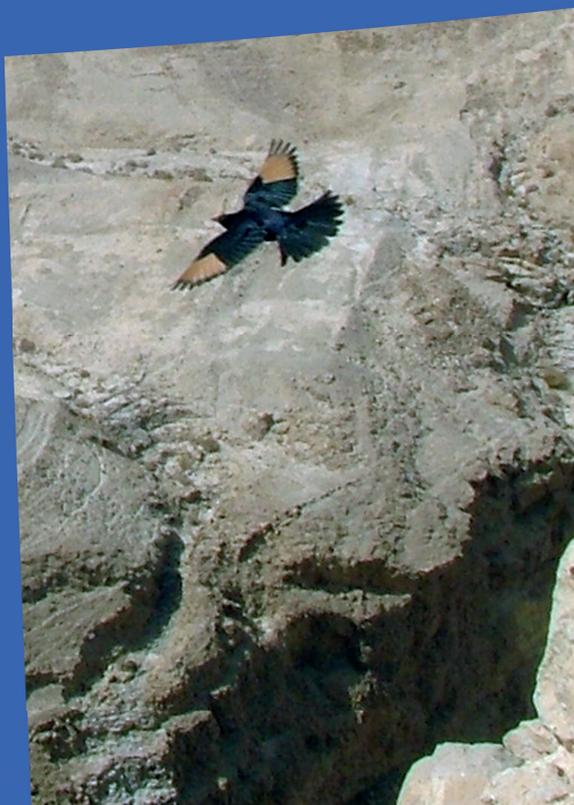
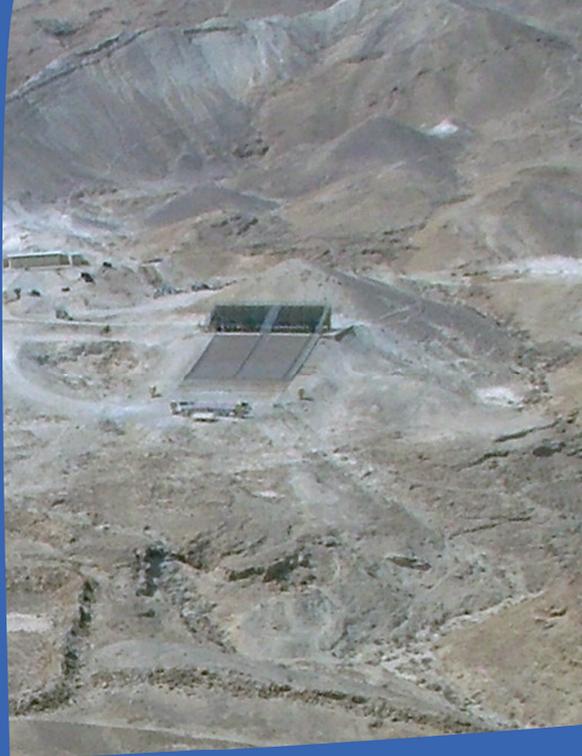




Prevailing in Prayer
The importance of
prevailing and persisting
in prayer.

Written by Ofer Amitai

Produced by
Prayer for Israel.



PREVAILING IN PRAYER

Written by Ofer Amitai

Ofer is Pastor of El Roi Congregation, Jerusalem and the Israel Prayer Centre. Persistence in prayer is of utmost importance. Yeshua's teaching in the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-9) is linked in the parable, to His coming. It is clear from this that God's people have an important role to play in the last days through prayer. And that it is important that they prevail in prayer. The Parable ends with an emphatic assurance that God will speedily answer the prayers of His people, although it may seem to them that He is long in answering.

"And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:7-8

A question is left in the air at the end of the parable: Will the elect persist in prayer, will they have that faith that persists till He comes?

"Now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will he delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily" Luke 18:7-8

A question is left in the air at the end of the parable: Will the elect persist in prayer, will they have that faith that persists till He comes?

What is persistence in prayer?

Sometimes we can get into a real effort by thinking that persistence

is endless repetition of our prayer request. Our prayer can become a "push" in our own strength and therefore unbearable. The result, often is discouragement; we give up praying. At other times, we can get obsessed with the praying itself as an activity. Or we can be taken up with the need and object of the prayer, till we lose sight of God; and that can be fatal to the prayer itself. Surely, this is not what Yeshua is teaching us or calling us to do. Rather, I believe that persistence in prayer is getting to God and clinging to Him.

Persistence in prayer is getting a hold of God Himself

We have a wonderful example of this in the story of the woman from Shunem. (2 Kings 4:8-37) The woman, as you will recall, had a heart for God and expressed it by making room for Elisha his servant.

She arranged a special room for him on the second floor of her house.

There, he could rest when he passed by. The woman was childless, and her husband was old, but Elisha prophesied she would have a son, and so it came to pass. In the story, the son dies suddenly, of sunstroke apparently. Let us observe the woman's actions, hers is the kind of persistence we need. On her son's death, the woman lays him on the prophet's own bed, his dwelling place (thus defiling it.) Apparently she has no doubt of the outcome of her plan; she believes the man of God will resurrect her son! What an amazing faith and assurance! Next she saddles an ass and orders the servant to never stop till he gets to the prophet.

