

## Luke 18:1-8

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray at all times and not lose heart: <sup>2</sup>“In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected men. <sup>3</sup>And there was a widow in that town who kept appealing to him, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’

<sup>4</sup>For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect men, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice. Then she will stop wearing me out with her perpetual requests.’ ”

<sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “Listen to the words of the unjust judge. <sup>7</sup>Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He continue to defer their help?

<sup>8</sup>I tell you, He will promptly carry out justice on their behalf. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?”

Berean Study Bible

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1

### Learning at the Master's feet. Luke 18:1-8

A lesson about prayer. 18:1

Prayer requires action. 1 “pray at all times”

Prayer requires attitude. 1 “not lose heart”

A lesson about persistence. 18:2-6

Pray what is consistent with God's character. 3, 7, 8 “justice”

Pray what is contrast to God's enemy. 6b “the unjust judge”

A lesson about promise. 18:7-8a

Fulfilled promises wait for the right time. 7b “continue to defer”

Fulfilled promises come at the right time. 8a “He will promptly carry out justice”

A lesson about patience. 18:8b

This world has limited time. 8b “when the Son of Man comes”

This world has limited faith. 8b “will He find faith on earth”

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2

### Back 2 Basics. Luke 18:1-8

2 Priorities. 18:1 “need”

My priority need for prayer. 1b “pray at all times”

My priority need for perseverance. 1b “not lose heart”

2 Perennials. 18:2-5

My perennial need for persistence. 3 “kept appealing”

My perennial need for patience. 5 “perpetual requests”

2 Permanents. 18:6-8

My permanent need for power. 7 “God will bring justice”

My permanent need for promise. 7-8a “He will”

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3

**Pray prayers that get answers. Luke 18:1-8**

A positive plan. 18:1

An outward expression. 1 “pray at all times”

An inward impression. 1 “not lose heart”

A negative parable. 18:2-6

An illustration of what God is not like. 2-6 “the unjust judge”

An illustration of what I can be like. 2-6 “a widow who kept appealing”

An affirmative process. 18:7-8a

Pray so big only God can answer. 7a “God will”

Pray for God’s character. 7a “justice”

Pray without ceasing. 7 “day and night”

Pray until you have an answer. 7-8 “defer... prompt”

Pray faithfully, even to the Second Coming. 8 “faith”

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**Practical prayers. Luke 18:1-8**

What is the prayer God answers?

God answers according to His nature. 7a “justice”

God answers according to our requests. 7 “cry out to Him day and night”

When does God answer prayer?

God answers prayer immediately. 7-8 “not defer... prompt”

God answers prayer gradually. 7a “bring about”

Who is the pray-er God answers?

God answers the ones who are dependent. 1 “not lose heart”

God answers the ones who are faithful. 8 “faith on earth”

### **Praying with purpose. Luke 18:1-8**

Prayer's first purpose is relational.

Prayer is to develop my dependence on God. 1 "need to pray"

Prayer is to develop my appreciation of God. 3, 7, 8 "justice"

Prayer is to develop my walk with God. 7 "continue to defer"

Prayer's second purpose is personal.

Prayer is to develop my resilience. 1 "not lose heart"

Prayer is to develop my endurance. 7 "day and night"

Prayer is to develop my faith. 8 "will He find faith"

Prayer's third purpose is practical.

Prayer is to develop my insight. 7a "God will bring about justice"

Prayer is to develop my understanding. 7-8 "God will"

Prayer is to develop my timing. 7-8 "defer... promptly... find"

### **Praying for answers. Luke 18:1-8**

The consistency of my prayers. 18:1

When I need to pray. 1 "pray at all times" 1 Thessalonians 5:17

How I need to pray. 1 "not lose heart" Matthew 6:7-8

The content of my prayers. 18:2-5

The provision for which I pray. 3 "justice"

The protection for which I pray. 3 "adversary"

The conclusion of my prayers. 18:6-8

Praying takes time. 7-8 "defer... prompt"

Praying is a test. 8 "find faith"

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### **Other possible titles**

Why won't God heal me?

