

## The Bible Speaks

And he said to them, *Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.* (Luke 11:5-8)

**Persistence and perseverance.** When a few bad days turn into a bad month or worse, it's easy to become discouraged in life. Sometimes, try as we might, the hill seems almost too steep, the river waters, too strong.

Whatever it is: an annoying neighbor, an overly demanding boss, or what seems like tough relationships everywhere we turn, still, with patience and perseverance, we can make it through.

Sometimes, the best we can do in life is to just *keep after it*. In other words, persist and persevere. We never know when a breakthrough will occur. We never know when a new awareness, a new disposition, or a new understanding and orientation will win the moment.

In chess, sometimes the *winning* play comes only after serious and deep focus on the options. It doesn't come in a flash, but only on the wings of persistence and perseverance.

So much of our lives is like that. Like the man in the brief parable above, we have to persist, not give up, and keep our purposes on the front burner.

The point of the Luke passage above is precisely that *persistence* pays off. The *friend at midnight* has already shut down for the night (In the ancient world, it was common for a family to live in a single room home—with limited bedding, and with the whole family in the one, family bed.). The man doesn't get up and give his friend what he seeks because he's his friend. Rather (the point of the parable), he fetches what his friend asks for because of his relentless persistence.

The further point is that God, whose love for us is beyond compare, will respond with even more generosity and consideration when we, too, persist and persevere. We simply need to stay the course in practicing the presence of God in our prayer life and on our faith journey.

**Don't give up!** What this reading is calling us to is a *disposition* and *attitude* for not giving up. Over time, in God's own way and as the Spirit moves, God will provide. Our spirit of perseverance and persistence serves to ready us for this day.

The implication is that too often in our lives, we give up too soon. We allow discouragement and a few bad experiences to shut the door on our hope and expectation.

Our *healthy* expectations of one another, particularly our children, have much to say about how they will respond. If our children are raised in an atmosphere where *giving up* too easily is simply not acceptable, they'll develop a toughness of spirit to persist and persevere with their goals in life.

*Ask, search and knock* Jesus says. *Ask and it will be given to you, search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.*

The *asking, searching and knocking* are for God's presence in all things and for God's tender mercies along the way.

Our persisting and persevering are part of our *meeting God half way*. They are also part of our *faith response*. They are the way we understand and show gratitude for God's abundant gift of grace related to us Romans 8:

*For I am certain that nothing can separate us from God's love; neither death nor life; neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above or the world below. There is nothing in all creation that can ever separate us from the love of God which is our through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Amen!