
WITH CHRIST

IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

A 31-Day Quiet Time Series | Week 2

Day 8... THE BOLDNESS OF GOD'S FRIENDS: Because of your shameless persistence.

Luke 11:5-8

"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." (NLT)

Prayer of Intercession:

What we have here is an asking friend, taking a needy friend, to a providing friend. And this is what it means to intercede for someone. Prayer is an appeal to the friendship of God, for another friend.

Our relationship with God gives us confidence to ask and assurance of response. What should we do with this great gift? Is it to fulfill all of our needs, desires and wants while the rest of the world is left wanting?

Well, ask yourself what has Jesus been doing ever since he finished his work on the cross. Does he live to now only soaking up the benefits of being with God? No! Read [Hebrews 7:25](#). This tells us that Jesus lives... to intercede. Therefore, this also needs to be the primary objective of our prayers as well.

Prayer is an appeal to the friendship of God, for another friend.

- **What percentage of your prayer life revolves around praying for the needs of others?**

The friend asked for three loaves of bread. He knew what the specific need was down the exact number of loaves!

- **What can you do to be able to pray for the specific needs of someone else?**

Andrew Murray writes: "And let us hold fast the threefold cord that cannot be broken: the hungry friend needing the help, and the praying friend seeking the help, and the Mighty Friend loving to give as much as he needeth."

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

Day 9... PRAYER PROVIDES LABORERS: Pray to the Lord of the harvest.

Matthew 9:37-38

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"

Two days ago, we considered the continual gift of God, His Holy Spirit. The call of that time was to ask our Father for the Spirit. Not the one and only Spirit that we received in baptism, but the becoming more and more conformed to that Spirit.

Today we will consider the fruit of becoming more and more conformed to the likeness of God, as we consider the product that naturally results: a concern for the lost sheep.

Luke 15:3-7

Write down a few emotions connected to how God feels toward lost sheep.

We see the depth of God's love and concern in three distinct ways:

- Focusing** on that one lost sheep, he turns away his attention from the 99,
- The **physical effort** exerted to search, find and then carry the sheep back,
- Excitement** expressed through calling friends and neighbors to celebrate!

The more you ask for the Holy Spirit to become like your Father, the more these traits will begin to describe you as well. And it is in this light that your prayer will also be for more workers.

The soul conformed to the likeness of God feels keenly the reality that the harvest really is plentiful, but indeed the workers are few.

Let us today pray for more workers. And let us today be conformed to the likeness of God focusing our attention on the lost, exerting effort to find them and learn how to bring them home, and celebrating with the excitement of heaven when any sinner repent.

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

Day 10... PRAYER MUST BE DEFINITE: What do you want?

Luke 18:35-43

"What do you want me to do for you?' 'Lord, I want to see,' he replied."

Jesus did not ask the guy, "what is your *wish*?" or "what do you *hope happens*?" Rather, he asked "what do you want me *to do*?"

God is a God of doing. Not wishing, wanting or just hoping something will happen. Therefore, your praying should start with what you believe God can *actually* do (in other words, wherever your faith is), and then ask God to act. Prayer must be definite and specific, not grandiose and general.

Consider the Boers Battle of Majuba. In this battle, the South African army was considered a vast underdog. Yet in the end, the British lost the battle losing 200 soldiers compared to only 2 Boers soldiers. How was this battle won? The victory was solely in the ability to aim! Although the British soldiers had more men and more ammunition, they did not aim their weapons. Aimlessness can render any weapon useless. The same is true of prayer.

Andrew Murray writes, "As long as in prayer we just pour out our hearts in a multitude of petitions, without taking time to see whether every petition is sent with the purpose and expectation of getting an answer, not many will reach the mark."

Here are a few questions to ask yourself, before you ask God:

- What is really my desire right now?
- Do I desire it in faith, expecting to receive?
- Am I now ready to place and leave it in the Father's bosom?
- Is it a settled thing between God and me that I am to have the answer?

In closing, Andrew Murray writes about faith, "Faith is nothing but the purpose of the will resting on God's word, and saying: 'I must have

believe truly is to will firmly."

So, let us answer Jesus' question of "what do you want me *to do*?" with a faithful and firm answer.

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

Day 11... THE FAITH THAT TAKES: Believe that you have received it.

Mark 11:24

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

This belief and confidence, that whatever you have asked for you have already received, comes more from God than from us. Remember the quote we were left with from yesterday: "Faith is nothing but the purpose of the will resting on God's word, and saying: 'I must have it.' To believe truly is to will firmly."

The origin of your confidence comes from leaning on God's promise... The only thing we are really doing is saying "I am claiming the promise that you, God, made!"

[2 Chronicles 6:4](#)

Keep on believing.

Yet, how do we reconcile with prayers that are not answered immediately? How we deal with silence can have serious effects on our faith. During the time that God says "wait" is an opportunity to grow as long as we do not wilt in our faith.

