we ask, with the wrong motives (James 4: 3). That God allows us to approach Him is an indication of His mercy and graciousness toward sinners. But He is our Abba Father (Romans 8: 15), and we are His children. We come before Him as a child comes before his earthly father, in confidence that his father loves him and wants the best for him. If this man would give his neighbor what he wanted not out of friendship, but just because of his shameless boldness, how much more will God, who loves us