

PRAYING WITH IMPORTUNITY **(Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8)**

1.The explanation of importunity in prayer.

- a.This word was long believed to mean persistence.
 - i. There is no doubt that persistence is seen in this parable as well as the parable about the widow.
 - ii. But, when this word is looked at outside the biblical text, we see it is used to mean something else.
- b. But if you look at various translations, you see translators are divided on this word.
 - i. The KJV and ASV have “importunity”, which in English is defined as “persistence in solicitation”.
 - ii. The NKJV has “persistence”.
 - iii. The ESV has “impudence”.
 - iv. The NIV has “shameless audacity”.
- c. The Greek word translated “importunity” literally means, shamelessness, want of modesty, impudence.
- d. What this means for our parable is that the man knocking on the door is doing so without shame and continually because he is in need of assistance.
- e. So the idea of persistence is there but there is added to a sense of shamelessness.
- f. You are unabashedly begging for help until you get it.
 - i. This man kept knocking on the door until the neighbor got out of bed and gave him what he needed.
 - ii. The widow continually went to the judge until she got the help she needed.
- g. This is the way we are to approach prayer.
- h. The great thing is, our Father is approachable.
 - i. Jesus was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray.
 - ii. Jesus didn’t say anything about God being approached only at certain times or by certain followers of His.
 - iii. Every Christian can go to the Father in prayer at any time as many times as is felt needed.
- i. You might be thinking that it seems that God should just give us what we want without having to ask numerous times.
 - i. We don’t always know what is best and that for which we are asking may not be best.
 - ii. It may be that God is delaying to give us what we want to teach us patience.
- j. Whatever the case, God is pleased with us when we persistently and unashamedly come to Him with our requests.

2.The effort of importunity in prayer.

- a. Notice what the Lord said after he gave the parable of the friend in need (Luke 11:9-10).
- b. He said that we must give effort if we want to obtain something from God.
- c. There is an escalation in effort isn’t there?
 - i. Asking leads to seeking, which leads to knocking.

- ii. It's similar to Psalm 1:1.
 - iii. These words teach us to keep coming to God in prayer.
- d. If you have children, have your children ever come to you with a request and you said, "let me think about it"?
 - i. At times, don't you do that to see how serious they are about that for which they are asking?
 - ii. Other times it is to put them off because you, as a parent, believe that for which they are asking is not the best thing for the child.
- e. God tells us to ask, seek, and knock for those same reasons.
 - i. There is another thing we need to pay attention to in these verses.
 - ii. You probably are aware of this already, but if you are using the KJV, you see in verse 10, the letters -eth on the end of ask, seek, and knock.
 - iii. This is telling us the tense of the words in the original language show a continuation of action.
 - iv. We are to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking.
- f. There is a great illustration of this in Genesis 18.
 - i. God has revealed to Abraham that He is going to destroy Sodom.
 - ii. This bothers Abraham because his nephew Lot and his family are in Sodom.
 - iii. Genesis 18:23-33 is an illustration of persistence in prayer.
 - iv. Six times Abraham came to God with a request for the saving of Sodom.
 - v. He did so shamelessly and persistently.
 - vi. He was not arrogant because notice what he said in verse 27 (Genesis 18:27).
 - vii. As you read through the conversation, you see a rising intensity in his requests.
- g. There is another illustration of this in Matthew 15:21-28.
- h. Jesus is an example of this the night of His betrayal in the Garden.
- i. Paul asked the Lord three times for the removal of his thorn in the flesh.
- j. These last two occasions should be a great reminder for us.
 - i. God always answers our prayers.
 - ii. However, He doesn't always answer them with a yes.
 - iii. Sometimes we have to wait.
 - (1) On one occasion, Nehemiah asked for something in prayer in the month that equates with our mid-November to early December.
 - (2) He did not get that for which he prayed until three months later.
 - iv. Sometimes God gives us something altogether different than that for which we asked, as He did in the case of Paul.
 - v. Sometimes God gives us more than that for which we ask as He did in the case of Solomon.
- k. Paul often prayed for brethren (Colossians 1:3; Philippians 1:4).
- l. Notice how Paul asked the Roman brethren to pray for him (Romans 15:30-31).
 - i. The word strive gives the idea of strenuous effort.
 - ii. Paul was asking them to give great effort for him in their prayers.
- m. When times are difficult that is when we are to pray harder, not give up (Ephesians 6:18).

3.The effect of importunity in prayer.

- a. Notice what our Lord then said after telling His disciples to give effort in prayer (Luke 11:11-13).
- b. I don't believe there is a father in this room that would knowingly give something hurtful or harmful to his children.
 - i. We love our children too much to give them something that would hurt their feelings or harm their bodies.
 - ii. Despite the fact that we are sinful we wouldn't do that.
- c. If we who are far less than God know how to give that which is needful to our children, surely we believe the Great God of heaven can give us what we need when we come to Him with shamelessly persistent prayer.
- d. Remember the words of James (James 5:16).
 - i. How can a righteous man's prayers accomplish much?
 - ii. Because they are asked of a Great God who wants to bless us more than we can comprehend.
- e. We are tapping into the greatest source of power there is.
 - i. Prayer takes us to the very throne of God (Hebrews 4:16).
 - ii. Our faith in God to give us that which is needed is based on all the scripture evidence of His having done so for His children through the ages.
- f. We have a God that wants to bless us and has given us the ability to seek that blessing.
- g. Mack Lyon wrote, "It is amazing that we pray so little when we contemplate the willingness of God to make adjustments in the circumstances of our lives. We need His love, His understanding, and His protection. We need His companionship, His deliverance, and His power".
- h. We don't just have a heavenly Friend, but a heavenly Father who wants to bless us more than we know (Ephesians 3:20).