

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE - PERSEVERANCE

Everything else we do in the Christian life is easier than prayer.

- D. M. Lloyd-Jones

Well, let's now at any rate come clean. Prayer is irksome.

An excuse to omit it is never unwelcome. When it is over, this casts a feeling of relief and holiday over the rest of the day. We are reluctant to begin. We are delighted to finish. While we are at prayer, but not while we are reading a novel or solving a cross-word puzzle, any trifle is enough to distract us.

- C.S. Lewis

In Matthew 6:7-8, Jesus tells us that our Heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask Him. Yet the New Testament also tells us to make our requests known to God (Phil. 4:6). If the prayer that is offered in faith is as good as answered, then why does the Bible instruct us to repeatedly bring our requests before God? Why this emphasis? Well, certainly not because God is like the unjust judge in Luke 18 and needs to be subjected to endless nagging before he will give us what we want. It is also not because God needs us to inform Him of our needs. He is God after all, and He knows our needs and desires better than we do.

For one thing, the man or woman who perseveres in bringing his case to the Lord is a man or woman who understands his or her need, who desperately wants that need met, and who believes that God is the only one who can meet it. But when we lose interest in praying for a particular request, we show that either we do not really see the full extent of our need; or that we are not really dead set on having that need met; or that we think there are other ways to meet it. Persevering prayer is a test of our faith. Also, persevering prayer is one of the principle ways in which we demonstrate our willingness to let God's will be done. When we continually put a matter that we are concerned about into God's hands, we are submitting our desires to him. Just as Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-44).

The reason God wants us to persevere in telling Him our needs & desires, is not for His sake...but for ours!

One of the keys to perseverance is to remember...to remember God's faithfulness to you in the past. We are forgetful people and in the midst of temptations or difficulties, we easily lose sight of the fact that God has brought us through trials before and He will again. In the following spiritual challenge you will be asked to recall what God has done for you in the past as you persevere in faith for the future.

PERSEVERING PRAYER CHALLENGE

Day One – Get out your journal (if you keep one) or a notebook and write down your responses to the following questions.

1. Have you ever faced a situation in which you were tempted to doubt God or question His will?
2. How did you respond to that situation? How did you see God work in that situation? What would you have done differently?
3. What current circumstances (personal or those of your family or friends) are making it difficult to persevere in trusting God?

Make this your prayer commitment for the week.

finances, job situations, marriage struggles, illness or disease, children, letting go of the past, trusting for the future, breaking an addiction...all of these are possible areas for persevering prayer...

Days Two - Six

Read one of the following passages each day and write down your observations & insights regarding perseverance.

Luke 18:1-8, Luke 22:39-44, Romans 5:1-5, James 1:1-4,
Hebrews 10:35-39, 12:1-3

After reading and reflecting on Scripture, spend a few minutes in prayer for the person or circumstance you are committed to praying for.

How to Pray:

Thank God for the privilege of coming to Him in prayer...

Pray for God's strength for all involved...

Pray for God's perspective and wisdom in the situation...

Pray for patience...

Pray for God's peace in the midst of it all...

Pray honestly about what you desire...

Pray for God's will to be done...

Record any distractions, temptations or discouragements that occur while you pray and ask God to help you persevere through them.

Day Seven

Of course we cannot expect that all issues will be resolved and all prayers answered to our satisfaction in one week. Hopefully this week has helped you to align your heart with God. Write down your feelings and insights from the past week. Be honest about your concerns, struggles, failures, doubts, etc. (God can handle it)

Ask God to lead you as to how you are to persevere in this issue in the future.