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~ **The Unexpected Guest** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Luke 11:1-13.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story.

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Luke 11:1-13 NASB	Luke 11:1-13 NLT
<p>It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” ² And He said to them, “When you pray, say:</p> <p>‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. ³ ‘Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’”</p> <p>⁵ Then He said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷ and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you <i>anything</i>.’ ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him <i>anything</i> because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.</p> <p>⁹ “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹ Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? ¹² Or <i>if</i> he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will <i>your</i> heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”</p>	<p>Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” ² Jesus said, “This is how you should pray:</p> <p>“Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. ³ Give us each day the food we need, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation.”</p> <p>⁵ Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ⁶ ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ ⁷ And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’ ⁸ But I tell you this—though he won’t do it for friendship’s sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.</p> <p>⁹ “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.</p> <p>¹¹ “You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? ¹² Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! ¹³ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”</p>

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2. Discover key cultural and historical insights

The following insights are from Gary Burge, *Jesus: The Middle Eastern Storyteller*

- Prayer in Israel was 1) formal and liturgical. It consisted of set sayings and recitation of psalms, and 2) it was in Hebrew which was not the language of the people. The language on the street was Aramaic.
- Jesus prayed in Aramaic. They don't seem to follow set forms of the day but are expressions of personal concern. His use of Abba was carried over into Greek settings (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6)
- When an unexpected guest arrived, the first obligation of the host would be to present food to the guest. Food must always be served with newly baked bread.
- The honor of the entire village is at stake. Because the honor of the whole village was at stake, the man would go to a home and ask for bread knowing that the village would want to maintain its honor.
- Many villages would have communal ovens. Even private ovens were outside so the man would know where to find freshly made bread.
- The man in the story is honorable. He calls to the man, "Friend."
- It would be unthinkable for the friend in the house to give an excuse that he is sleeping with his children. Peasant homes were small, one room houses with an elevated porch in the back where everyone would sleep while animals would be in the front part of the house. Jesus says this because he is explaining what will not happen.
- The man does not get up because of friendship. He gets up because of honor.
- The word "his" refers to the man in bed. The word persistence or shameless = *anaideia* refers to being without shame and it means that the man is a man who has no village shame but he has village honor. He gets up because of his village honor and gives the surprised host as much bread as he needs.
- Some fish at the bottom of the Sea of Galilee were eel-like and looked like snakes. These were unclean. Some scorpions could roll themselves into balls and appear like eggs.

The following insights are from Kenneth Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*.

- The phrase – "Which one of you" expects a negative answer. Jesus is saying, "Can you imagine going to a neighbor and asking for help to show hospitality to someone and receiving this kind of answer?" And of course, the answer would be "no."
- He asks for three loaves – one would have been more than enough for the traveler but he wants to provide abundantly.
- The host's bread is used up or there are broken pieces. To offer this is an insult. He must find fresh bread to set before his guest. He will know who has just baked bread that day in the village because of the village oven.
- The bread is just the utensil for the whole meal. He needs other things and the friend gives him whatever he needs.

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- The man awakened knows that the person is obligated to serve the traveler. The sleeper must help the man and to avoid shame in the village he gets up and gives the man whatever he needs. If he had refused, the news would have spread throughout the village that he would not help maintain the village honor.

3. Answer these reflective questions.

Read Luke 11:1-4 which is commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer.” What part of this prayer is most meaningful to you and why?

Do you believe that your prayers put God’s name and his kingdom above your daily needs?

Have you forgiven others for their trespasses against you? In what ways do you think temptation and evil can come upon those who do not forgive?

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The neighbor in the story helped his friend at midnight to be hospitable to maintain village honor. What does this teach us about God being faithful to hear and answer our prayers to maintain his honor?

How does Jesus' parable and his teaching on prayer encourage your prayer life?
