

The Power of Nothing Produces the Power in Prayer

Introduction

- The Bible talks much about prayer. We hear much about prayer.
 - Prayer crosses most religious and cultural boundaries.
 - The very fact that we pray is evidence to God's existence.
- In all this talk about prayer, Is there a right way and a wrong way to pray? How can we pray correctly? How can we pray effectively? Where does our power in prayer come from?
- Praying can be a challenge at times.
 - (You may struggle with prayer like I do.)
 - Finding the time, taking the time, learning to pray effectively, and actually following through and doing it.
- What challenges have you experienced?*
- What tends to happen is:
 - We pray some on good days but we typically **pray more** on bad days.
 - We pray some before we have a need but typically **pray more** when we have a need.
 - We pray some before the emergency but we typically **pray more** during the emergency.
 - Why is this case?

Read Luke 11:1-13

- Jesus is responding to the request to teach his disciples how to pray in verse 1
- He gives them the model prayer in verses 2-4
- Then he tells them a story to teach a couple powerful and practical truths about prayer.

(Important Context note)

-Jesus never says that God is this friend.

-God is not this grumpy, sleepy friend who is hesitant to hear and answer. Who must be begged to meet a need.

-This is so important to understand in our passage.

-Otherwise it creates an incorrect view of God.

-I use to think that Jesus was relating God to this friend.

-The key is to remember that God is not like this friend but is our Heavenly Father who wants to hear from his child. (Everything is in direct contrast to this friend)

-He is arguing from the lesser to the greater.

-If a human friend will do this then how much more will your heavenly father do for you.

*Jesus reveals a very powerful principle for effective prayer. It is a principle that does something **to us** personally and then does something **for us** in prayer. The principle is the power of nothing in prayer.*

1. He Seeks Because He Has Nothing

A. He has nothing to offer his friend.

-In eastern culture hospitality is huge. He had an obligation to provide food for his friend. But he had nothing to give.

-*So what does he do?* Goes to one who does have bread and the ability to give it.

B. The power of nothing produces the power in prayer.

-The power in prayer comes from the realization that you have nothing.

-Nothing to give. Nothing you can do. (Helpless)
Don't know what to do or where to go.

-When something must be done but you can't do it, this is the power of nothing and it does something to your prayer life.

-It is when we have nothing to offer that we will seek God and seek Him the most.

-If we think we have it then we will not pray like we should. Or if we don't care enough we will not seek God like we should.

This man starts to seek because he has nothing to offer his friend. The power of nothing produces two important truths about prayer: boldness in prayer and persistence in prayer.

2. He is Bold in Prayer because he has Nothing.

-This man is bold by going to his friend's house at midnight and banging on the door.

-It is the most inconvenient time possible and to even ask for something.

*"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and **access with confidence** by the faith of him."*
(Ephesians 3:11-12)

-Why can we come with boldness to God?

-Believers have access to God who is a loving father.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

-Boldness is not pride or arrogance. Boldness is not a demand. Boldness is not irreverent.

- Boldness is knowing that God is there, that He is ready to hear, He wants to hear, and wants to answer.
- Boldness is knowing that God is teaching us to pray this way.

It took the power of nothing to produce the boldness in prayer that God is looking for. It was not only boldness that the power of nothing produced. Notice that it also produced a persistence and it was His persistence that got the request answered. God is teaching us a powerful truth that we need to apply to our lives.

3. He is Persistent in Prayer because he has Nothing.

- It was because of his "Importunity"- boldness, without shame.
- Shameless boldness, shameless audacity, shameless persistence.

*-Have you ever **not** asked someone for something because you didn't want to bother them?*

- Persistence can be hindered by not wanting to bother someone, seem like a burden, show weakness.
- A great salesman closes because of persistence.
- God is wanting us to have bold persistence in our relationship with Him.

-What provoked this shameless persistence? What caused him to be so persistent? What motivated this man to keep knocking and asking?

-The Power of Nothing

- He had one objective and could not accomplish it on his own. He would not stop until he got it. (Boldness)
- He knows he has nothing and he knows his friend has what he needs.

- The power of nothing produced the persistence in prayer and the persistence in prayer got the answer.
- When we realize we have nothing and God has it all, only then do we start to pray like God wants us to pray.

-*Why do you think Jesus teaches us persistence in prayer?*

- We understand God hears us the first time. *Why keep praying the same thing?*
- I have struggled with this in my years growing as a Christian. Why do I need to keep asking for something if I have already asked for it. Especially since God is all-knowing and has promised to hear and answer our prayers.

1. Persistence in prayer strengthens our relationship with God.

- He wants us to have a real relationship with Him.
Have you ever considered that there are times that God will allow situations into our lives to bring us to the point of having nothing to offer. Having no way out. Having no other alternatives.
- Having no other way is when we realize Christ is the only way. (Give the Gospel)

2. Persistence in prayer overcomes our apathy not God's perceived insensitivity.

- Apathy is when we barely pray, just don't care, go through the motions.
- Apathy is a faith killer.

3. Persistence in prayer changes our hearts and minds.

- Helps us understand how serious we are:
 - If we are not serious we will ask 1-2 times then forget. Like a kid who sees a

to say they have to have and then says nothing else about it.

-Helps us learn how to express the intensity of the need.

4. Persistence in prayer keeps us dependent on Him.

-Keeps us seeking Him consistently.

-God is teaching us not to only come in emergencies but to pray from the power of nothing in normal prayer life.

-Praying better means knowing God better.

-Praying better means loving God more

-Praying better means seeing God work more in our lives.

-If persistence finally paid off with the reluctant friend, how much more will persistence pay off with a loving Heavenly Father.

-Keep knocking long enough and he will answer. Keep asking long enough and he will give it to you.

-*"Persistence in prayer is not an attempt to change God's mind but to get ourselves to the place where He can trust us with the answer."* Phillips Brooks

Conclusion/Application

-When it comes to prayer maybe you say:

-You don't know where to start. I struggle with prayer. It has been a while since I prayed.

-Just pray what you got!

- Don't start with where you want to be. This produces discouragement and defeat.
- Start where you are and make consistent baby steps to get where you want to be.

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