

I. Heart Health

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A. *A Healthy Heart has _____!*

B. Churchill said this on October 29, 1941, when he visited Harrow School. It was after the Blitz and things were looking up a bit for Britain.: But for everyone, surely, what we have gone through in this period—I am addressing myself to the School—surely from this period of ten months, this is the lesson: Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy. Never, Never, Never, Never give up."

C. *(Luke 18:1-14 NIV) Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.*

D. *(Luke 18:1 KJV) And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

1. World Class Fainting: June 15, 2010 General David Petraeus, the commander of US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, fainted while giving testimony to the U.S. Senate's armed services committee, forcing proceedings to a halt while he was taken away.
2. *(Isa 40:31 NRSV) but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*
3. *(Isa 40:31 NIV) but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

E. *(Luke 18:1 NRSV) Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.*

F. ***A Healthy Heart has Hope!***

G. *9 Things You Simply MUST DO to Succeed in Love and Life* Dr. Henry Cloud pg.63 "Hope is one of the great virtues in life, right up there along with faith and love (1 Corinthians 13). But hope is not a fairy tale wish; it is bedrock, and you should be able to order your life with it at your side."

II. Hope requires _____.

A. {2} *He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. {3} And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'*

B. Gladys Brown, Bucyrus, Ohio: At our midweek prayer service, a member requested prayer for a neighbor woman who was having a difficult time and was feeling "just miserable." Volunteering to take the request, a man fervently prayed, "O God, bless this miserable woman!"

C. Sort of a Freudian slip. That's how we sometimes feel!

D. That's probably how this judge felt about this woman.

E. First, you must remember that women didn't have a high place in society at the time of Jesus.

F. It was very hard for a single woman to make ends meet.

G. She appears sort of naggy and needy!

H. Making a widow the central character in the story, everyone knew that she wouldn't have much leverage with the judge.

I. That didn't stop her. She kept coming before the judge. She kept stating her case!

J. ***Hope requires Persistence.***

III. **Prayer is fueled by Hope and Persistence**

A. {4} *"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, {5} yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't*

eventually wear me out with her coming!" {6} And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. {7} And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?

B.The Relationship Principles of Jesus (Tom Holladay) It was the accepted practice in that day to pray no more than three times a day so God wouldn't get tired of hearing you. Jesus shatters this concept by showing that we should always pray and not give up (see Luke 18:1).

C.Charles H. Spurgeon in *The Quotable Spurgeon*. Christianity Today, Vol. 39, no. 3 Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly. Others give but an occasional pluck at the rope. But he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might.

D.(2 Th 1:4 NIV) *Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.*

IV. Prayer enables us to **Persevere!**

A.(James 1:3-4 NIV) *because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. {4} Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

B.Corrie ten Boom: Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?

C.Is Prayer what you do to guide your life consistently, or is it a parachute that you use when the plane is going down and you are about to crash.

D.Phillips Brooks, Pastor and Preacher in the 1800s.Leadership, Vol. 12, no. 3 Pray the largest prayers. You cannot think a prayer so large that God in answering it, will not wish you had made it larger. Pray not for crutches but for wings!

E.Prayer should not be seen as our means of getting God to do our will on earth, but rather as a means of getting God's will done on earth. God's wisdom far exceeds our own.

F. In situations for which we do not know specifically what God's will is, prayer is a means of discerning God's will.

V. It takes **Faith in God!**

A.{8} *I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

B.This story teaches us more about what faith is than it does about the nature of God.

C.God is not an unjust judge.

D.Jesus is teaching on persistence in prayer, not on the nature of God.

E.He paints a picture of a judge so not like God in order to show how necessary prayer is and how it impacts God!

F.The Relationship Principles of Jesus (Tom Holladay)- Highlight Loc. 1731-34 People frequently ask, "How long should I keep praying about this situation?" Pray until one of two things happens: God changes the situation, or God changes you. Often both will happen at once. And while you're waiting, realize that God is working. We're in a hurry, but God is not. He can afford to take the long view in his answers to our prayers. Martin Luther once said, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. It is laying hold of God's willingness."

G.Did your parents give you everything you want. Many people have bought into the idea that God is somehow required to give us anything we ask.

1. Frankly that is not even the experience of most of the people of the Bible.
2. It is not Jesus experience, it is not that of Paul, it is not that of Moses, not of Abraham,
3. Bruce Larson University Presbyterian Church in Seattle : The church, unfortunately, has become a museum to display the victorious life. We keep spotlighting people who say, "I've got it made. I used to be terrible, but then I met Jesus, got zapped by the Spirit, got into a small group, got the gifts

and fruit of the Holy Spirit ...” and the implication is that they are sinners emeritus. That’s just not true.

“The church is not a museum for finished products.”

