

NEW CITY DAILY DEVOTIONAL FOR WEEK OF 8/3/2020-8/7/2020

The following content is based on the message on 8/2/20 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. It is not meant to be a full synopsis, but rather a resource to help you analyze and apply the main ideas. To use this devotional effectively, please listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

MONDAY // THE PERSISTENCE OF PRAYER

Read Matthew 7:7-12. Jesus gives us a command and promise that is easily misunderstood. It may seem as if we can pray for anything and then receive it. However, your experience with prayer may tell you otherwise. We will get into more about our desires later in the week, but first let's try to understand the point that Jesus is making here. He commands us to continually ask, seek, and knock. Jesus wants us to persistently pursue Him.

We need to be reminded to never stop praying.

- *How would you describe your prayer life? What would you like to see changed about your prayer life?*
- *Take a moment to think about what it could look like to pray persistently or continually. It might feel overwhelming to do that, but what is one step that you could try to do today to pray more?*

TUESDAY // PURSUING PRAYER WITH PASSION

Read Luke 11:5-13. Luke records the same teaching of Jesus that Matthew records, except Luke includes another story to introduce Jesus' teaching. This story highlights someone pursuing what he wants with persistence and passion. Again, Christians should seek after God in the same manner. Chances are, you have pursued something that you are passionate about. That may have been a job or a relationship. If there is something that you are passionate about, then you pursue it. Similarly, God is asking you to pursue Him in a way that reflects how passionate you are about Him.

We must pursue God all the time.

- *How did the first step go toward praying more continually yesterday?*
- *The amount of prayer in your life may suggest how passionate you are about your relationship with God. What could you do to become more passionate about your relationship with Jesus?*

WEDNESDAY // NOT LOSING HEART

Read Luke 18:1-8. Jesus tells His disciples this story so that they "would not lose heart." This persistent widow continually sought after justice. The judge heard her request and granted it. Jesus says that our relationship with prayer should follow the same pattern. We should be persistent in our petition to God. At first, it may feel like the answer to prayer rests on your own effort. If you are persistent and passionate,

then Jesus has to answer you, right? But what if the motives from which you are asking God to give you the request aren't really Godly motives at all?

We don't have to lose heart because our prayers should be based on our faith in God, not faith in our request.

- *Reflect on a time when God answered your prayer by saying "No." How did that impact your faith in God?*
- *What are some ways that God has proven Himself faithful to you even though He said, "No?"*

THURSDAY // THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

Read James 4:2-4. Often our prayers are not answered as originally desired because we do not share God's perspective in knowing what is ultimately a good gift for us. We are especially tempted to think of the values of this world (e.g., health and wealth) rather than spiritual values. Ultimately, our prayers should be about aligning our desires with Jesus. When we seek more of Jesus, we will find more of him.

In the *Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis says this: "It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

While we are redeemed, the human nature doesn't understand the things of God.

- *Reflect on a time when you prayed consistently for something. How did you feel like your relationship with Jesus grew?*
- *Set a timer for five minutes (or more). Spend this time in silence becoming more aware of the presence of Jesus.*

FRIDAY // THE PERSON OF PRAYER

Read John 14:12-21. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus asks us to pray by expressing our desires. But the key is not that we can get whatever we want. The key is that our desires should be aligned with God's will. When we take the time to align ourselves with God, then our desires should reflect that. When we pray in Jesus' name, we aren't using magic words to bless our desires. When we pray in Jesus' name, we are actually submitting ourselves to a person. We submit our prayers to Jesus because we are seeking to live out of union with Him.

When we pray in Jesus' name, we are praying "For the glory of the father and the good of others, Amen"

- *How can you pray for something specific while submitting yourself to the will of God?*
- *Reflect on the usual tone of your prayers. How do you need to change toward a more humble posture?*