

THE VIRTUE OF PERSEVERANCE

Matt 7:7-11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Why do some people succeed in having their prayers answered; have a greater understanding of the Bible; reach more souls for Christ? Is it skill, genius, or luck?
- B. The answer is suggested by Calvin Coolidge: "Press on! Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts."
- C. Jesus talked about the virtue of perseverance; especially in its relevance to prayer, giving us motivation to persevere in our service to God

DISCUSSION: (TITLE)

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF "PERSEVERANCE" (7-8)

- A. Perseverance is implied in these verses
 1. By the tense of the Greek. It is the present tense, which most often stresses "continuous action". Literally, then, Jesus is saying:
 - a. "keep on asking," and it will be given to you
 - b. "keep on seeking," and you will find
 - c. "keep on knocking," and it will be opened to you
 2. By the progression of the terms themselves
 - a. "asking" is one level of inquiry
 - b. "seeking" suggests a step up, as one goes about to find what they ask (asking plus action, Hendricksen)
 - c. "knocking" is another step up, as one persists in finding that which they seek (asking plus action plus persevering, Hendricksen)
- B. Perseverance is relevant
 1. To "prayer"
 - a. As later implied in Mt 7:11
 - b. Jesus often stressed persistence in teaching on prayer – "The Persistent Friend" Lk 11:5-8; "The Persistent Widow" Lk 18:1-8
 2. To "Bible study"
 - a. Many people give up too soon in their Bible studies
 - b. But those who persevere in their studies benefit from the blessings God's Word provides Psa 1:1-3; 119:97-104
 3. To "evangelism"

- a. Many do not bear fruit because they give up too soon
 - b. But we reap what we sow; the more persistent we are in sowing, the more we will eventually reap Gal 6:7
- C. If we desire success in any venture, but especially in prayer, Bible study, and evangelism, then we must adopt "The Virtue Of Perseverance."

II. A MOTIVE FOR PERSEVERANCE (9-11)

- A. God delights to give good things to his children
 1. To illustrate, Jesus gives a simple argument (from the lesser to the greater)
 - a. Men give good gifts to their children who ask
 - b. How much more so, will our Father in heaven!
 2. Jesus stressed this Fatherly attribute of God
 - a. Regarding physical necessities Matt 6:31-32
 - b. Regarding things that are good for us Matt 7:11
- B. This is especially true regarding prayer!
 1. As Jesus promised to His disciples in Jhn 15:7 Conditioned on our abiding in Him and His words abiding in us
 2. As the apostle John wrote in 1Jhn 5:14-15. Conditioned on our asking according to His will, which assumes we know His will for us (i.e., His word is abiding in us)
 3. And as James wrote in Jas 4:3. Presuming we are not asking for personal and selfish gain, but many do not enjoy God's favor, simply because they do not ask!

CONCLUSION:

- A. To persevere, then, is a noble virtue, especially regarding prayer
 1. We have a Father in heaven who is not untouched by the persistent pleas of His children Heb 4:15
 2. Providing we do not ask amiss, persistent prayers will not go unanswered!
- B. If we desire to receive, find, and have doors opened to us, then we must
 1. Keep on asking
 2. Keep on seeking
 3. Keep on knocking
- C. Not only regarding prayer, but in all ventures worthy of Christians such as Bible study, evangelism
- D. Are you asking, seeking, and knocking today...?