

INTRO

- As a child do you recall persistently asking your parents for something? What happened?
- Is there a time in life when you were tempted to give up on something? What helped you to persevere?

READ

Read Luke 11:1-13

REFLECT

After being asked by his disciples, Jesus teaches on prayer, uses a parable about prayer and then offers encouragement to keep on praying.

Qu: In the parable (v5-8), what is Jesus drawing our attention to? Why?

Jesus highlights the shameless persistence ('impudence') of the friend. Jesus stresses the importance of persisting in prayer in v9-10.

Qu: How does Jesus connect the point of the parable with v9-10? By using the actions of asking, seeking and knocking, what picture of persisting in prayer do you get?

To encourage us not to give up, Jesus reminds us of 2 vital truths about God as we pray.

1. GOD'S WILLINGNESS

This is a parable of *contrast* between God and the reluctant friend. Jesus wants us to persist in prayer like the friend who kept knocking, but NOT because God is like the grumpy, reluctant friend. Persisting in prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.

Qu: Do you ever feel like God is reluctant to answer your prayers? Why is it important to remember the truth of this parable highlighting God's willingness towards us?

The reality is, when we ask, seek and knock, sometimes we are praying with disordered or mistaken desires and requests.

Qu: How can we grow in praying for things in alignment with God's will? How can we pray when we are not sure what God's will is?

Because we sometimes pray amiss, Jesus further encourages us to trust in God's goodness and wisdom in answering us.

2. GOD'S GOODNESS

Qu: Rd v11-13. What is Jesus comparing God to in these verses? What's the point?

In other words, if good fathers (although sinful) know how to answer their child's requests, how much more our Heavenly Father? God knows and wants what's best for his children. He will answer our prayers accordingly.

"God will either give us what we ask or give us what we would have asked if we knew everything he knows." — Tim Keller, Prayer

Therefore, Persisting in Prayer...

- requires the security of and trust in God's goodness and willingness towards us.
- is fuelled by the confidence that God is our father and that he is inclined to give us what we need FAR MORE than the best human parents are.

Qu: How is Jesus the embodiment of God's willingness and goodness towards us?

RESPOND & PRAY

- What encouraged/challenged you the most from this discussion?
- What is God leading you to pray more persistently for?

Further Resources on Prayer:

Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship
By Kenneth Boa

Prayer: Finding the Hearts True Home
by Richard Foster

Red Moon Rising: How 24-7 Prayer is Awakening a Generation
by Pete Grieg

A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World
by Paul Miller

Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God
by Tim Keller

Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer
by Eugene Peterson