

Keep Praying

Message 02 of the series: "Breakthrough"

A. Jesus taught His disciples to keep praying for breakthroughs with shameless persistence.

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." Jesus said, "This is how you should pray: "Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation." 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, 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' 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.' 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. "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. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. "You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! 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." Luke 11:1-13 (NLT)

1. God wants us to pray persistently because He wants a relationship with us.

"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment." Matthew 22:36-38 (NLT)

2. God wants us to pray persistently because some answers to prayer take time.

"But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day." 2 Peter 3:8 (NLT)

3. God wants us to pray persistently because His plans are better than ours.

"Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! For who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen."

Romans 11:33-36 (NLT)

4. God wants us to pray persistently because persistence reveals our true desires.

Jesus told them a story showing that it was necessary for them to pray consistently and never quit. He said, "There was once a judge in some city who never gave God a thought and cared nothing for people. A widow in that city kept after him: 'My rights are being violated. Protect me!' He never gave her the time of day. But after this went on and on he said to himself, 'I care nothing what God thinks, even less what people think. But because this widow won't quit badgering me, I'd better do something and see that she gets justice—otherwise I'm going to end up beaten black and blue by her pounding.'" Then the Master said, "Do you hear what that judge, corrupt as he is, is saying? So what makes you think God won't step in and work justice for his chosen people, who continue to cry out for help? Won't he stick up for them? I assure you, he will. He will not drag his feet. But how much of that kind of persistent faith will the Son of Man find on the earth when he returns?" Luke 18:1-8 (MSG)

5. God wants us to pray persistently because it allows us to recognize His answers when they come.

"I assembled the exiles at the Ahava Canal, and we camped there for three days... I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We prayed that he would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we traveled... So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer... We broke camp at the Ahava Canal on April 19 and started off to Jerusalem. And the gracious hand of our God protected us and saved us from enemies and bandits along the way." Ezra 8:15, 21, 23, 31 (NLT)

B. We keep praying for breakthroughs because we trust our heavenly Father who loves us and ALWAYS does what's right.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."

Daniel 3:16-18 (NLT)

1. God is for us.

"When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee... Thou hast taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Thy bottle... This I know, that God is for me." Psalm 56:8-9 (NASB77)

2. God is with us.

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

3. God is in us.

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you." John 14:16-18 (NLT)

4. God is able.

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

5. God is righteous.

"The LORD is righteous in everything he does; he is filled with kindness. The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth." Psalm 145:17-18 (NLT)

John Schmidt ♦ 02-03-19 ♦ john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions:

1. Did you participate in any of the prayer times this past week either online or in person? If so, what was your experience?
2. Read Luke 11:9-10. In your opinion, why was Jesus teaching that we should be persistent in prayer?
3. Read James 1:5-8. Since faith plays such a big role in our prayers, how does a person pray believing?
4. Read Luke 5:15-16. What was the importance of Him taking time to pray during the busyness of ministering to others? If you were to follow this example, how would your life/ministry be impacted?
5. Read Mark 14: 35-36. In these verses we see Jesus surrendering His personal desires and aligning with God's plan. How do you navigate these difficult conversations with God when His plans are so far away from your own?
6. From this sermon we know that God is for me, with me, in me, able, and righteous. What would you add to the list? God is _____. How does understanding who God is impact the way we pray?
7. Have you ever considered using your journal to help you keep up with your prayers? How could this help your prayer time?
8. Share with the group something that you are praying for with shameless persistence.