

WARM UP

One of my friends happens to be quite wealthy. While browsing the shops with our wives we happened upon a very nice stationery shop. Our wives checked out the unique greetings cards, while we men just waited, talking and relaxing.

I casually mentioned how annoying my stapler was - sometimes jamming etc. Next thing, my friend is asking the shop assistant to gift wrap a beautiful Spanish stainless steel and brass stapler. I was shocked. We'd seen the prices and my friend was about to give me a \$250 stapler!

I felt awkward and embarrassed. I regarded myself as a kind of equal to my friend - that we were, and are, peers. If we go somewhere or do something, I will pay my way, share the costs, in the easy relaxed way that friends do. But here was my "peer" lavishing a gift upon me. \$250 for a stapler! Undeserved, I thought - over the top.

What caused me to be embarrassed and awkward was pride. My friend is wealthy and he simply wanted to give me something nice - to bless me. He was capable of it, and it gave him pleasure. My pride could have robbed me of the pleasure of receiving, and him, the pleasure of giving.

READ Matthew 7:11**BACKGROUND**

The Lord used my friend's generosity to show me a very valuable lesson. The Lord is our friend - He wants to bless us. We must learn to receive. God has unlimited "wealth" and he calls me "friend". He wants to gift us all kinds of things, tangible and non-tangible.

The question is, am I too proud, too self-sufficient, too self-reliant, to receive His gifts? Pride can cause us to say "I don't need a saviour, or His help". Pride can keep us from prayer, or from hearing from Him.

QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we limit what God has for us by our attitude?
- 2 How do we balance the "benevolent heavenly Father" nature of God, with the fact that He calls us His friends and His sons?

- 3 What can the consequences be of limiting God?

- 4 How do we limit what God wants to do in our lives by lowering our desire to receive, to the level we feel we deserve? (I didn't deserve a \$250 stapler, so had difficulty receiving it.)

CONSIDER THIS

I placed my new stapler on my desk and emailed my thanks to my friend, telling him I'd think of him every time I used it.

I also thank Him who loves me, and continue to be amazed that His love for me means that He gifts me with good things that I certainly do not deserve.

My testimony to the world is that Almighty God loves me. He gave, and He gives. He never stops, and there's no limit. As we men testify about God's love and demonstrate His love everywhere we go, then we fulfil the Great Commission we've been called to, and influence this planet for the Lord who created and sustains it all.

What is God saying to me?**LET'S PRAY****REAL LIFE STORIES OF GOD'S POWER**

I came to a healing meeting which Bill was attending. He pulled me out of the congregation and asked me to raise my arm 10 times. Previous to this meeting, I had always had a bad tennis elbow. During the next week I was doing things with my arm that I hadn't been able to do before. It has been healed ever since. Thank God.
Graham

