

The disciples witnessed every miracle that Jesus worked
They heard every message that He ever preached
They witnessed every deliverance and observed every prayer

Yet, they never asked Him to teach them to heal, prophecy, or do miracles. They asked, *“Lord, teach us to pray”* (Luke 11:1)

“So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.” (Luke 11:2, NKJV)

We would think that if an all-knowing, all-seeing God wanted His will to come forth on the earth then it would happen

- God Needs Our Help!
- Adam was to be God’s representative to represent God’s will on the earth
- Image – *“shadow, phantom, or illusion”* – Genesis 1:27
- *“Glory”* – *“Heavy or weighty”*, clout – Psalm 8:5
- Adam carried a lot of weight or clout
- Of course, we all know Adam failed
- God became flesh and dwelt among us enabling us to be ministers of reconciliation between God and man

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,” (1 Timothy 2:5, NKJV)

(John 1:18, NKJV)

We are the “sent” ones – representing Jesus

“So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” (John 20:21, NKJV)

Everything we do is under the authority of Jesus

- He fulfilled His part and defeated the enemy *legally*, we do our part enforcing His work, *literally* – **Psalm 110:1-3**
- We are the army of God policing a war Zone, enforcing His Law until Government Rule is established

God's plan for redeeming mankind is not a formula it is a Person

“In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;” (**John 16:26, NKJV**)

- Remember we pray to the Father in Jesus' Name
- He is interceding for us, legally permitting us to approach the Throne

Everything God can give us or do for us is based on the finished work of Jesus Christ

- We can only enter into a relationship with our Father because of His legal sacrifice
- He is our Mediator or Advocate
- It is impossible for God to relate to us any other way

Remember *intercession* means *creating a meeting*

- Christ's intercession created a meeting connecting heaven and earth
- Making His plans, purposes, and destinies a reality in the hearts of people

If we miss the God of meetings, we miss the God of the Bible

- Everything changes when people meet with God!

Perseverance in Prayer

“that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Hebrews 6:12, NKJV)

“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:”

(Hebrews 10:35–36, NKJV)

- The reaping in due time comes if we do not grow weary, become sluggish, or throw away our confidence
- We must endure and persevere if we are to receive the promises of God

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;”

(James 1:6–7, NKJV)

If we fail to receive anything from the Lord it isn't because it's not His will to provide it, but because we don't persevere in believing or praying

Persistence in prayer can mean persevering in one extended session of prayer or persevering over many sessions over an extended period

Remember Elijah prayed seven times for rain in one extended time of prayer – **1 Kings 18:41-45**

Daniel prayed for twenty-one days before he received a breakthrough in prayer – **Daniel 10**

Jesus prayed for three hours in the Garden before He broke through and was able to face the cross – **Matthew 26:36-46**

The great point is never to give up until the answer comes. . . . The great fault of the children of God is that they do not continue in prayer; they do not go on praying; they do not persevere. If they desire anything for God's glory, they should pray until they get it. Oh, how good, kind, gracious, and generous is the One with whom we have to do!

– George Mueller – Intercessor in the 1800's

- Testified that he could recall at least fifty-thousand specific answers to his prayers
- Once prayed for a man's salvation for 63 years!
- The man received Christ while standing over Mueller's grave

We prayed and persevered to purchase this building for ten years

- Worth \$800,000 – closed with \$380,000 Mortgage

We all face delays in answers to our prayers

Continued, persistent prayer is necessary

When we pray we must remember that we are not talking God into doing something

- We are not changing His will!

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” (1 John 5:14–15, NKJV)

- We are to ask for that which is in agreement with God’s revealed will in scripture
- Our persistence is not to overcome a hesitancy or reluctance on His part
- We must remember that we are dealing with an all-wise God

He does not have to think about something for a while, trying to figure out what is right, or whether or not He should give it to us

However, there are examples in scripture where God does change His mind because of someone’s intercession

- Abraham’s intercession for Sodom – **Genesis 18:20-33**
- Moses’ intercession for Israel – **Exodus 32:7-14**
- Nineveh’s repentance – **Jonah 3:4-10**
- In all of these, we see God change His mind

However, it is important to realize that God’s will and heart never changed in these situations

As a righteous and holy God, He must judge sin, yet He is also love, and as such desires to forgive and redeem

- Remember He has chosen to work through people and our intercession – (*prayers and actions*)
- When He can find someone in whom to work, His will is accomplished
- When He is unable to find someone, His will in that situation is often frustrated

In our Biblical examples, we must remember that His holiness demanded judgment, but His desire was forgiveness

- His *mind* or *plans* were changed by prayer, not His will

What, then, are the reasons for delays in answers to prayer, causing us to have to persist in intercession and faith?

