

Praying for Your Family

The power and mystery of prayer - God changing you to change your family

Chapter 2

Luke 18:1-8

Week 2

GOAL: Give Christians hope for their families that will enable them to persist in praying for them and not grow weary.

- See lives changed because of persistence in prayer.

INTRODUCTION:

Praying for your family can be one of the most difficult tasks to which we give ourselves. There can be several reasons for this.

Illustration:

Tell about someone in your family who seemed like it would be impossible to see their lives changed. If there is no one in your family, tell about someone in another family that took a long time for someone's prayers to be answered.

Thoughts:

1. We know our families so well that it often seems impossible that God would work in their lives.
2. We wonder if God really does care about our family situation.
3. We become weary when we don't see immediate answers to our prayers.

This is why Jesus spoke the parable about persisting in our prayers. He knew our weaknesses. He knew that we would become weary.

Define Prayer:

Praying for your family begins with **Praying**.

- If we are to pray effectively for our families, then we must have a Biblical understanding of prayer.
- Prayer is intimacy with God. (Matthew 6:5-8)
- Jesus taught His disciples to find a quiet place where they could be alone with their Heavenly Father and share the deep things of their hearts.
- Prayer is the communion of two hearts – the heart of God and the heart of man. When we become a people after God's heart, He will do extraordinary things in our lives and families.

Illustration:

Tell about a time when you had very intimate fellowship with God in prayer.

BODY OF MESSAGE:

I. The primary purpose of this parable is to encourage followers of Jesus to persist in prayer and not to grow weary, not to give up in their petitions as Jesus encouraged them in Luke 18:1.

2. The question is, “Why do we need to persistently pray?” Is the purpose of such praying to change God? In order to answer this question, there are several basic principles about prayer that we must remember.

- First, the purpose of prayer is to grow in our love and knowledge of God. You grow in your love for God as you spend time with Him.

ILLUSTRATION: Share about how you have grown in your love for your wife and/or children because of time spent with them.

- Second, He is a good and just God (Matt. 7:7-11).

ILLUSTRATION: Give one example of God showing His goodness to you.

- Third, because we know the nature and character of God is good, then we understand that Jesus was not comparing God to the unrighteous judge. He was contrasting them. This is very important to know, in order to understand what Jesus was teaching.
- If God is good and righteous, and the judge is not just and did not care about people, then why do we need to persist in prayer?
- When we pray, we come to know God as a God who loves us and loves our families. It is crucial to our prayer lives to know that God loves our families more than we love them.

ILLUSTRATION: Share a brief story of how God displayed His love to your family.

3. When we persist in prayer, God changes us. We pray because we think that our family members will be changed. However, God is interested in changing us.

- When we pray, we are sharing our heart’s desires with God and allowing Him to share His heart with us.
- The more we come into His presence with our needs, the more we come to know Him and the more that our will lines up with His will. We are changed.

ILLUSTRATION:

Tell the story of Sammy’s mother as he wrote in *Praying for Your Family*. Share how God changed him before he changed his mother.

4. The parable concludes with a question. “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the Earth?”

- Faith at the end of the parable is directly related to persistence at the beginning of the parable.
- Faith grows in a heart that has come to know God in His love.
- Faith grows in a heart that has been changed.
- God is looking for a person of faith. It does not matter the economic status, the racial makeup, the cultural uniqueness, or the national identity. God does not look on the outward, but rather He looks upon the heart.

ILLUSTRATION: Share the story of a person who waited by faith for a long time before seeing the answer to their prayer. If you do not know someone, then share the story of Sammy’s grandmother as he told it in *Praying for Your Family*.

CONCLUSION: *Ask people in your congregation if they have grown weary in praying for their families. Ask them to renew their vision and commitment to pray for them.*