Why do the innocent suffer?

Prayer changes things. Or does it?

How long am I supposed to pray if God continues to ignore me?  
Keys that unlock answers to prayer  
Help for those whose prayers remain unanswered  
Unexpected, and unwanted, answers to prayer  
If God answers prayer, why are we in this mess?  
How to put power into your prayer  
How to have a conversation with God, when He is silent.  
Do you want more answers to your prayers?  
Pray powerful prayers  
When God says 'No'  
Prayer that reaches God  
How to twist God's arm  
How to make God listen  
How to get your prayers answered  
Keep the faith  
Faith and prayer for the long haul  
Follow-on from faith  
Honouring God in a God-dishonouring world  
Persistence pays off  
For how much longer do I have to put up with this?

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## **Quotes and illustrations**

Quotes about God hears our prayers

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are inclined to their cry.  
Psalm 34:15

Know that the LORD has set apart the godly for Himself; the LORD hears when I call to Him. Psalm 4:3

In my distress I called upon the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice, and my cry for His help reached His ears. Psalm 18:6

He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them.  
Psalm 145:19

The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous. Proverbs 15:29

<sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your inner room, shut your door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup>And when you pray, do not babble on like pagans, for they think that by their many words they will be heard. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Matthew 6:6-8

We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does listen to the one who worships Him and does His will. John 9:31

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know how we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words. Romans 8:26

#### Quotes about answered prayer

Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him, and He will do it. Psalm 37:4, 5

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7

So if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Matthew 7:11

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we might ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we already possess what we have asked of Him. 1 John 5:14, 15

So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. Truly, truly, I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. John 16:22-24

Jesus says you will have problems, and you will be in need, until He comes again. Only then, will you not ask Him anything. You will have everything you need when He returns. But, as long as we are in this world, we will have to ask for what we need. This is proof of our inability to sustain ourselves

We are like a spiritual transformer. Spiritual power has to be converted to physical power just as radio signals have to be converted into frequencies audible to our physical ear. You don't hear the actual signal broadcast by the radio station, but rather a signal that has been picked up by a receiver and translated into an audible sound. For a person to say that there aren't any radio signals where they are, just because they cannot hear them, is not true. They are there, but they are on a higher frequency than the human ear can hear. They have to be "demodulated" into a lower frequency which we can hear. This is the way our answers to prayer come. God moves in the spirit world and gives us our answer by faith, and we convert it into a physical reality through our actions. Andrew Wommack

#### Quotes about delayed answers to prayer

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven...

2 Chronicles 7:14

Pray without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Daniel 9 and 10. In chapter 9, Daniel prayed a prayer, and while he was still praying, his answer to prayer came in the form of Gabriel giving him “skill and understanding” in the thing he desired. That’s a quick answer to prayer, but in verse 23, Gabriel says that God had sent him forth at the beginning of his prayer. God moved instantly, but it took about 3 minutes for the answer to appear in the physical realm. In Daniel chapter 10, he prayed another prayer, and his answer took three full weeks to manifest. Andrew Wommack

#### Quotes about ‘unanswered’ prayer

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. Psalm 66:18

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favour and honour. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. Psalm 84:11

Whoever turns his ear away from hearing the law, even his prayer is detestable. Proverbs 28:9

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray at all times and not lose heart. Luke 18:1

Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me. Yet not My will, but Yours be done. Luke 22:42

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6, 7

But he must ask in faith, without doubting, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded person, unstable in all his ways. James 1:6-8

And when you do ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may squander it on your pleasures. James 4:3

Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as a delicate vessel, and with honour as fellow heirs of the gracious gift of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. 1 Peter 3:7

Beloved, do not let this one thing escape your notice: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 2 Peter 3:8

God is eternal and does not measure time as we do. His timetable is not the same as ours. He knows, far better than we do, when is the right time for our prayers to be answered.

