

Bay City Wesleyan Church  
April 24, 2016

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Sunday Morning 04-24-2106

Part 3 of Advancing Deliberately: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting and Start Growing - Following Jesus does not need to be complicated and incomprehensible to regular people

THE PRAYERS JESUS WANTS TO HEAR

<http://bible.com/events/25104>

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We're about to start another addition to our series called Advancing Deliberately: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting and Start Growing. We believe that growth in a person's spiritual life is not limited to a select group of highly motivated saints. In fact, we go so far as to declare that following Jesus does not need to be complicated and incomprehensible.

We believe there are four essential areas for Advancing Deliberately as we follow Jesus. We can stop drifting and start growing when we focus on these areas:

1. LOVE<sup>2</sup> (Love to the second power)
2. GIVE
3. PRAY
4. DEPEND ON JESUS

This message is about number 3 – PRAY.

Sermon in a Sentence:

Jesus hears all our prayers but he wants to hear a few exceptional prayers.

What kind of prayers does Jesus want to hear?

Luke 18:1-8 NIV

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 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? 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?"

Persistent prayers for justice

Faith expressing prayers

Luke 18:9-14 NIV

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers,

evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

### Prayers of humble confession

Luke 18:15-17 NIV

People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

### Prayers from a child-like follower

Luke 18:18 NIV

A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<http://bible.com/111/luk.18.18.NIV>

### Prayers of Surrender

Luke 18:35-43 NIV

As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, I want to see,” he replied. Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

### Prayers of Honesty Regarding Your Needs

Luke 18:18-34 NIV

A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’ ” “All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!” “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.” Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of

Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.” The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.