

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”-Psalm 119:105

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“Ask and It Shall Be Given You”

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Perhaps you have heard the story of the bride who said to her mother regarding her new husband, “Pierre is perfectly wonderful to me, mother. He gives me everything I ask for.” To which her mother replied, “That merely shows, my dear child, that you are not asking enough.”

An ancient prayer (dated around 1662) says, “Grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually.”

The Savior taught the principle of asking in order to receive, and asking well. Here are his exact words: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Luke 11:9-10).

What the Lord may be suggesting in this teaching is that our problem is often that we do not ask, or do not ask for the really important things, or even that we do not request persistently and tenaciously those things we really need. This latter point is particularly important for our own lives today. Now, I am not referring to food, clothing, and shelter, or even the forgiveness of our sins. These matters are certainly taken up with Heaven each and every time we speak with God in prayer, and often more than once in the same prayer! It is other things which I have in mind here. They are those things which perhaps we do not pray for because we do not really seek them, and so do not wish to knock upon the door behind which these treasures lie. We do not ask for these things because we do not actually want them. Below I have listed some of those things I have in mind:

1. Opportunities For Service To God and Our Fellow Man

Have our lives gotten so busy that we have pushed out God completely? Some folks are so busy with their jobs and other activities that they are too occupied to come to worship half of the time, let alone set aside any time at all for “extra-curricular” activities like visitation or personal work. When a work day at the church building comes up they are engaged beyond their limits already, and so they let others who are “not so busy” take up their slack. (You would be surprised who makes it to those work day projects!) They never can make room on their schedule for attending church business meetings, nor can they make it to the nursing home or sickbed where other members may need their encouragement or comfort. They just don’t have the time.

Now, do you think that such folk are including in their prayers a request that God may send their way opportunities of service either in the kingdom of God or for benefit of their fellow-man? I think not! That would probably be the last thing in the world they would ask for. Nevertheless, the Bible still says, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is” (Revelation 22:12).

2. Prospects For Conversion To Christ and His Truth

Is our own “conversion” very much in question these days? Do we feel that words like “dedicated” and “committed” refer to others but not to us? When people at school or work bring up the subject of religion do we flee into a far corner away from them, or do we meet the questions and issues squarely with firmness and resolve, conviction, and knowledge? The early disciples seemed to have been eager to share their faith with others, as evidenced by the growth and spread of their faith among those whom they met in the neighborhoods, marketplaces and workplaces of the first century (Acts 8:4). Those early Christians turned the world upside down for their Lord because of their enthusiasm and excitement for the Lord and his Truth.

Are we today looking for or praying for prospects? To have converts you must first have prospects! Any salesman will tell you that in order for you to make one sale you must first have several prospects; then, out of those several prospects he may only convert one into an actual transaction, a

sale. In our experience with bringing people to the Lord, it has almost universally been the case that gimmicks and special techniques are virtually worthless. One interested, concerned, and committed Christian may bring many people to Christ in a lifetime if he or she is praying toward that end and is constantly “on the lookout” for prospects.

But some of us are not praying for prospects. In fact, we are hoping they are found by someone else and not us. We don't have time for them. Or, we are afraid we don't have the knowledge necessary to teach them. Maybe we just don't care whether they are saved or damned! That was not Paul's attitude: “Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved” (Romans 10:1). Undoubtedly this is the most essential ingredient to bringing others to the Lord, then or now. So, let us pray for prospects that the kingdom of God may be increased and the lost may be brought to Christ.

3. Wisdom and Knowledge of The Word of God

This is one thing that some folks could never be motivated to pray for. After all, if they did gain such knowledge, then the first thing you know the elders would ask them to teach a Bible class, or lead in public prayer, or even preach occasionally. That would be the worst! Yet, my friends, that was precisely what Paul prayed for on behalf of his friends and brethren at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:16-20).

We are not praying for knowledge of God's will, in far too many cases, because we fear the responsibility which we know will attend it! I have every confidence that if we ask we will receive it, for the Lord's promises are ever true (Luke 11:10).

Let us begin to pray for the things which really matter, not merely for the minimal expectations of life and ministration, but for great usefulness and extraordinary utility in the service of the Master.

“Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, who keeps our soul among the living, and does not allow our feet to be moved.”—Psalm 66:8-9

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"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"
(Psalm 118:24).