



## WEEKLY STUDY

### ***Stepping Into Increase* - Week Four**

This week's passage from the Gospel of Luke begins by telling us what Jesus was up to with this story he was about to tell. Prayer that never gives up in hard times. Jesus is inviting his disciples to practice this key distinguishing characteristic, to be people of prayer, putting trust in God and not themselves. May your times of prayer be cloaked in this deep and abiding trust in God.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

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## DAILY STUDY

### **MONDAY: LUKE 18.1-8 (NIV)**

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup>He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. <sup>3</sup>And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

<sup>4</sup>"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

<sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup>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? <sup>8</sup>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?"

- The parable's purpose was stated by Luke. "that they should always pray and not give up." We can get the idea that the disciples were hard pressed. Things were not looking great. They needed

encouragement to stay in prayer and Jesus was there to provide that encouragement. Do you ever get so distracted by the things going on around you that you find it difficult to pray?

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- **Prayer Prompt: When I said, “My foot is slipping,” your unfailing love, LORD, supported me.**  
**<sup>19</sup>When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. (Psalm 94.18-19)**
- *God, there are so many things in this world that clamor for my heart's attention. Let today be a day when I remain focused on you above everything else. Amen.*

#### **TUESDAY: LUKE 18.1-8 (NIV)**

- The judge was so focused on himself that he couldn't be bothered by God or anyone else. He felt no concern for others. The language is more about a lack of care than a healthy resolution to persevere regardless of critique. He couldn't be bothered to help until the persistence of the widow began to distract him from himself! There are times when the plight of another person can snap us out of our own self-centeredness. Has this ever been true for you?

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- **Prayer Prompt: A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. (Psalm 68.5)**
- *Jesus, I want to see others as you do. Make my heart more like yours today. Amen.*

#### **WEDNESDAY: LUKE 18.1-8 (NIV)**

- Though this judge is a made up character in Jesus' parable, we can see the Pharisees reflected in him. His job as a judge, according to Scripture (See [Exodus 22.22-24](#)), is to care for the orphan and the widow. He is supposed to be a defender of this woman who would have lost everything when she lost her husband. Any money and property would have gone to the husband's brother or sons, not to her. She would have had no course to stick up for herself. She needed a judge to provide the justice she couldn't achieve on her own.

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- **Prayer Prompt: Learn to do right; seek justice.**  
**Defend the oppressed**  
**Take up the cause of the fatherless;**  
**plead the case of the widow. (Isaiah 1.17)**
  - *God, my pursuit of justice leads me in all kinds of directions. Let me be like the persistent widow seeking justice from you. You are just and righteous. Amen.*

#### **THURSDAY: LUKE 18.1-8 (NIV)**

- It may sound like Jesus was comparing God to an unrighteous judge. He was not. The primary point of the parable is this: If an unjust judge can be moved to relent and offer justice, certainly a loving God will be moved by our prayers. God doesn't need our prayers in order to be God, but we need to pray in order to truly be His people. God is moved by the prayers of His people! Have you ever doubted that God heard or cared about your prayers? When have you seen evidence that God was in fact moved towards justice on your behalf?
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- **Prayer Prompt: let justice roll on like a river,**  
**righteousness like a never-failing stream! (Amos 5.24)**
- *God, I know you hear my prayers. I seek your justice for those around me who are hurting. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: LUKE 18.1-8 (NIV)**

- Sadly, the judge in Jesus' parable is relatable to most of us. He said that he didn't care what others thought of him (least of all the God he didn't believe in), but the phrase he used in verse 5 suggests otherwise. He said he would extend justice to the woman so that she wouldn't come back and attack him. He wasn't worried about a physical attack, but he used a phrase that is more closely translated: *give a black eye*. We use that phrase metaphorically. "That business really has a black eye now". It's a phrase about reputation. Perhaps the judge was a little more concerned with the thoughts of others than he let on! Do you ever find yourself caught between not wanting to care about the opinions of others, and actually caring deeply about your reputation? How does that impact your ability to do what is right?
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- **Prayer Prompt: A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.**

<sup>2</sup> **Rich and poor have this in common:  
The LORD is the Maker of them all. (Proverbs 22.1-2)**

- *God, I desire a good reputation among my peers. Help me to make your name great among them. Amen.*

### **SATURDAY: LUKE 18.1-8 (NIV)**

- We need to learn to lean on this teaching of Jesus' especially when we go through hard things: *always pray and don't give up.* Is there anything in your life today that has you just about ready to give up? What feels out of your control? What injustices have you frustrated? Offer these up in prayer to God.
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- **Prayer Prompt: Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. (Psalm 25.6)**
- *God, I admit that my prayers are often fleeting. Today I commit my heart and mind to prayer that is frequent. Amen.*

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

Pastor Jacob offered this litany of people who need to be persistent in prayer. Who would you add?

*Moms, you should always pray and never give up.  
Husbands, you should always pray and never give up.  
Widows, you should always pray and never give up.  
College students, you should always pray and never give up.  
3rd graders in the room, you should always pray and never give up.  
Brothers and sisters struggling with addiction, you should always pray and never give up.  
Sick and hurting ones, you should always pray and never give up.  
Lonely ones, you should always pray and never give up.  
The one praying for your heart's dream,  
The one praying for healing,  
The one praying for a miracle, you should always pray and never give up.*