

Parables: Jesus the Storyteller

Lesson 22 - Persistence Pays Off

Warm up -

1. What have you accomplished so far that you are most proud of?
2. What characteristics do you look for in a best friend?
 - funny
 - kind
 - good-looking
 - loyal
 - silly
 - a good listener
 - fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs
 - likes to spend time with you
 - other:
3. What are some of the reasons God wants to talk with us on a daily basis?

Lesson -

Harry has a happy-go-lucky kind of guy. He was pretty easy to get along with too. If you wanted to go to the game, Harry was in. If you'd decided you'd rather stay home and shoot pool, Harry was OK with that too. He didn't care much about stuff either - anything his mother picked out for him to wear was fine with Harry. But there was one thing Harry wanted. Badly.

Harry wanted a dog. A big dog to horse around with. Harry loved dogs. Problem was, Harry's father hated dogs. Whenever he asked his folks if he could get a dog. Harry's dad said, "No way." No matter how much Harry promised to take care of the dog himself, no matter how much he begged and whined, the answer was always, "No way." But Harry wouldn't give up.

Every single night at the dinner table, he'd ask again. "How about it, Dad?"

Harry's folks got pretty sick of listening to Harry. On the ninety-sixth night of this routine, Harry asked his usual question. "Could I please, please, puh-leeze get a dog?"

"Yes," said his dad. "You can get a dog." He knew he'd go nuts if he ever had to listen to Harry ask that question again. So he finally gave in and said yes.

Persistence. It paid off for Harry. And it pays off for us. After all, the stuff we really care about - stuff like getting an 'A' in geometry, making the varsity soccer team, landing a part in the school play - takes a bit of effort.

Jesus told his disciples a story about a persistent woman. She got results because she kept on asking for what she wanted. In the same way, says Jesus, we ought to keep on praying and never give up.

I'm not saying that God eventually says yes to every request we have. Sometimes God flat-out says no; other times God doesn't seem to be listening, and we don't get an answer. But remember that God knows your heart. God knows (better than you know) what's best for you. So keep on praying. Don't give up. You can bet God will answer your prayers.

Read Luke 18: 1-8

1. As you read this, look for the technique the widow used to get her way.
2. Describe the judge in this story. Describe God.
3. What was the widow asking the judge for? Was this a legitimate request?
4. Does persistence in prayer mean repetitious or boring prayers? What does it mean to pray persistently?
5. What was the widow's attitude toward the judge? Do we need to have the same attitude toward God?
6. How will you put what you've learned about persistent prayer into practice this week?
7. Have you prayed for years for something? What kinds of things should you make a daily matter of prayer?
8. What can we learn from doing something on a daily basis?
9. How do you know God is listening to your prayers when you don't get an answer for a very long time?

