

Approaching Jesus as Little Children: Persistence Pays Off

Persistence and Passion Help Believers to Enter the Kingdom of God



A child is persistent -- sometimes to the degree of annoyance! When they want something they can be very, very insistent. This childlike persistence would also be a quality of which Jesus spoke when He said, change, and become like little children or you will be unable to enter the kingdom. It was persistence that Jesus elevated when He told the story of the persistent widow who incessantly hounded the unjust judge until she received her request. Her reward came not because He was a just judge, but because he was tired of hearing her complaint. The lesson: if an unjust judge can respond, how much more will the Father in heaven, who is compassionate and just. The other contrast Jesus emphasizes is that the Father is not slow to respond, rather, he will speedily answer (Luke 18:2-8)

Another parable pictures a man who has received unexpected company and is without anything to feed them. It is late, but he has the boldness to go to his neighbor who is already snugly in bed with his family. He persists in asking for bread. He receives his reward, Jesus says, because of his "brassiness" the literal meaning of importunity. Jesus rewards a woman who presses through the crowd to touch the hem of his garment, a soldier who sends servants to tell him to just say the word and healing will come to a beloved servant and a gentile woman who speaks wisely about crumbs for the dogs in her persistence.

Many other parables of the kingdom, the pearl of great price, buried treasure, and lost coin, also accentuate seeking with all one's heart that which is of ultimate value

The prophet Hosea foretells this same admirable quality of persistence when he encourages believers to press into the knowledge of the Lord, for He will come forth as the spring rains (Hosea 6:3). Over and over, God speaks through His prophets to invite His people to seek Him with all their hearts, for they shall surely find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). It seems God wants to be sought after. It is this quality that Tommy Tenney speaks about in *The God Chasers*. He depicts God playing hide and seek with His children. It is not that He is coy. Rather, His desire is to be desired above all else.

Therefore He jealously hovers over His beloved. This jealousy is a righteous quality unlike human jealousy which is based on insecurity and the inordinate desire to control. His is the righteous protection of the Beloved for His beloved. Above that quality is the implicit understanding that one becomes like the object of one's worship. In His benevolence, Jesus desires that we become like Him, and no other; not other is worthy of such worship and adoration.

The Apostle Paul while in prison encourages the Philippians to press on to *know the Lord* and the power of His resurrection, forgetting past failures and even triumphs towards the upward call of God in Christ (Philippians 3:10-14). The question with which one must grapple with is what it would take to turn from the Lord. Whatever that action or inaction on God's part may be is the very area in which our trust and faith in His goodness needs some work.

There is inherent in the persistent request of Him a trust and faith that He wants to bless in such a way that His favor would facilitate further seeking rather than contentment with the object of one's request. He wants his disciples to learn in their prayers and supplications, that knowing Him is the greatest treasure to be sought. That is what the Apostle is encouraging. He declares that everything else is so much refuse compared to knowing the Lord (Philippians. 3:8). Let us press in to know Him in childlike persistence that approaches Him believing He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

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