

Session Eight · Persistent Prayer

The Friend at Midnight · The Persistent Widow

WHAT WE FOUND

Two short parables for the most wearing experience in the life of faith: praying a long time without seeing the answer. Both reason from the lesser to the greater. If a reluctant friend will finally rise at midnight, and if even an unjust judge will finally grant justice, how much more will the Father, who is neither reluctant nor unjust, hear his children.

In Luke 11:9-13, the present-tense imperatives “ask, seek, knock” suggest continuing action; set beside the parable, Jesus is describing a pattern of life rather than a one-time petition. And the deepest gift named at the end is the Holy Spirit himself: beneath every request is God drawing us into his own life. The widow’s parable closes with the real question, aimed not at God’s reliability but at ours: “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) In his letter to the widow Proba: God does not need our prayers to be informed. Persistent prayer enlarges the soul’s capacity to receive what he has wanted to give all along.

St. John Chrysostom (347–407) Do not be discouraged by apparent delay; a soul that keeps praying when nothing visible changes is being knit more deeply to God.

St. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582) Persistent prayer is not chiefly a technique for getting what we want but the path along which the soul is led into deeper communion with God.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) In the *Summa Theologiae* (II-II, q. 83, a. 2): Prayer does not change God, whose will is unchanging; rather, God has arranged from eternity to grant certain gifts precisely through our prayers, so that in praying we obtain what he has willed to give by means of our asking.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Take the one long petition you have been carrying and write it down. Place it where you will see it daily, and pray it deliberately every morning for ninety days, in any form: the Our Father with that intention, a Rosary, a single sentence offered.
2. Before you pray each morning, repeat this session’s memory verse as the orientation of your prayer. Persistent prayer is not first about results; it is about keeping the line open, remaining faithfully before God and entrusting the outcome to him.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Copy it out this week and carry it with you: **Luke 18:1**

WHAT STAYED WITH ME

One line, an image, or a question from tonight that you do not want to lose:

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read ahead: John 10:1-18 (the Good Shepherd) and John 15:1-17 (the True Vine).

Catechism: CCC 2737, 2742, 2746