

# Effective Prayer

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### 3. It is a persevering prayer

*“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:1-8*

Perseverance is holding on and never giving up even in the face of opposition and apparent failure. Perseverance is a mark of faith.

The above scripture says that Jesus told his disciples a parable to the effect that men should pray always and not to give up. Jesus told them the story of a widow who asked a judge for justice. The judge refused. The woman did not give up but continually repeated her plea until the judge hearkens to her plea. And the Bible makes us understand that Jesus wants us to be likewise in our prayers.

What are some of the attributes of perseverance? It is:

- Focused: it is concentrated on the object of prayer.
- Incessant: it continually repeats and is not rebuffed by opposition or failure.
- Systematic: it is methodical.
- Unyielding: It is never gives up.
- Patient: It waits for the answer.

The Bible is full of stories of men and women who persevered in prayer and God's response to their prayer. My favorite example is Jacob.

#### **Jacob: Gen 32:24-28**

*“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed”. (Gen 32:24-28)*

This story shows us some qualities of perseverance.

1. It wrestled. It did not accept a “no” even though it came from an angel. He fought and he prevailed.
2. Even when wounded, he never gave up.
3. He was stubborn in his prayer.

Perseverance in prayer changed his name and his destiny. He prevailed with God and with man.

### **Bartimaeus: Mark 10:46-52**

*“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: **but he cried the more a great deal**, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way” (Mark 10:46-52)*

Bartimaeus was a blind man. He seemed to be a famous and popular blind man because he was the only blind man mentioned by name in the healings of Jesus. The others were just called blind men. One day Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and the crowds that always followed him. When Bartimaeus heard it, he started calling out to Jesus for help. Note what happened next. The people around him began to charge him to keep quiet. But the Bible says he cried out even louder. That attracted the attention of Jesus. Jesus healed him.

Now the most important lesson from this passage is that Bartimaeus did not give up even when his friends and those around told him to keep quiet. Have you been in situations when dear friends, family and fellow Christians try to explain away your failure and disappointment so you would keep quiet? Have you been in a situation where people tried to make you accustomed to your blindness instead of calling out to Jesus with a louder voice for help? Bartimaeus could not be hushed. He could not be stopped. He cried out with a louder voice. *“Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”* and Jesus heard him. This is perseverance.

### **The Woman of Canaan: Matt 15:22-28**

*“And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”*

This is another moving story. This woman came to Jesus to ask him a favor. Jesus kept silent. She never stopped. His disciples interceded on her behalf so they can have peace.

Jesus refused explaining he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. She did not give up. She went o and cried out unto him and then Jesus responded and said it was not good for the food of the children to be given to dogs. She accepted that fact but added that crumbs from the table were meant for dogs. The test was over. Look at what Jesus said “*O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt*” What can we learn from this woman?

1. Sometimes our prayers can meet with silence but we should persevere.
2. Even when we have a reason to be offended, let us not loose sight of the object of our prayers. Persevere.

Her prayer was answered.

### **The two friends: Luke 11:5-8**

*“And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.”* (Luke 11:5-8)

This is another example of perseverance. A man went to his friend for help. But his friend refused to help because he was already in bed. But this man refused to go but continued to knock. Jesus said that if his friend will not answer him because of their friendship, he will answer him because of his importunity or perseverance.

Therefore friend, never give up. Ask, seek, knock and if necessary storm heaven. Your miracle is on the way. Hang on and never let go. You will be glad you did.

***“He prays not at all, who does not press his plea. Cold prayers have no claim on heaven, and no hearing in the courts above. Fire is the life of prayer, and heaven is reached by flaming importunity rising in an ascending scale”*** E. M. Bounds

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### **About the author**

**John Abraham Godson (Godson Onyekwere)** is a Nigerian serving as a missionary in Poland, Eastern Europe for the past 13 years. He is the international director of Pilgrim Mission International. The main vision of his ministry is “Revival” which comes through fervent and persevering intercessory prayer and bold uncompromising preaching of the Word of God. He also serves as the chair for the Lausanne Intercession Working Group in Eastern Europe/Eurasia, and International facilitator for the Network of Nigerian Missionaries Overseas. Together with his wife Aneta and 4 children, they make their home in Lodz, Central Poland.