

Flourish in Faith *Stewardship Narrative Series*

Proper 24 - Luke 18: 1-8

Sunday, October 20 2013

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.



I can remember the first time I heard someone suggest I should pray about my commitment to the church. Having a business degree and not much spiritual education at the time, I thought, “Why would I pray about that?” I suppose someplace in my head I understood how prayer worked, but I also suspected prayer might open a can of worms I wasn’t prepared to handle. At that time in my life, giving was a financial decision made using my head and not a spiritual decision made on my knees.

As I grew in faith, I began to hear God’s voice in my everyday life. He and I had gotten on more friendly terms, and eventually it was time to trust God with the money question. I was finally ready to listen to God’s response to how I should use the resources with which I had been blessed. I began to ask, “God, what do you want to do through me?” It was a fairly simple prayer, often with a less-than-simple answer.

The effects of this prayer and attention to God’s reply have resulted in many life changes. In fact, this prayer changed absolutely everything. No longer was I floating along in the world minding my own business. As I began playing by God’s game plan rather than my own, I became more deeply connected to God. We were now playing on the same team.

The two most significant changes were my vocation and my financial giving.

I had an MBA, two young daughters and a husband whose work took him all over the world. But God thought I should become a church consultant, which I did some seventeen years ago: the first change.

The second change was becoming a tither. Like many Christians today, my family was contributing about 2.5% of our income to church and charities—the result of our ‘financial’ decision. By our personal standards, we were being generous and doing all we felt we could do. But as we prayed about our giving, we began to feel God take the lead. God was inviting us to take the risk, to trust and to give away more money than we could have imagined. The thing is that while God may take you to a place you have never been, God is always present there with you. Tithing has become an integral part of our family and our growing relationship with God.

Even through these experiences, I often find myself rolling along trusting in myself rather than in God. I need to be reminded where to put my faith: not in the smallness of my ideas, but in the greatness of a generous God. Expressions of gratitude for the large and small blessings of everyday life help me to not lose heart, but to trust in God.

Today, my persistent prayer is, “God, help me to respond with gratitude, prayerfully listen for your voice, and faithfully go where you lead.” It’s a simple prayer, often with a less-than-simple answer.



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Reflection Questions

- Can you recall an experience when you were persistent in prayer?
- Can you pray with a willingness to let go of the outcome?
- Do you let God in on the conversation of what your giving can be?