- God's perfect timing is one element

Three words in the NT describe different stages of time

- Time in general
- Strategic or opportune time – window of opportunity
- Fullness of time

Jesus was born at the fullness of time – **Galatians 4:4**

- Many years after the fall
- God's infinite wisdom knows the timing for all things
- He waited until the right moment in history to send Christ to the earth

Hannah, a barren woman in Israel, waited several years for God to answer her prayers for a child – **1 Samuel 1**

- At the right time, God gave her a son – Samuel
- He became a great prophet in Israel
- God not only wanted to answer her prayer but also to meet His need for a prophet
- I'm sure she questioned the delay, but history gives us the reason

Elizabeth and Zacharias desired children for many years

- John the Baptist was born at just the right time to announce the coming of the Messiah – **Luke 1:5-25**

Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years for the fulfillment of God's promise to give them a son. They had to wait for God's perfect time – **Genesis 12:1-7; 21:1-5**

- Not only did this fulfill God's plans, but I'm sure it developed character and other qualities in them

“knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (**James 1:3–4, NKJV**)

- There is a perfect work of patience
- Waiting accomplishes something that nothing else can do

We must realize that when we are praying for God to move in the lives of others it may take some time

It may take time for God to bring someone to a level of understanding needed to change when dealing with deliverance and strongholds

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

(Colossians 4:12, NKJV)

- Maturing takes time
- Epaphras knew this
- He persevered and labored in prayers

Our intercession is also releasing the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the powers of darkness, this often takes time

“Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.” **(Daniel 10:12–13, NKJV)**

- His prayers were affecting the spiritual realm
- Angels were dispatched to answer his prayers
- The issue isn't whether or not God can overcome darkness
- He has chosen to work through people

Sometimes a miraculous answer to prayer can shatter an invisible demonic barrier

“Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”

(Acts 9:32–35, NKJV)

This is why we must persevere in prayer breaking the power of darkness and the power of God to be released and bringing many to Christ

“And he (Elijah) stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.” Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives!”

(1 Kings 17:21–23, NKJV)

- We are not told why he prayed three times
- It is yet another example of perseverance to see the power of God released!

Much of society has forgotten to persevere. . . . Few have a striving spirit like the artist Raphael. Once he was questioned, “What is your greatest painting?” He smiled, saying, “My next one.” One finds Raphael always striving to do better. This is what we need in prayer, an attitude of persistence.

– Dick Eastman – “No Easy Road”

Jesus spent entire nights in prayer to fulfill His ministry

“who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,” (Hebrews 5:7, NKJV)

- One-line prayers sometimes don’t cut it
- We think if we attend a two-hour church service once a week we’re fairly spiritual
- For most of life, including prayer “easy” doesn’t do it

*“And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet **because of his persistence** he will rise and give him as many as he needs.*

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Luke 11:5–10, NKJV)

Persistence – *Shameless audacity* – (NIV) – “*without modestly or shame*”, “*bold un-ashamedness*”

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

(Hebrews 4:16, NKJV)

- As the petitioner in **Luke 11**, we can approach our friend God at any time knowing we are accepted
- We know that He hears us when we pray according to His will – **1 John 5:14-15**

Remember God is sometimes delaying the answer to work something in us through patience and persistence – **James 1:3**

Other times it might be a matter of timing

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (Galatians 6:9, NKJV)

- Either way, we shouldn’t need to pray for the same thing again and again
- We are now waiting in faith for the answer!

Sometimes we need to pray until enough power is released to see the answer to our prayer

“Now He (Jesus) could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.”

(Mark 6:5, NKJV)

“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.” **(Matthew 17:19–21, NKJV)**

- Jesus worked miracles everywhere else He went, yet their lack of faith or belief limited Him – See **Psalm 78:41**
- The disciples were casting out demons and healing diseases everywhere, yet they couldn’t help the boy
- Both of these examples imply that there are different degrees of faith and power needed for different things

I believe this is why it takes time to get our prayers answered

- Receiving an instant miracle is far and away the exception
- Usually, it is not just a matter of asking the Father to do something
- It is a matter of releasing enough power in the Spirit to get the job done!

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20–21, NKJV)

- Exceedingly abundantly – *“more and more than”*
- So why are we often deficient?

The power source is not the problem

- *“according to the power that works in us,”*
- *“in the measure of the power which is operative in us”*
(Wuest)
- *“distribution”* – (Strong's)

How much operative power is being distributed through you?

- Remember it is the *“effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much”* – James 5:16
- Note: it doesn't say our prayer causes God to operate
- It certainly does this but that isn't what this verse is telling us

The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].
(James 5:16 AMP, Classic)

- Our prayers go to work!
- We have the same power inside of us that created the world!
- The same power that took the keys from the kingdom of darkness – We must release it!