Remember the experience of Abraham. God promised a son to Abraham. But Abraham and Sarah became impatient when Sarah didn't bear him a son. So, he took his wife's servant as his wife. Abraham tried to solve the problem in his own way and the result was disastrous. God did answer his prayer, but at the time when He saw it was best for Abraham. Hebrews 6:13-15

We all want our children to be happy, but not at the expense of their health. That is why we don't give them candy at every meal. And we want them to hold down a good job. But we won't do that job for them. This is because learning responsibility and the consequences of bad decisions are much better for them in the long run.

This is my favourite reason for why God says "no" but we so often forget to consider it. Because He is good and knows what's eternally best for us, and doesn't want us to settle, God sometimes says no or closes a door because He has something better for us that we haven't even thought to ask for. He is One who can do "immeasurably more" than all we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Trust His timing. Trust His "no." And trust His idea of what is eternally best for you. He really is a good father.

Cindi McMenamin

The Apostle Paul, who was one of the most faith filled people who has walked this earth, prayed three times to be healed of an affliction and God told Him, "His grace was sufficient, that when we are weak He is strong in us." Sometimes God allows things for a greater good. An example of this is Joni Eareckson Tada. She is one of the most inspiring Christ followers that I know...she has such deep abiding faith and God has used her quadriplegia and disability to help millions of people around the world. I was astounded to hear that people have actually said to her, if she only had more faith she would be healed. We can pray, asking in faith and believing with all of our hearts that God can and will heal us, but at times, He doesn't choose to heal in this life because He has a greater plan and purpose for our illness or infirmity...what the enemy has meant for our harm...what the enemy hoped would be a stumbling block to our faith, God will turn around and redeem and use for our good and His glory.

Debbie Kay

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## Commentary

Most frequently found words in Luke 18:1-8 are: Will, 6 | Justice, 4 | God, 3 | Fear, Give, Judge, Men, Respect, Town, Widow, 2.

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## Music and songs

### Songs about prayer

Before You I kneel / a worker's prayer, Ot 98  
Down in the valley to pray  
I'm praying for you, Ot 33  
Prayer (Petra)  
Standing in the need of prayer, FE 18  
What a friend we have in Jesus ...to the Lord in prayer, H 421/C 279  
Whisper a prayer in the morning, CWH 85  
With a prayer... Love Incarnate, Ot 38  
You must pray every day

### Songs about God hearing us

A quiet place, FE 74  
Great is Your faithfulness, H 73  
Just a closer walk with Thee, FE 79  
Whispering hope, CWH 21

### Songs about persistence / endurance

A mighty fortress, H 84  
Does Jesus Care? H 238  
God can do anything, but fail, CWH 45  
God on the mountain,  
Higher ground, CWH 87  
I am not skilled to understand, C 209  
I know who holds tomorrow, CWH 84  
If God be for us, H 733  
Is your burden heavy... Reach out to Jesus, CWH 2  
It's not an easy road, CWH 52  
Jesus keep me near the cross, H 665  
Leaning on the everlasting arms  
Something good is going to happen to you, CWH 7  
The battle belongs to the Lord, SiS 630  
We'll talk it over in the by-and-by, CWH 78

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## Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. In what ways are the prayers you pray in good times different from the prayers you pray in hard times?
2. Read Matthew 6:8. God already knows what we are going to pray. But list some advantages of praying anyway.



3. This (Lk.18:1-8) is not the only time Jesus endorsed prayers that nag God (Lk.11:5-10). Why should we repeat the same prayers?
  4. A repeated theme in this text is “justice” (v3, 5, 7, 8). Why would God answer a prayer for justice? What are some downsides of asking for justice; and is there a better outcome to seek?
  5. How can you tell if the answer to your prayer is “No” or “Yes, but later”? What do you do in these circumstances?
  6. What are some things I can do that might make someone say, “You are an answer to prayer”?
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