

9-30-2026 –Persistent Prayer

Eph. 6:18 – NLT _ “Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.”

- **1 Thessalonians 5:17** – “Pray without ceasing.”

Persistent. Adjective; means continuing to do something for a long time w/o giving up, often despite difficulties, opposition, or attempts to stop it.”

What does it mean to pray persistently? Over & over? Beg God?

Why? Doesn't God already know what we need. Jesus said:

- **Matt. 6:** ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

If God knows what we need, why pray? Persistently?

Luke 11 – the Disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray.

First, He said the Lord's prayer. Then – He taught about persistence:

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.

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. 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.”

A few spiritual points in this story:

1 – Jesus tells us times **when** we should be **persistent** in prayer:

- Midnight hour. Need a miracle; divine intervention.
- When the unexpected happens.
- When you are empty. “I have nothing”
- When you are rejected. “Don’t bother me.” “Door is locked”

2 – **God knows** how to **give** us good gifts. He gives in love. He loves us.

- If flawed people can give good things, how much more a perfect God?
- If flawed people respond to persistent requests, be **certain** that our loving heavenly Father will respond to His children, **even more good**
- **Delay in responding** doesn’t mean God doesn’t love you!!!
 - **It mean** God is preparing your gift. Goodness on the way.

3 - **Persistence paid off.** The request was granted. The man was bold, the friend responded **because of the man’s persistence**

If we want something passionately, we don’t tire of going for it.

Persistent prayers show where our passions lie. **God doesn’t tire of us!**

God welcomes tenacity. “shameless persistence.” – We’re not wearing Him down; this process **deepens** our **trust** in God.

When we wait, don’t take matters into our own hands, we are trusting. Don’t be like Abraham & Sarah.... Didn’t want to wait. Problems!

Keep knocking until the door opens. Keep praying & giving your burdens to God.

4 - Prayer is not begging. So persistent prayer isn't begging.

- **Begging** is driven by anxiety, emotion, desperation, helplessness.
- **Prayer** is driven by inner worth, trust (God's power), & strength.
 - **Driven by faith.** God keeps His promises.

There are other stories in the Bible teach about persistent prayer:

– **Jacob** wrestling til daybreak ([Gen. 32:26](#) – The man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “**I will not let you go unless you bless me.**”)

– The **Canaanite** woman who would not be dismissed ([Matthew 15:22-28](#)) -
²² A Gentile woman ... came to him, pleading, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is possessed by a demon that torments her severely.” ²³ But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word. Then his disciples urged him to send her away. “Tell her to go away,” they said. “She is bothering us with all her begging.” ²⁴ Then Jesus said to the woman, “I was sent only to help God’s lost sheep—the people of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, “Lord, help me!” ²⁶ Jesus responded, “It isn’t right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She replied, “That’s true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their masters’ table.” ²⁸ “Dear woman,” Jesus said to her, “your faith is great. Your request is granted.” And her daughter was instantly healed.

- God welcomes this kind of tenacity . . . it builds faith.
 - Jesus is concerned about faith – **not hers** – but the 12.
 - “She’s bothering us” - They can’t forget her ancestry . . . Jesus can.
 - He’s taught about “unclean” – not defiled by food - **they do nothing**.
 - Saw her as a Gentile. . . He says can’t throw food/dogs. Why? B/c that’s been the **mindset** of the **Jews**. Gentiles called dogs b/c they were “pagans who didn’t believe in God.” Inferior.
 - But this woman calls Him “Lord.” His delay is to build faith in the disciples. She already believes. Has faith. It shows.

- And Jesus told another story - widow before the unjust judge ([Luke 18:1-8](#)).

Luke 18 - NLT - Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. ²“There was a judge in a certain city,” he said, “who neither feared God nor cared about people. ³A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, ‘Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.’ ⁴The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, ‘I don’t fear God or care about people, ⁵but this woman is driving me crazy. I’m going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!’”

⁶Then the Lord said, “Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. ⁷Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?”

5 - People can be worn down, but not God. He never tires, never sleeps.

- Delays in justice are in God’s timing.
- He doesn’t just change **things**... He **changes people**. Takes time.
- **Jesus taught** to keep praying... keep believing... keep seeking.
 - Believe in the God of justice. Mercy. Forgiveness. Healing....

Can persistent prayers change God’s mind? At least 4 examples:

- **King Hezekiah’s Healing (2 Kings 20:1–6):** The prophet Isaiah told King Hezekiah he was going to die from an illness. Hezekiah turned to the wall, wept, and prayed for mercy. God heard his prayer, told Isaiah to go back, and **added 15 years** to Hezekiah's life.

- **Amos Prays for Israel (Amos 7:1–6):** God showed the prophet Amos visions of coming destruction by locusts and fire. Amos prayed, "O Lord God, please forgive!" and both times the Lord relented, saying, "This shall not be."
- **Nineveh Repents (Jonah 3:10):** After Jonah preached destruction, the king and people of Nineveh fasted, sat in sackcloth, and cried out to God. Seeing their actions, God relented from the disaster He had threatened.
- **Moses Intercedes for Israel (Exodus 32:10–14):** God told Moses He was angry with the Israelites for worshiping the golden calf and said His wrath would “burn hot against them and consume them” (Exodus 32:10).

“But Moses implored the LORD his God and said ‘Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, “I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.”

And then, the most amazing verse: “**And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.**” (Exodus 32:11-14).

What’s going on here? Does Moses’ prayer convince God to change his mind? Did God need a reminder? Did He forget a promise? God having an off day?

- And more confusing - Moses, the same author who recorded this story, says clearly in Numbers 23:19, “**God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.**”

What should we do with this? Here’s truth -

God has sovereignly placed us in certain situations *for the express purpose of praying his promises* and “changing his plans,” so to speak. He wants us to employ divine power to create a different destiny than the one everyone is heading to. Prayer changes things . . . but not God.