

A Person of Persistence

Over the past three weeks, we have seen that a person who prays well is a person of the Word, a person of faith, and a person of obedience. Scripture also teaches that a person who is effective in his or her praying is the one who prays with persistence. Today, we are looking at passage in which Jesus taught his disciples about the need to be persistent in prayer.

Opening Discussion: What comes to your mind when you think of the word “persistence”?

Read Luke 18:1-8

1. What is the context of this parable?
2. Luke tells us that Jesus told this parable to show his disciples how they should pray at all times and not lose heart (v. 1). What does it mean to lose heart?
3. How is God like and unlike the judge? How are we like and unlike the widow?
4. Does our persistence in prayer always guarantee that God will do what we ask? Why or why not? What are the issues involved?
5. Brian mentioned three reasons why we sometimes don't pray with persistence: (1) We don't think we need God to do things; (2) We don't know what God wants to do; and, (3) We don't care about what God wants to do. In what ways have you in the past or are you now experiencing any of these things?

Brian quoted Dallas Willard, who says:

Prayer simply dies from efforts to pray about “good things” that honestly do not matter to us. The way to get to meaningful prayer for those good things is to start by praying for what we are truly interested in. The circles of our interests will inevitably grow in the largeness of God’s love. . . . Many people have found prayer impossible because they thought they should only pray for wonderful but remote needs they actually had little or no interest in or even knowledge of.

6. What’s your response to Willard’s thoughts on prayer? Do you agree with the idea that if we are going to care about the things God cares about that we should start by praying for what we are truly interested in?

7. In the past three weeks we saw that a person who prays well is a person of the Word (John 15), a person of faith (James 1) and a person of obedience (1 John 3). How do these characteristics help a person pray with persistence?

8. Is there anything for which you are praying persistently right now? If so, what?

9. What is something for which you would like to begin praying persistently?