

Why We Persist

Hello Storehouse Fam!

Trust you've had a great week so far. Hope you've enjoyed the last few days of feasting on our Lord in the word, in fellowship, and prayer. In this season of fasting, it is very helpful to take a moment to review our thoughts and perspectives on prayer.

If you walk long enough with the Lord, you will inevitably come to a season when it feels like some things we ask for in prayer don't come; they don't come as soon as we'd like or don't come at all. What are we to make of this? Give up? Lose heart? Throw a tantrum? Try harder? Devise new strategies?

No. Jesus tells us that '...men ought always to pray, and not to faint; '[Luke 18:1](#). He urges us to be persistent in prayer. There is a sense in which this could very easily be mistaken for effort, for doing more. The logic goes that the more we "badger" God, the more likely we are to get what we want from him. To take this view would be mistaken though.

Do we really need to pester the One who says he knows what we need even before we ask?

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In the parable in Luke 18, we see the Lord deliberately use the imagery of a very terrible Judge to pass his message across. Here was this evil man whose character was as different from God as could be possible, in a position to do right by a widow. "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people." **Luke 18:2**

The widow is a strong metaphor for someone socially and economically disadvantaged. To be a widow was (is) to be vulnerable to exploitation and injustice. She was essentially dependent on this mean judge to help her. 'A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' **Luke 18:3**

Jesus taught that by her persistence, she was able to get this wicked judge to do something for her. Not because he cared about her, not because he had any desire to help or because he spared a thought for her wellbeing. 'Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even 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?"' **Luke 18:6-7**

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So again, the question - is Jesus saying we need to whine and bother God before he answers our prayers? Surely not! The contrast was meant to shift our hearts and our attitudes towards God in the place of prayer. God is good. God is love. So he wouldn't need to be harassed to bless us. He is the complete opposite of this evil judge. This was meant to be a source of encouragement to his hearers. The basis for our persistence in prayer is not in our effort or our ability to push. It is in the goodness of God.

Elsewhere, Jesus uses the same approach to teach his disciples about prayer. He asks a very fundamental question: 'So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him. ' **Matthew 7:11**. The contrast here is between though loving, human, imperfect, honestly, evil parents and God, the one in whom is no darkness, no shadow or turning? The perfect father of light, the one who loves us so much that he breaks into song.

The reason why we can always come to God and keep coming to him in prayer is because he loves us and wants what is best for us. He is the one that has thoughts and plans for us that are good and not evil. He is the one who spent all of eternity mapping out good works for us. A beautiful version says that we are God's poetry. 'We have become his poetry, a re-created people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One. Even before we were born, God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it !' **Ephesians 2:10**. In scripting our lives, God waxes lyrical.

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When you think about this, shouldn't you feel a renewed sense of vigour to keep coming before his throne?

In his infinite wisdom as our Father, he has not designed prayer as a magic wand that gives us our every whim. Thankfully, the God of all the Universe has not limited himself to being a Cosmic Vending Machine with buttons that can be pushed, to give us our desires on demand. Instead, he invites us into a non-stop dialogue with him. We are to trust his goodness, but also his wisdom, his power, and his timing.

The funny thing about the mean Judge was that he never barred the widow from coming to present her case. This is a reminder from our Lord that we are always welcome, that we may come boldly to the throne of Grace. 'So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.' **Hebrews 4:16.**

Let this encourage us to remain steadfast in prayer. In the end, we get the greatest gift of all, we get God! 'Find your delight and true pleasure in Yahweh , and he will give you what you desire the most.' **Psalms 37:4.**

Love,
The Storehouse