

Don't Give Up

Read [Luke 18:1-8](#)

If we have prayed for a need to be met, and it hasn't been met, should we keep praying about it? What is the answer to that question, according to [Luke 18:1](#)?

“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart (don't give up).”

[LUKE 18:1](#)

(According to this verse, we should persist in prayer if a need hasn't been met.)

The parable was about a widow in a certain town who was not getting justice from some “*adversary*” ([Luke 18:3](#)). Jesus did not say who the adversary was, or what the conflict. But we can assume that, being a widow, the woman was being taken advantage of by a more powerful or wealthy citizen. She went to the town's judge and said, “...*Give me legal protection from my opponent*” ([Luke 18:3](#)).

The problem was, the judge was an unjust man. Jesus described him as a man “*who did not fear God and did not respect man*” ([Luke 18:2](#)). So when the woman brought her complaint to him, he refused to help her. He just sent her home. Not just once—this went on “*For a while he was unwilling*” ([Luke 18:4](#)).

The woman, however, did not give up. She kept returning, asking for justice. Finally the judge said to himself, “...*Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out*” ([Luke 18:4-5](#)). The judge granted her justice not because she deserved it, but because she persisted in her request.

Jesus said there was a lesson about prayer to learn from her story:

⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said;

⁷ now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

⁸ “I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

[LUKE 18:6-8](#)

The lesson was that persistence in prayer pays off. If an unjust judge will grant justice to a persistent petitioner, how much more so will the just and loving God of the universe meet the needs of those “*who cry out to him day and night*”? When it comes to praying for a need, we should not give up.

As we've discussed before, there are times God will say “**No**” to a prayer. In those cases, we should not keep praying about the same thing, but should conclude that our request must not have represented a real need after all, that our prayer did not line up with

God's will for our life. But when we're praying for a real need, we can assume it is God's will to meet it ([Philippians 4:19](#)), and in those cases we should persist in prayer.

There are three ways we can persist in prayer when a need hasn't been met. **One way**, of course, is to repeat the request. It's not that God needs to hear it again. It's that our heart needs to say it again. We are still burdened with it and need to release it to God again, exercising our faith in his help once more.

The second way to persist in prayer is to adjust our prayer. That is, as we seek the Lord for a need to be met, we may sense that we haven't been praying for exactly the right thing to happen. Maybe we've been praying for a raise with no results, when we realize that what we should be praying for is our employer's business to do better. We're still praying for the need to be met, but have been led by the Holy Spirit to pray more specifically. I'll talk more about the need to search our heart in prayer in the following section.

The third way to persist in prayer is with praise and thanksgiving. You know the answer has already been given—you have God's Word on it in the Bible, you sense it by the leading of his Spirit. In this case, it doesn't make sense to ask the Lord for it again, or to adjust your prayer. When the need comes to mind, you simply thank him and praise him that the answer's coming. This is a form of persisting in prayer.

If we have prayed for a need to be met, and it hasn't been met, we have need of persistence. You may have heard athletes speak of a **"second wind,"** a new burst of energy that comes during a long session of exercise. It's not a myth. According to Dr. Paul G. Donohue, a marathon runner will have depleted all of his muscle glycogen (muscle sugar) at about the two-hour mark. His body will then switch to a new fuel source—fat. Initially, there is fatigue, as lactic acid builds up and blood sugar drops. But when the body adapts to the new source of fuel, new energy comes—a **"second wind."** But the athlete must persist through the fatigue stage to reach the **"second wind."**

Likewise, there are some prayer rewards that only come to the persistent, to those who refuse to stop trusting that a just and loving God will meet their needs.

Do you have a need that you have prayed about, that hasn't been met yet? Which of the three ways to persist in prayer do you need to practice—repeating the request, adjusting the prayer, or thanking God that the answer is on the way?