

# Keys to Experiencing God

## Part 4—Persevering Prayer

July 13, 2014

**One key to experiencing God is to  
Pray by Faith, with Persistence, according to the Will of God.**

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### Praying by Faith

#### Matthew 17:14-21

- When the disciples were helpless in healing a demon-possessed boy. “Why could we not cast it out?”

#### Matthew 17: 19-20

- Bring the small faith you have, and nothing will be impossible

#### Mark 9:16-29

- The same story from the perspective of the father of the same son

#### Mark 9:23-24

- Bring the faith you have in prayer, and then ask for more where you lack

Andrew Murray wrote, “There must be a certain amount of faith before there can be prayer, but greater faith is the result of prayer.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Luke 17: 5-6

- Jesus continues to bring up the issue of a small seed of faith
  - Mustard seed grows into a large tree (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 13)
  - Farmer spreads his seed on good soil and it produces a large crop (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8)
    - One seed is related to faith, and the other to receiving the Word

#### Romans 10:17

- “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (NKJV)

#### Mark 11:22-24

- Get the focus off the size of the mountain and onto the God of that mountain!

**We need to stop measuring our faith by the size of the problem, and instead take what faith we have and employ it!**

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### Praying with Persistence

#### Luke 18: 1-8

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, (Radford, VA, Wilder Publications, 2008), 49

- If even the unjust judge relents, not by merit, but out of the repetition and persistence, how much more will God!

### **Matthew 15: 21-18**

- Jesus connects faith to persistence and answered prayer

### **Matthew 7:7-8**

- Persistence doesn't stop, won't let up, and grows in aggressiveness when thwarted — instead of diminishing!

### **When I'm assured that I will receive, does persistence sit back and rest? NO!**

### **I Kings 18:41-45b**

- Elijah is sure of receiving — he is confident before Ahab, yet he persists in prayer!

### **James 5:7**

- A farmer is still on duty, plants, waters, protects, and watches over his crops — but also waits patiently.

Andrew Murray on James 5:7 — “Of course the husbandman longs for his harvest. But he knows it must have its full term of sunshine and rain, so he had plenty of patience. A child so often wants to pick the half-ripe fruit, while the farmer knows to wait until the proper time. In his spiritual nature, man too, is under the law of gradual growth that reigns in all created life. . . Just as each of ten thousand seeds is a part of the final harvest, frequently repeated, persevering prayer is necessary to acquire a desired blessing. Every single believing prayer has its influence.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Galatians 6:9**

- We should have this same attitude of —patience, yet finishing the work!

E. M. Bounds: “Persistent prayer, restless desire, restful patience, and strength to hold on are all contained in it.”<sup>3</sup>

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## **Praying According to the Will of God**

### **I John 5:14-15**

- This verse has been stripped of its power by our adding our own “ifs” to it
- That is the exact opposite intention of these verses — they are meant to instill confidence
- We are called to pray according to His will, so it must be possible to do so, therefore pray with confidence!
  - The ability to pray according to God's will is found in praying by His Spirit and according to His Word

#### **1. Praying by the Spirit**

##### **Romans 8:26-27**

- God's Spirit that is within us knows how we ought to pray; He will lead us into praying God's will

#### **2. Praying the Word**

##### **Hebrews 4:12**

- God's Word is alive, powerful, and discerns thoughts and intents

These two are meant to work together

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 71

<sup>3</sup> E. M. Bounds, *EM Bounds: The Classic Collection on Prayer*, (Orlando, FL, Bridge-Logos Publishers, 2001) 41

Separate the Spirit from the Word, and we get confusion, emotions, feelings

Separate the Word from His Spirit and we move to dead, lifeless praying.

### **Ephesians 6:17-18**

- The Word, Spirit, and Prayer are working in unison!
- The Sword (Word of God) is the turning point in this passage — from defense to offense

R. A. Torrey writes, “Mere intellectual study of the Word of God is not enough; there must be meditation upon it. The Word of God must be revolved over and over in the mind with a constant looking to God and His Spirit to make that Word a living thing in the heart. The prayer that is born of meditation on the Word of God is the prayer which soars upward to God’s listening ear.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Wrestling with God**

- When things aren’t coming as easily as they did at first, we think we have taken a step back in our faith
- God is inviting us to come and wrestle with Him and grow.

### **Examples of God wrestling with and even surrendering His will to men**

- Jacob wrestling with the Angel of the Lord (Genesis 32:24)
- Abraham arguing for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:22-32)
- Moses pleading and fasting for Israel not be wiped out. God relents! (Deuteronomy 9:13-19)
- Daniel fasts and prays for 21 days for an answer and angels are in combat in the Heavens (Daniel 10)
  - When we debate about God’s Sovereignty vs. our free will, we miss the point!
  - These men were in a relationship with a Father who loves them; God was interacting with them as a Dad

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## **Praying by Faith — with persistence — according to the will of God**

**Each one fuels the next in an ever-increasing cycle of growth.**

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### **Discussion Questions**

1. Compare the faith of the disciples to that of the father of the boy who was demon possessed.
2. According to Andrew Murray, which comes first, faith or prayer?
3. Why is it so hard for us to take our focus off the size of the mountain, and put it on the God of that mountain?
4. Has there been a time in your life when you have prayed with persistence like the widow before the judge? What made that need different than when you prayed for something else in another way?
5. Does praying with persistence guarantee that your prayer will be answered in the way you are petitioning?
6. How do we strip John 5:14-15 of its power?
7. What gives us the confidence to pray according to God’s will?
8. What happens when we separate “praying by the Spirit” and “praying the Word”?
9. Do you believe that your personal fervent, persistent prayer could change the mind of God?
10. How are praying by faith, with persistence, according to the will of god part of a continual cycle of growth?

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<sup>4</sup> R.A. Torrey, *How to Pray and How to Study the Bible*, (Peabody, MA, Hendrickson Publishers, 2011) 45