

Want a closer walk with God? Then talk with God!

Luke's introduction in today's Gospel says: "Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always, and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). Jesus' parable of "The Persistent Widow" then goes on to tell of a judge that is repeatedly approached by a poor widow, seeking justice. Initially he rejects her demands, but she repeatedly comes back to him to make this plea for justice. He eventually gives in to her request to avoid being wearied by her insistence. One can imagine that she might have used the familiarity of her presence to affect the change she desired. She just kept showing up and kept making the request.

Some may see the key lesson is to be persistent. And in part that is true. The more important part of the message one could say is to always be praying. And by the way this isn't the only place in the Bible that recommends constant prayer. For example, Apostle Paul is quoted in Thessalonians as saying that we should "pray without ceasing." Most of us pray when we want good things from God either for ourselves or for others. Some of us pray to give thanks for good things we see or good things we have received (i.e., attitude of gratitude). Some pray to acknowledge God's greatness. Some pray to ask for forgiveness and there are those times when we pray to do all of the above. But that's not the focus of today's parable. Today's parable is to pray always and then not to lose heart. In other words, pray and pray and then continue to pray some more. But one could argue there is even more to the parable. One could say that pray always means always be praying and then not lose heart is our commitment to those prayers. That is to say that we should constantly be praying and be wholehearted about doing so. But isn't this impossible? How can one be praying constantly? Perhaps the answer depends on how one prays.

As previously and perhaps simply stated, prayer is a request made to God. The way to accomplish constant prayer then is making this request in a variety and sustainable number of ways. We can say prayers out loud. We can say prayers in quiet (mentally). We can sing prayers. We can pray by meditating on specific thoughts about God (ex. Bible Passages) then study and reflect on these as they relate to our petitions. Being prayerful therefore is being in constant communication with God in a variety of forms that may be taken. Praise God. Sing about God. Think about God. Talk about (and with) God. Better relationships are often characterized by good and frequent communication. Why should this be any different regarding our relationship with God? Want to know God better? Want to have more of God in your life? Then always be praying. Want to stay emphatic about praying? Then add additional forms of prayer to keep one's prayer life vital and fresh. Want to have a closer walk with God? Then have a talk with God!

by Rodney Van Bibber