The woman is utterly decisive and Focused; she does not even take time to explain things to her husband. Elisha, seeing her from afar, sends Gehazi to meet her, but she brushes him off, never stopping to explain the situation. When she gets to Elisha, she catches him by the feet, saying not a word; as far as she is concerned her journey is all but over; she has got hold of the man of God. Gehazi tries to remove her but to no avail, the woman clings to Elisha's feet. Finally, her terse question reveals the matter to Elisha, but not fully; he probably does not realize the boy is dead.

- He proposes to send Gehazi with his own staff, but the woman would have none of it. *"As the Lord lives, and your own soul lives, I will not leave you."* With this, Elisha agrees to go back with the woman. The result is spectacular: the boy is resurrected! Note here several things:

- The woman became utterly focused on one thing only - getting a hold of the man of God. All her actions were directed to achieve this.
- She kept the matter to herself and did not talk about it with anyone, not even her husband. Perhaps for fear of someone talking her out of it or weakening her resolve and faith.
- She did not stop on the way for anyone or anything. She allowed no distractions.
- The woman was not satisfied with a representative of the man of God, but only with the man of God himself.
- Her words were few - her purpose

was to get a hold of Elisha, not explain things.

- The woman was not willing to take an answer in the form of the man of God sending his staff with a servant—a symbol of his power and authority, she would have none of it. (See God's offer to Moses in Exodus 33:1-3. There, the Lord offers to give the Jewish people the Promised Land but declares He will not go up with them. See what Moses does about this.)

- She clung to Elisha's feet till he granted her desire, which was that he come with her. Let us suppose for a moment that the staff (power and authority of the prophet) would have done it. That is, give the woman the results she wanted. Still, she would have none of it; it had to be Elisha, period.

We need this same kind of heart.

What a single-minded woman! What a God-focused heart! What utter faith and confidence in God! What a simple strategy: just get a hold of God. Nothing less will do when it comes to persevering in prayer in the last days. This is the kind of heart-focus we need to have these days. Without it, we will get weary. The enemy will do everything in his power to discourage and tire us; when we see the "waves" in the ferocious storms around us. Peter began to sink when he saw the waves instead of Yeshua; after all, Yeshua was standing on the water, right there in front of him *"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the diving of time"* Daniel

7:25

Without this heart focus, we may lose our way and begin praying out of our own head or understanding. Once we lose sight of the Lord and begin to focus on the situation, we are in trouble. Put another way, if the sight of God is dimmed by circumstances or situations, we will see them with the natural eye more than in the Spirit and are apt to be led away into all sorts of byways. Where did this heart come from - or how did it develop?

"Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food."

2 Kings 4:8-10

The secret of it was in her Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a [a] notable woman, and she [b]persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. 9 And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. 10 Please, let us make [c]a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

The secret of it was in her heart's desire to make a place for God (expressed by making a place for his servant.) Bear in mind that the woman lived at a time of great wickedness and unspeakable idolatry in Israel;

during the reign of Ahab and Jehoram his son. So few were the godly people, even Elijah thought he was left alone. Yet, she loved God; she had a great heart for God. The woman was important, perhaps wealthy and influential, yet she was unafraid to associate herself with God's servants. By making a place for Elisha, she was showing great tenderness towards God Himself and care for His place in the Land. In a way, she really was makin a place in her life for God. Like Abraham who would not let he three mysterious visitors go by unless he fed them, like David who had in his heart to make a place of God, so the woman's heart was deeply devoted to the Lord himself and no doubt to His ways and commandments. And once she receives her son back from the dead, she does not simply walk happily away, but *"So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out."* 2 Kings 4:37

Obviously, the woman was taken up with God, not the miracle only. She was overwhelmed by the being that did such a mercy, and not just the mercy itself. Thus, we see she returns to his servant to give God glory. And how does God feel about such a thing? Yeshua's word to the Samaritan leper who returned to give him thanks reveals God's heart in the matter.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, *"Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to*

God except this foreigner?"

Luke 17:15-18

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

John 15:7.

It's the state of the relationship that matters in prevailing prayer. "Prevailing prayer..... is the outcome of a right relationship with God. The Bible is very clear on the reasons why prayers go unanswered, and every reason centres on the believer's relationship with God. (1)

"Firstly, prayer is communion, prayer is fellowship, prayer is love opening the heart to God, and that is the foundation of all true forms of prayer." (2)

You, too, can learn to prevail in prayer. The secret of all the great praying men and women of the Bible, was a simple utter devotion to the Lord. They were ordinary people, called by a sovereign God, to walk with Him. They seemed more occupied with God than with ministry or anything else they had to do; from Abraham on we see this. These men and women of God gave themselves to love Him, seek His face. They walked with Him and humbled themselves to walk in His ways. They all seemed to be prepared by the Lord for a time of great need in the history of Israel.

Daniel, was such, Moses too; both were prepared for long years in this very walk with God. You, too, can walk with God in this way, if you but wholly turn your heart to God to love Him, seek Him, obey Him. There is no telling what He

can do in and with such a heart. He must have our hearts. And so I close with Yeshua's question, which still hangs in the air, perhaps now more than ever:

Foot Notes:

Sanders, J. Oswald, "Spiritual Leadership: A Commitment to Excellence for Every Believer" (Commitment To Spiritual Growth) (Kindle Locations 2001-2005). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Sparks, T. Austin. "In Touch With the Throne: Some Considerations on Prayer" Pg. 7. Prayer.

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