

Why You Should Pray With Chutzpah—And Never Give Up

A knock on his door woke him.

As he got up to answer it, he realized how late it was. *Who could be here at midnight?* he thought. As he opened the door, there stood a friend who had traveled a long way and was both tired and hungry. Realizing he had nothing in his house to feed his friend, the man hurried to his neighbor.

As he pounded on their door, the man shouted he had company who just arrived, and he had nothing to feed him. The neighbor called out, “Leave me alone; I’m in bed!” The man who had company did not give up. He continued to shout his need until his neighbor gave him what he wanted.

Before Jesus taught this parable in Luke 11:5-8, he taught the Lord’s Prayer. With that prayer, He showed us *the way* to pray. However, the parable explains *how* we are to pray. It’s not just the words we use, but the persistence we show.

In Luke 11:8, Jesus said about the neighbor who didn’t want to get out of bed, “I say to you, though he will not rise and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as much as he needs.” What does this mean? The neighbor didn’t get up because his friend asked him for food; he got up because he knew his neighbor was not going away until he got what he needed.

The Hebrew equivalent of the word impudence is *chutzpah* and it means “brazen tenacity.” We can better understand this if we know the meaning of these two words, too. The word “brazen” means to be bold and without shame, and “tenacity” means to have determination.

Do You Pray With Brazen Tenacity?

Is this how you pray? I honestly can't say it describes all my prayers. In some rabbinical (Jewish) literature, they describe Moses' intercession for the children of Israel as if he took hold of God's garment and pleaded with Him to pardon them. This is chutzpah. This is what Jesus taught.

In Luke 8:43-48, Scripture tells us about a woman who knew Jesus could heal her of a bleeding disorder if she could only touch His garment. There was a great crowd around Jesus; people were pressing up against Him making it almost impossible to get close.

Yet her brazen tenacity didn't let a crowd stop her from getting to the feet of Jesus. When she touched his garment, Jesus knew power had gone from Him. After the woman came to Him and told Him why she touched Him, Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

The blind beggar in Luke 18:35-43 didn't stop yelling for Jesus to have mercy on him even though people told him to be quiet. When Jesus asked him what he wanted, he replied, "Lord, let me recover my sight." Jesus said, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you" (Luke 18:42b). The beggar had brazen tenacity. He would not be silent, so Jesus stopped to talk to him.

Like them, our brazen tenacity evidences our faith. There are stories throughout the Gospels about people who did not take no for an answer by pushing past boundaries to get to Jesus. These were only a few stories in which Jesus said, "Your faith has healed you."

What about the times our faith and tenacity don't get our prayer answered in the way we hope? We all know someone who didn't get healed or lost a child or spouse from a terrible disease. Or maybe it's you whose prayer has not been answered. Does Jesus love us less? Did He not hear our cries in the dark or at the altar? We don't always know why we get a "no" or

“wait” from our Lord.

In her book, *To Live is Christ*, Beth Moore explained that in the Bible Jesus healed for two reasons. One was to prove His authenticity. He was and is the Son of God. The second reason He healed was when natural methods were not possible.

What will bring you closer to God: the healing or the suffering?

God knows which one it is. He doesn't want us to suffer, but if our suffering takes us deeper into our relationship with Him, then it's worth it. He knows our ultimate healing is in heaven. But that does not mean we pray with any less brazen tenacity. Like the man who needed food from his neighbor, keep pounding on heaven's door.

Is there anything you have not asked of the Lord because you thought it wasn't worthy or because you felt embarrassed by it? In the verses that follow the parable, Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9).

Jesus doesn't want us to stop asking, seeking or knocking. Approach His throne boldly, knowing He hears you and He loves you. Never give up. Pray boldly, with shameless determination.
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