



TAKEAWAY THOUGHT: God doesn't want you to give up on prayer; He wants you to keep on asking

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 150:6, Psalm 100:4-5, 1 John 1:9, Philippians 4:6, Luke 18:1-8

INTRO

It can be really annoying when you're asked the same thing over and over again. Don't you think? Don't you think? I can tell you that, as a parent, being asked, "*Are we almost there?*" multiple times on any trip is frustrating. Have you ever eaten with someone that eats faster than you that constantly asks you if you're going to finish your food? I hate that, except when I'm the one doing the asking. Imagine someone's asking you for your phone number, you make it clear you're not interested, but they keep asking. That's frustrating, annoying, and maybe harassment. Maybe. You may begin to view them as a stalker. Or maybe you have a little sibling that constantly asks you if you'll play with them. You just want to chill, but they always want to be in your room or dragging you to the park, and their persistent asking never ends.

Persistent asking has its place, though. There are situations when persistence pays off. I have had success with persistent asking and even being persistently asked. I have gotten hired because I followed up and asked if I could have a job. It showed greater interest than others going for that same job. I have become a better friend by persistently asking my friends to help me understand how they feel. My food has become better, because I have kept asking for more and more grated parmesan at Olive Garden. Persistence has really paid off in my life.

TENSION

Because of human interactions and the way persistence makes us feel, it has gotten a bad reputation. We view persistence as annoying, frustrating, and as an inconvenience when people persistently come for us. Aren't there just some people, when they reach out to you, that you just want to throw your head back and sigh? It is most unfortunate that we project our own feelings and ways onto God and imagine that He does the same with us. *big sigh* "Oh, great, it's [insert your name] again. What does he want this time?" Do you ever feel like that's how God feels about you? I honestly

have. I worry in my heart that He gets annoyed with me, even though in my brain, I know it's silly.

TRUTH

We are talking about prayer tonight, and I want to tell you something important right up front. **Persistent prayer doesn't annoy God; it makes Him happy.**

Let's back up a minute, though, and define prayer. What is prayer? There are probably definitions of prayer. I think the simplest definition is that it is seeking God through conversation. You could be seeking something from Him, making a request of Him. You could be seeking an answer to a question or a problem in your life. You could be seeking Him for comfort for your hurting heart. You could be seeking to tell Him how awesome you think He is and how much you love Him. You could just be seeking to be near Him, to be in His presence. Whatever the reason is behind your prayer, you're seeking God out to speak to Him.

We mystify prayer into this ceremonial process that doesn't make sense, and then we don't do it as often as we should, because we think we don't know how to pray. And we're not alone! The most famous prayer is called *The Lord's Prayer*, and Jesus offered it when His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. People have asked me a lot or expressed that they don't know how. But you do know because you know how to have a conversation. Sure, you may be awkward in conversation. I can be. God doesn't care. Sometimes there are weird pauses in your conversations, because you don't know what to say, or you lose your train of thought. God's not going anywhere. He'll still be listening when you figure out what you want to say. You can be completely you because you're talking to the One that made you that way!

The Bible tells us that we can seek God any number of ways. In fact, it not only tells us that we can pray, it tells us we should pray!

Ways We Can Pray:

Praising Him

Psalm 150:6 (ESV): Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

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