[Luke 8:49-50](#)

Miracles happen by faith, and we all have a measure of faith since we are disciples. During the silence of "wait" Jesus tells us to keep focusing on him, keep believing, and we will have the answer to our prayer.

As I have quoted Andrew Murray before, I'll quote again: "Let us withdraw the request, if it be not according to God's mind, or preserve till the answer come."

O LORD, TEACH US TO KEEP PRAYING!

Day 12... THE SECRET OF BELIEVING PRAYER: Have faith in God.

Mark 11:22-24

"Have faith in God,' Jesus answered. 'Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, "Go, throw yourself into the sea," and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that

Secrets and shortcuts are some of the most popular and searched for solutions to problems and growth. Often times, they are oversimplified and shallow. And other times they are spot on simple truths. I believe this to be true for this heading: The Secret of Believing Prayer... It's simple truth is, have faith in God.

As we studied yesterday, the confidence of believing prayer is totally rested on God's promise to answer. All we are really doing is saying to God, "I am claiming the promise that you have made!"

So, to grow in believing prayer, we need to grow in embracing **who** God is rather than **what** we are asking.

Andrew Murray writes, "The value of the promise depends on the promiser: it is on my knowledge of what the promiser is[,] that faith in the promise depends."

Distorted by misbelief.

It is our misbelief about who God is and His intentions on answering our prayers that hinders our prayer life. He wants us to view Him as the perfect Father, yet we get distorted by our own sin, life circumstances, our own fathers and by other people and their distorted view of God. How important is it that we study and continue growing in our knowledge of who God is??

God takes very serious what people say about him: [Jeremiah 23:30-32](#) • [Job 42:7-8](#)

Now, let's be reminded of how God wants us to view Him, especially in the practice of believing prayer.

Re-read [Matthew 7:9-11](#)

With this scripture in mind, **Is there anything in your view of God that needs to change to be more in line with truth?**

Let us embrace the God of Heaven and earth, who has placed himself as a Father to us. Let us believe that He can do anything that we can ask for or imagine!

LORD, PLEASE TEACH US TO PRAY!

Day 13... THE CURE OF UNBELIEF: Prayer and fasting.

Matthew 17:19-21

"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.'" (NKJV)

Why couldn't we do it?

Up until this point, the disciples had seen Jesus do miracle after miracle. They were given the ability to do the same and had seen miracles done at their own hands! So, what happened? How could they be full of faith in one situation, and lack faith in the next?

Well, Jesus was teaching them, and is now teaching us, that faith is an exhaustible resource. It is not a one and done deal where once you have faith, you can never lose it. Rather, faith needs to be fed in order to maintain and then to grow.

Just like we need continuous exercise to stay fit, our faith needs a lifestyle of seeing prayer answered in order to grow.

- **How does your prayer life need to change in order to see answered prayers everyday?**

Why was my prayer not answered?

We give the question above a lot of answers. But most often we resort to, "Well, it must not have been God's will." Jesus answers their question of unanswered prayer differently. Jesus did not say it wasn't God's will... Jesus said it was because of their lack of faith! "In the spiritual world failure has but one cause, the want of faith." Murray says.

Meditate on [Matthew 13:58](#) in relation to your prayer life.

- **Do you believe lack of faith plays a role in your unanswered prayers?**

Cure: Faith and Fasting.

Faith is organic and needs a lifestyle of prayer as food in order to grow.

Prayer, however, also needs fasting in order to become full grown.

Imagine hanging from a cliff with both hands. Prayer is one hand that reaches out to grasp the invisible. Fasting, then, is the remaining hand letting go of the visible.

By letting go of a physical necessity for life like food, you put yourself in a vulnerable and desperate place of dependence on God. I believe it is in this state, of vulnerable and desperate dependence on God, that faith does indeed grow!

O LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

Day 14... PRAYER AND LOVE: When you stand praying, forgive.

Mark 11:25

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

It is amazing that here Jesus points to our relationships here on earth as having an effect on our prayer life. Along with faith, forgiveness is also apart of effective prayer. For evidence of this look no further than what Peter discovered in the matter:

[1 Peter 3:7](#)

If living in a disrespectful and inconsiderate manner will hinder the prayers of a husband... how much more an unforgiving heart?

We should learn the lesson of the unmerciful servant: [Matthew 18:21-35](#)

In addition to unbelief as the reason for a feeble prayer life and unanswered prayers, consider the role a lack of forgiveness may be playing.

- **Is there anyone that you have not forgiven?**

Take some time to specifically pray for God to help you forgive.

Forgiveness means giving the right of justice (or revenge!) back to God, instead of holding on to it. ([Romans 12:19](#))

Forgiveness is not an event, but a process. Sometimes fast. Sometimes slow. Either way, God has made it clear that if you want to have an effective prayer life, forgiveness is an art that you need to excel in!

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!