

Luke 18—The Importance of Perseverance in Prayer

Introduction – When it comes to the study of prayer in the Word and the practice of prayer in life, there are many aspects of prayer to consider. One aspect of prayer that is particularly difficult in our culture, possibly because of our affluence and lack of material want, is the importance of importunity, or perseverance, in prayer.

The parable of the importunate widow and the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8) –This is a parable given to us that we may know or learn fervency in prayer.. It presupposes that all saints thank and petition God with some regularity and beseech him with arrows darting up to heaven as the occasional circumstances of life may dictate.

It is a blessing and privilege that we may pray to the Lord of Lords and King of Kings (vs. 1) –Luke instructs us that we always *ought to pray*.. It is a work to be sure, as Paul comments on Epaphras (Col 4:12). *“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete”*

It is work that we should do with regularity -- This is the foundation of the whole parable. Daniel prayed three times a day. David prayed early in the morning and at night

Prayer must be persistent (Matt 7:7-12)--We must continue and not *faint*, for we do not seek God's face in vain

He neither feared God nor regarded man –(Luke 18:2) –Where there is no fear of God and His law, there is no thought given to right or wrong. *Wickedness in the place of judgment* was one of the sorest evils Solomon saw under the sun (Ecc. 3:16).

The widow began to seek justice daily, continually (vs. 3-5) –*Get justice for me, justice from my adversary*. God gives explicit instructions to not do *violence to the widow* (Jer. 21:3), to *judge the fatherless*, and *plead for the widow* (Is. 1:17, Ps 68:5)..

How does this apply to us? Why does Jesus tell this parable? (vs 6-7)—This parable is for the encouragement of God's praying people, that they may pray with faith and fervency (*Rom 8:31-33, I Peter 2: 9*) We must *cry day and night to him*. Our God does not need our pleadings to act.

We ought to be particular and specific in our prayers (II Cor 12:7-9a)—Remember how Paul asked God to relieve him of his affliction. *Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me*. We should ask again and even again. **Compare and Contrast:**

- **This widow, was a stranger**--God's people are his own, his elect.
- **She was alone**--The praying people of God are *many* and are part of the Body of Christ. We have an *Advocate with the Father*, Jesus Christ his own Son.
- **She came to an unjust judge**—We come to a *Father* that commands us to **boldly** approach the throne of grace and to cry, “*Abba, Father*”. (Ex 32:12)—Moses pleads with The Lord. This is truly one of the most remarkable and most bold intercessory prayers in all of scripture. Joshua at Ai (Josh 7:9)
- **She had limited access to the judge**—We may cry to God *day and night*, at any and all hours.
- **Her shamelessness (importunity) provoked the judge to action**—Our praying is pleasing to God. The asking, seeking, and knocking of the elect is welcomed and not provocative to God.
- **She had no encouragement given to her to ask even one time**--We are to approach our Father boldly (Jn 17:25). We have “the golden scepter” held out to us.

If He delays, it is for our own good and His glory. (Matt 15: 21-28) Christ is silent that she might be strengthened, that she might draw nearer to Him and to improve or prove her faith..

And what of the delay in answers to our prayers? (vs. 8)— He wants the blessing to be rich, full, and sure.

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