

THE PARABOLIC TEACHING ABOUT CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Lesson 11: Persistence the Prerequisite: The 'Unprofitable' Servant, The Widow, and the Pharisee

15-Point Chronological Discussion Outline & Worksheet • Dr. Dallas Willard Lecture Series (1983)

1. Strenuous Grace and Intentional Effort

[Audio ~00:00 – 03:45]

Scripture Focus: Luke 17:5–10; 1 Corinthians 15:10

Dallas Willard Insight: Salvation is unearned grace, but growing in grace requires strenuous effort, deliberate practice, and persistence.

Discussion Question: How does spiritual formation require strenuous effort without falling into legalistic attempts to earn salvation?

My Notes & Answer:

2. The Duty of the 'Unprofitable' Servant

[Audio ~03:45 – 07:15]

Scripture Focus: Luke 17:7–10; Romans 12:1

Dallas Willard Insight: A servant ploughing or feeding sheep does not expect special praise for doing basic duty; obedience is our bare baseline.

Discussion Question: Why should doing our basic spiritual duty produce deep humility rather than demanding special praise from God?

My Notes & Answer:

3. Moving from Duty to Co-Laboring Friendship

[Audio ~07:15 – 10:30]

Scripture Focus: John 15:15; 1 Corinthians 3:9

Dallas Willard Insight: While starting as servants doing duty, disciples mature into friends who co-labor with Christ, sharing His heart purpose.

Discussion Question: How do we transition from doing legalistic duty as servants to co-laboring in joyful friendship with Jesus?

My Notes & Answer:

4. The Parable of the Persistent Widow

[Audio ~10:30 – 14:00]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:1–3; Isaiah 62:6–7

Dallas Willard Insight: A helpless widow repeatedly came to an unrighteous judge, demanding justice against her adversary.

Discussion Question: What does the helpless widow's repeated plea teach us about approaching God in prayer?

My Notes & Answer:

5. The Unrighteous Judge Overcome by Persistence

[Audio ~14:00 – 17:30]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:4–5; Genesis 32:26

Dallas Willard Insight: The judge neither feared God nor regarded man, yet granted justice simply because her persistent coming wore him down.

Discussion Question: If even an unjust judge responds to persistence, how much more will our loving Father answer His elect?

My Notes & Answer:

6. God Will Avenge His Elect Speedily

[Audio ~17:30 – 21:00]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:6–8; Revelation 6:9–11

Dallas Willard Insight: God is not an unjust judge; He hears His crying children and will bring swift justice, though He bears long with them.

Discussion Question: How does knowing God's loving character encourage us to keep praying when answers seem delayed?

My Notes & Answer:

7. 'When the Son of Man Comes, Will He Find Faith?'

[Audio ~21:00 – 24:30]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:8; Habakkuk 2:4

Dallas Willard Insight: Jesus questions whether He will find persistent, trusting prayer-faith on earth when He returns.

Discussion Question: Why is persistent, unyielding prayer the primary indicator of genuine faith on earth?

My Notes & Answer:

8. How Persistent Prayer Reshapes the Soul

[Audio ~24:30 – 28:00]

Scripture Focus: Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18

Dallas Willard Insight: Prayer is not persuading an unwilling God, but a practice that reshapes our soul to receive and align with God's will.

Discussion Question: How does persistent prayer transform the person praying rather than manipulating God's will?

My Notes & Answer:

9. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

[Audio ~28:00 – 31:30]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:9–10; Proverbs 30:12

Dallas Willard Insight: Jesus told this parable to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt.

Discussion Question: How does self-trust in moral righteousness inevitably lead to treating other people with contempt?

My Notes & Answer:

10. The Pharisee's Self-Congratulatory Prayer

[Audio ~31:30 – 35:00]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:11–12; Isaiah 65:5

Dallas Willard Insight: The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself, listing his moral achievements, fasting, and tithes as merit.

Discussion Question: Why was the Pharisee's prayer rejected by God despite his impressive moral record?

My Notes & Answer:

11. The Publican's Cry for Mercy

[Audio ~35:00 – 38:30]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:13; Psalm 51:1–3

Dallas Willard Insight: The tax collector stood far off, beat his breast, and cried: 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

Discussion Question: What made the tax collector's desperate cry for mercy acceptable and pleasing to God?

My Notes & Answer:

12. Justified Rather Than the Other

[Audio ~38:30 – 42:00]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:14; Romans 3:23–24

Dallas Willard Insight: The repentant outcast went home justified before God, while the self-satisfied moralist remained in spiritual death.

Discussion Question: Why does God justify the humble sinner who begs for mercy over the self-righteous moralist?

My Notes & Answer:

13. He Who Humbles Himself Will Be Exalted

[Audio ~42:00 – 45:15]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:14; 1 Peter 5:5–6

Dallas Willard Insight: Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted by God.

Discussion Question: How does adopting genuine humility open our lives to divine exaltation and grace?

My Notes & Answer:

14. Cultivating Childlike Persistence

[Audio ~45:15 – 47:30]

Scripture Focus: Luke 18:15–17; Matthew 18:3

Dallas Willard Insight: We must receive the Kingdom like a little child—with simple, persistent trust that refuses to give up.

Discussion Question: What does it mean to receive and pursue the Kingdom of God with childlike persistence?

My Notes & Answer:

15. Mastering the Discipline of Prayer

[Audio ~47:30 – 50:00]

Scripture Focus: 1 Thess. 5:17; Colossians 4:2

Dallas Willard Insight: Like mastering an instrument, effective prayer requires patient repetition until continuous communion becomes natural.

Discussion Question: How can we practice prayer as an ongoing discipline until walking with God becomes second nature?

My Notes & Answer:
