

## 2-19-2025... Praying Through - Persistence



How many swings of the axe will it take to cut down this tree? It depends on the sharpness of the axe and the strength of the blows. But we all know it's gonna take some sweat, time and perseverance.

Recently I have seen some exciting breakthroughs from prayer. But I sense the Lord saying, *"There is so much more available if you would hunker down and keep praying until I answer or redirect"*.

### **Movement 1 Read ...**

"Our generation desperately needs to rediscover the difference between *praying for* and *praying through*. Sometimes *praying for* will get the job done, but sometimes you need to grab hold of the alter and refuse to let go until God answers." Mark Batterson

### **Luke 18:1-8.**

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.'

<sup>4</sup> For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'"

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

### **1 Kings 18:41-45**

(Context after prophesying a multi-year drought, Elijah is commanded to prophesy then pray for rain.

<sup>41</sup> And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and to drink.

And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees.

<sup>43</sup> And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times. <sup>44</sup> And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" <sup>45</sup> And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.

### **Movement 2 Reflect ...**

- Are you more like a one hit wonder in prayer or more like a dog with a bone that won't let go? Why?
- Ask Jesus to reveal several people or situations where he is inviting you to pray like Elijah or the persistent widow. Then calendar a time to pray daily. Ask Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and revelation on how to pray and perseverance to keep praying.
- Pray for your micro church to flourish in community, worship and mission.
- Pray for UGTN to become all God envisions and calls us to.

*It can happen, without even realizing. Spiritual drift from fully alive to empty. Spiritual sleepwalking from abiding in Jesus, to drifting along absent minded of God.*

Life gets hectic, your focus gets distracted, you get pre-occupied with yourself, and boom you skip your God times (quiet time or devotional time). You don't engage your bible, your prayers stop. Gratitude shrinks, and we move from feeling like daughters & sons to acting like orphans.

You still belong to God and your relationship will always be solid. As a Father, God will always love you and your adoption is permanent.

But your sense of intimacy, union, oneness. The fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, self control... Galatians 5:22-23) begins to fade and be replaced by the fruits of selfishness.

Jot down 3 words that describe what that feels like \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

For me, I began to feel selfish, cranky and vulnerable.

An important skill in walking with Jesus is learning to return to Him quickly and completely. With confession and repentance and desire to be restored, the flow of the Spirit's power, and guidance and leadership is quickly restored.

We can return to God, trusting in his heart and goodness.

### **Movement 1 Reflect on these passages.**

Isaiah 55:7

“let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him **return to** the Lord, that he may have

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought.

<sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

<sup>4</sup> “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

compassion on him, and **to** our **God**, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Jeremiah 24:7

“I will give them a heart **to** know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their **God**, for they shall **return to** me with their whole heart.”

Hosea 12:6

“So you, by the help of your **God, return**, hold fast **to** love and justice, and wait continually for your **God**.”

Joel 2:13

“and rend your hearts and not your garments.” **Return to** the LORD your **God**, for he is gracious and merciful, slow **to** anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.”

1 John 1:9

<sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

In your past experience, what 3 words would you use to describe how it feels when you confess / repent and return to God. Jot them here \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

After committing adultery with Bathsheba, and having her husband killed in battle, David became hard – hearted and resisted returning to God. Only when God sent Nathan the prophet to share an amazing word picture story did David’s heart soften to repent. You can read the story in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.

Psalms 51 is David’s journal entry of his return to God.

**Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.**

<sup>2</sup> *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!*

<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

<sup>6</sup> Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

<sup>7</sup> *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup> *Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right<sup>tr</sup> spirit within me.*

<sup>12</sup> **Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

<sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.

<sup>16</sup> For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;

you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup> **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart,** O God, you will not despise.

## Movement 2

⇒ Spend a few minutes inviting God to lead you in confession and returning.

## Movement 3

⇒ Pray for your 3 VIP (very important people) who you would love to see come to know Jesus as rescuer and leader. Pray for opportunities to bless and serve and love on them. Pray God opens their eyes to his

goodness and what Jesus did for them on the cross.

⇒ Pray that you grow quick to return if you wander and that your life will shine and show what a difference Jesus can make.

⇒ Pray for your neighborhood, and city, and our country.

⇒ Pray as led for what's going on around the world.

### Bonus...

Check out this short video about why God described David as a man after his own heart in Acts 13:22.

<https://youtu.be/iu4kwohdIE>