What we need in the church are models who fail, because most of us fail more than we succeed.

That’s why we need to remember that the church is not a museum for finished products. It’s a hospital for the sick.

VI. Faith believes God is Concerned for our well being!

A. (Psa 37:25 NLT) *Once I was young, and now I am old. Yet I have never seen the godly forsaken, nor seen their children begging for bread.*

B. (Eph 3:12 NIV) *In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

C. Bill Hybels, "God's Attitude Toward Prayer," Preaching Today, Tape No. 97. You don't have to pester God to get his attention. You don't have to grovel. You don't have to flail yourself. You don't have to bite your lip and groan and moan and all of these kinds of things people do to show God they really mean business.

If one of my kids ever called me and said, "Daddy, please, please, please, I beg of you, I petition you, I'm pleading with you to listen to my need."

I'd say, "Time out. I don't like the underlying assumption here. You don't have to go through all those gymnastics. What can I do for you? Nothing in my life is more important than you." What gives me greater pleasure in life than meeting the needs of my children? What?

D. This widow mattered to God.

E. The point is that even a person without compassion, this judge, is moved by the actions of the widow.

F. God doesn't have to be coaxed or pressured into helping. You don't have to nag him. Your persistence is instead an indicator of your desire and your dependence on God.

VII. Faith believes God is not bothered by our Persistence!

A. This story actually tells us that God values persistence.

B. Remember when you were a kid, when you just didn't take no for an answer.

C. Remember how you wore your parents down until they bought you what you wanted.

D. There are requests that Hannah makes of me that I am just not going to grant.

E. On occasion, I just say no because I am not convinced she really wants it bad enough.

F. God doesn't deal with us in such human ways, but I think even Jesus is letting us know that we need to be persistent when we ask for things.

G. God is not going to grant us things that are going to hurt us, or are out of his will for our lives; but according to this Jesus story, God can be persuaded. In fact, maybe He is waiting to see how bad we want something.

H. God is waiting to hear us pray with persistence, to not lose hope, to not faint or lose heart.

VIII. Faith believes God has His own Timetable

A. It is great when we pray for something and see the immediate answer and it is a positive thing.

IX. The Relationship Principles of Jesus (Tom Holladay) Loc. 1749-53 Picture the four-year-old daughter of a single mother asking one day, "Mommy, can I go to college?" "Yes," says the mom—with a gulp. That very day the mom begins to save a little each day for college. Her commitment involves giving up a daily latte at the local coffeehouse and carefully planning meals. While the four-year-old can't understand it yet, her request is already being answered. Likewise, God is answering many of your prayers in ways you can't yet see—in ways you may not see until you get to heaven. To acknowledge this doesn't provide an excuse; it recognizes our limitations and expresses confidence in God's perfect plan and power.

A. Quite frankly, most of us have prayers that we have just about given up hope.

B. Salvation of a loved one.

- C.Redemption for someone in bondage.
- D.Relief from the stress of an extended illness.
- E.This story says keep praying. Keep Praying. Never stop. Never stop praying. Wait! Persevere, Persist.
- F.Sometimes our prayers are not answered in the way we would like.
- G.In those cases, I think we just have to have Faith!

X. **God is Pleased by Faith!**

- A.*(Heb 11:6 NKJV) But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*
- B.*(Col 1:23 NIV) if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*
- C.*Real Survivors Steve & Valerie Bell pp. 199 "Real survivors seem to hold to a future hope, a belief, that God will pronounce meaning on all the chapters of their lives--and that from some of the apparently tragic chapters, eternal good will prevail."*
- D.Julie and Rick Williams when there was a possibility one of their twins could have Downs syndrome. They didn't want to test; they just believed that God would give them the resources and strength to handle any challenge.

XI. Heart Health

A.*Daughters Gone Wild Dads Gone Crazy Charles Stone & Heather Stone pg. 154-158*

1. **Don't bottle your feelings.** "Max Lucado says, "When words are most empty, tears are most apt.""
2. **Never give up hope.** "The kind of hope you need is that which drives [you] to hang in there in the face of no evidence that anything is working—at least not yet. This kind of hope is the muscle behind the absence of gratitude or effects—at least for now. This hope is the wind that keeps you moving forward, looking for better days ahead in the face of nothing but bad. This hope drives and sustains and can be at the core of a positive-outcome, self-fulfilling prophecy."
3. **Draw near to God.** "Something became clear. There were no formulas. There were no right strategies with guaranteed outcomes. There was only God. Would I trust him and rely on his name (not as a new plan to get what I wanted)? Would I simply hold his hand, trust his heart, and move into darkness with no purpose other than to reflect something of Christ? Only deep darkness helped me to fear God more than confusion."
4. **Persist in prayer.** "That you won't lose hope."