First Thessalonians 5:17

5:17 **<u>Paul commands perseverance in prayer</u>.**

1. His rule was not a perpetual prayer every waking and sleeping moment from conversion to death, but rather praying without fainting, giving up, losing hope, or quitting.
   a. It doesn't teach – pray all the time; it does teach – don't stop praying for a need.
   b. Rightly divide this text, yet do not cease from confidence in prayer, constant preparation for prayer, sober and holy living fitting of prayer, private practice of prayer, public practice of prayer, and a dependent spirit of prayer.
   c. Our minds are limited, unlike our omniscient God, and cannot pray constantly; but we can pray consistently, persistently, and patiently without quitting and ending the effort because we do not see our desired results in our time frame.
2. Jesus gave the parable of the unjust judge to teach us not to faint in prayer (Luk 18:1-8).
   a. Observe very carefully that we are told expressly the purpose of this parable.
   b. Our Lord said to take special note of what the unjust judge said motivated him.
   c. Let us also take note that there was no other motive with this unjust judge at all.
   d. So the Lord is much more sure to answer His elect, for we have the house edge.
   e. But also notice that the Lord does warn us that He may bear long with us (18:7).
3. Not fainting in prayer requires your faith the Lord will answer in time (Ps 27:13-14).
   a. The psalmist would have fainted but for his faith in God's future blessings.
   b. Here faith is defined – believing He will reward diligent seekers (Heb 11:6).
   c. The key is waiting, during which we take courage and receive His strength.
   d. When we have done what we can reasonably do, we go to sleep (Ps 127:1-2).
   e. Properly done, this is the Lord's rule for a carefree life with peace (Phil 4:6-7).
4. Importunity gets the answer, not mere necessity. Know the difference (Luke 11:5-10).
   a. The lesson is to teach the disciples how to pray (11:1), not with content (11:2-4), but with the same great and irritating persistence and insistence as 18:1-8.
   b. It is easy to read the lesson like this – though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his ***<u>necessity</u>*** he will rise and give him.
   c. **Importunity**. Pertinacity or constancy of action; bothersome pertinacity in solicitation. **Pertinacity**. The quality of being pertinacious; resolute or stubborn adherence, as to a purpose, design, course of action; persistency; usually in a bad sense; perverse obstinacy or stubbornness; evil persistence. **Importunate**. To solicit pressingly and persistently; to ply or beset with requests.
   d. Though their friendship was not enough to raise him, the persistence finally did.
   e. Yet the Lord is more than a casual friend, so again we have the house advantage.
5. Jacob would not let the Lord go when he wrestled with him (Ge 32:24-32; Hos 12:3-4).
   a. Facing a horrible family situation, Jacob would not let the LORD go (32:26); this is true persevering in prayer, when even the Lord tells you to stop praying!
   b. And circumstances went from bad to worse, as he became lame while wrestling.
   c. But the blessing was right there around the corner, because he would not let go.
   d. And his name was changed to indicate his powerful victory with God in prayer.
   e. How can a man defeat God in prayer? Because He lets us win for the blessing.
   f. Check out the wonderful blessings Jacob received that day (Genesis 33:4,9,16).
6. A woman of Canaan persisted with Jesus in spite of five rejections (Matthew 15:22-28).
7. Paul taught that we ought to continue in prayer (Col 4:2) with perseverance (Eph 6:18).
8. Continuing in prayer is not just any prayer, but instant – insistent – prayer (Rom 12:12).

9. We should believe more than ever before due to the great blessings recently received.
10. There is nothing the Lord cannot give you by following this and other rules of prayer.
    a. He wants to give us what we need (Matt 7:7-11; 18:19; 21:22; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9-13; John 14:13-14; 15:7,16; 16:24; James 5:16; I John 3:22; 5:14-15).
    b. But if we cease to pray before the blessing, we are the losers; He is still faithful.
11. He wants us to wait, for it shows our dependence, our inability, and teaches us faith.
    a. If He answered immediately, you would not learn faith, patience, or dependence.
    b. If He answered immediately, you could not express love, confidence, and need.
    c. If He answered immediately, He would not hear as many praises and promises.
12. Prayer is worship of a deep, personal, and intimate sort. Do you mind He prolongs it?