

Persistence
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Intro: **Luke 11:1-10** – Not just “ask, seek, knock”, but “keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking”

- A. What do you think of when you think of persistence?
 - 1. Athlete, telemarketer, asking child... God? Satan? Christian?
 - 2. The root ideas are *repetition* and *time*
- B. The parable here focuses on persistence (**Luke 11:5-8**)
 - 1. The man here would have been turned away empty-handed without *persistence*.
 - 2. Jesus then applies this to *our* asking, seeking, and knocking.
 - 3. How persistent are we when we go to God?

I. Our Adversary is Persistent

- A. Satan is known for his ruthless tactics.
 - 1. **Job 1:8-12** is a prime example of this—“while he was still speaking.”
 - 2. There are some days, some years when the trials just don’t seem to relent.
 - 3. We must not be ignorant of his schemes (**2 Cor 2:11**).
- B. Consider Joseph
 - 1. **Gen 39:10** – it may not have been hard to resist once, but day after day?
 - 2. Satan is a deceiver, and he wears on our minds (**Prov 27:15**)
 - 3. Don’t let Satan drip into your life! (**1 Peter 5:8-9**)
 - 4. Don’t get discouraged when temptation doesn’t go away (**1 Cor 10:13**)
- C. Other examples
 - 1. Daniel – served for years – **Dan 1:9; 6:10**
 - 2. Paul (**2 Cor 11:23-28**)
 - 3. Jesus – temptations in **Matt 4** – scourging and crucifixion

II. Our God is persistent!

- A. We are told to knock, but God also knocks (**Rev 3:20**)
 - 1. This is written to Christians in Laodicea!
 - 2. They were ‘lukewarm’ (**3:16**)
 - 3. God persistently sought their repentance
 - B. God has always been persistent with His people (**Amos 4:6-13**)
 - 1. God *desperately* wants His people to repent!
 - 2. God will try to get us to turn away—and it hurts
 - 3. It is God’s love that keeps Him coming back to us (**Ezek 16:5-8, 15, 28-29, 32-33, 43, → 62-63**)
 - C. God’s persistence translates into *patience*
 - 1. God will judge the world, but He waits (**2 Peter 3:8-10**)
 - a. Imagine if God *wasn’t* persistent / patient!
 - 2. It is gratitude for God’s patience that motivates us to change! (**3:11-15a**)
 - Ex. Holding open the door – run faster
 - 3. It is the patience of God that leads us to repent. (**Romans 2:4**)
 - a. We must be *persistent* in our repentance
- “Success is getting up one more time than you fall down.” Consider **Prov 24:16**
- 4. In evangelism, we must be *persistent* and *patient* (**Jude 22-23**)

III. God Calls Us to Be Persistent

A. The context of **Luke 11** is prayer

1. “Lord, teach us to pray” - (**Matt 14:23; 19:13; Mark 1:35-36; 14:32; Luke 3:21; 4:42; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18,28; 11:1; John 9:28**)
2. They saw persistent prayer in Jesus, and wanted the same
3. **Luke 18:1** – God wants us to pray and *not lose heart*

B. Consider the Syro-Phoenician woman (**Matt 15:21-28**)

1. Jesus acted differently here—unkind, but knowing her heart
2. Jesus wanted to test her and see how serious she was
3. She was *persistent!*
4. What do we do when it seems our prayers go unanswered?

“Sometimes when God appears unwilling to grant our requests, the result is that we are led to seek Him more fervently. When our prayers are not instantly answered, we should not jump to foolish conclusions about God Himself. It may be that He is waiting for us to find out, by our continual prayer, just how deep our desires really are. Our prayers may be answered much later than we had hoped — and in ways much better than we had imagined. When that happens, we’re able to enjoy a deeper appreciation of God’s goodness.” – Gary Henry

5. God knows what is best for us!

“His delay may actually mean that He cares more than we think. It is His wisdom, no doubt, that prevents Him from rushing into quick fixes to our problems when they need a more long-lasting solution.” - GH

“Sometimes we’re asking for a serpent and He gives us a fish—we just can’t see it.” – Peeler

6. Our persistence really tests how much we *trust* God!

Not what we want, but what we need,

Oh! Let Your grace supply.

The good unasked, in mercy grant;

The ill, though asked, deny.

- James Merrick

“From us, God is looking for persistent faith and persistent prayer.” –GH

Conclusion: God has promised us the rewards of persistence!

A. **Heb 11:6** – We are *diligent* (persistent) because we believe in God and His promises

1. We can’t imagine how good God’s rewards are! (**2 Cor 2:9**)
2. In this life, God will give us what we *need*, even when we can’t see it.

B. God is seeking us eagerly—what is our response? **Rev 3:20**