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**Teaching, Modeling, and Imparting Responsiveness to the Holy Spirit for Life and Ministry.**

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**TEACHING:****The Promises of Perseverance**

by Mike Flynn

Some time ago I realized that the bottom line of all Jesus' teachings on prayer is perseverance. That realization fit with a favorite quote from Winston Churchill: "Never give in! Never give in! Never, never, never. Never--in anything great or small, large or petty--never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense."

It helps to have some of the Greek unzipped.

"ask, seek and knock" in Lk 11 are in the imperfect imperative form of the Greek verbs. In literal English they would translate: "I command you to ask and keep on asking, to seek and keep on seeking, to knock and keep on knocking." So here is the Lord commanding us to be insistent.

And the first half of the Lord's Prayer is in the same verb form. This means that Jesus taught us to pray like this: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, we command that Your name be hallowed, we insist that Your kingdom come, and we demand that Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

I shared this once with a theologian who was aghast at the idea. "You don't tell a King what to do!" he reprimanded me. My answer--which didn't come for a day was--"you do it if He commands you to command Him."

Why would Jesus order us to order Him in prayer? The simple answer is: to get us past our reticence to be persistent. He seemed to be emphasizing that persistence is what is needed.

Another Greek word:

anidia is the word translated "importunity" (KJV) or "persistence" (NIV). It's worth taking that word apart: a is a negative and naidia is translated "shame". It's the same as putting "un" in front of an English word: like un-necessary. So Jesus is telling us to pray shamelessly. And I think that is in two senses:

- 1) without guilt. So we get our sins confessed and then can pray without shame and with insistence.
- 2) socially. So we can pray insistently like brazen hussies, way past the point of social propriety.

Why does Jesus so strongly urge us to pray like that? I think it's because many prayerful requests take a good bit of organizing and motivating of humans who may be key to the release of the answers. That can take time and persistence, even of God. Just consider one obstacle: human free will. This means that the Lord must find humans who will agree to collaborate with Him for the meeting of our prayer requests, since He will not force anyone to do something against their free will. If you need money for your life/ministry, God will not force anyone to write a check to you. He has to find willing people. Your persistence in prayer frees Him to keep looking for such people.

What's more, your persistence in prayer links your heart to His in deeper measure--which is the best reward of all. I've often urged those listening in my conferences to "get cheeky" with God. "Get in His face! He loves it," I tell them.

So what are some of the promises of perseverance?

1. Intimacy with God. As mentioned above, persistence gets us in God's face and in His heart. Which is just

where He loves us to be. I often remember my granddaughter Riley sitting on my lap when she was 3 and grabbing my chin to force me to look at her as she shouted "cookie!" You know what? She got the cookie. And I got utter delight in having been commanded to give it to her. That's what your demands do for your Father.

2. Request modification. Some prayers aren't answerable in their original form. But if we keep persisting in asking, the Spirit can communicate modifications that will bring our prayers into answerable form. Years ago I asked the Lord to make Sue lose 15 pounds. As I kept asking, the Spirit moved on me and I gradually changed the prayer: "help me accept her just as she is." And that got answered.

3. Faith growth. As noted in my Mustard Seed Book, faith is like a muscle and muscles grow strong by being resisted. The Lord is always assessing our faith-level and working to strengthen it, because it is by our faith that He is freed to do all things. That's how He organized the universe. Since He always wants to do more, He needs to keep strengthening our faith which frees Him to act.

4. Character growth. When we persist in persisting, character qualities  
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## FreshWind Scheduled Events

DATE	PLACE	EVENT	CONTACT
July 28	Ventura Healing Rooms Ventura, CA	Teaching-Training	805-650-3574
Aug 3-5	Springfield, IL	Yes, These Bones Can Live (invitation only)	
Aug 27	Ventura Healing Rooms Ventura, CA	Teaching-Training	805-650-3574
Sept. 6	Holy Apostles, Epis Ch Katy, TX	Healing Service	281-392-3310
Sept 7-10	St. Christopher's Epis. Ch. League City, TX	Recapturing the Supernatural conf.	281-333-2706
Sept. 16	Diocese of Albany, NY	Mike preaching at the new Bishop's ordination	
Oct. 13-15	Ontario Canada	Order of St. Luke healing conf.	905-849-6113
Oct. 20-22	Vineyard Christian Fellowship Pomona, CA	(undetermined)	909-992-9717
Nov 14-18	Ten Northern Uganda dioceses	Training of Trainers, etc.	

## Northern Uganda Mission

Perhaps you know that FreshWind has led 3 conferences in Uganda in the past couple years. These events, at the invitation of the Archbishop's staff, have been extremely well received and our teaching and training has galvanized many participants into effective ministries.

We've been invited back now to grapple with the most difficult part of the country: the 10 northern dioceses. These areas, on the border of the Sudan, have endured 40 years of islamization and arabization. Blacks have been killed, tortured, raped, forced into armies, dislocated, and impoverished. Their wounds are great. In addition, the so-called Lord's Resistance Army has been tormenting Ugandans for 2 decades.

While those we've trained have put on Training of Trainers conferences in other parts of the land--which have produced wonderful results--they insist that we return to the land to lead this event. It will occur Nov. 14-18 and will utilize our 40-page syllabus that has been translated into Ugandan dialects.

I am in the process of praying through whom to invite on the team and how to raise funds. The participants are so impoverished that we will have to pay for their food and lodging at the event.

If God touches your heart about this, may I ask you do contribute to FreshWind for this need?

By the way, John Robb, of WorldVision says: "Next week in South Sudan, important talks will be held that could end the awful 20-year conflict of Uganda with the LRA rebels. The talks between the government and rebels are considered northern Uganda's best chance for peace in years. Please pray for the Sudanese mediators and all who are involved on both sides that a peace breakthrough can occur."

## Teaching:

(Continued from Page 1)

mature. Like patience. And compassion. And humility.

5. Answers! When we have persevered shamelessly in prayer and have freed Him to answer, answers come. Often miraculously. And they are worth waiting for! "Ohmygod! I almost gave up. Look what I would have missed if I'd given up." That's the kind of thing we say when we see what was at stake in our asking. My friend Rick Taylor of Santa Maria Healing Room says one woman with cancer was healed on her 38th visit to their prayer rooms.

6. Victory. Victory is akin to answers, but it is such a grand accomplishment that is worth mentioning on its own. There is something superbly satisfying in having persisted against the enemy and having triumphed. Insistent prayer, persistent hard work, clinging to not giving up--these behaviors grant us victory over obstacles, over the devil, over the world, over our own flesh. And victory tastes especially sweet.

So, what are you up against? Health issues? Financial concerns? Relational problems? Ministry needs? Nature (e.g. not enough rain)? Organizational problems? What do you believe God wants to do about it? Will you collaborate with Him to bring you victory? Will you start now? Will you determine not to give up?

I've been wisecracking lately: "God thinks He's God!" But it's true, isn't it? And the question is: do you think He's God too?

## A teaching addendum

A children's race--young boys, young men  
How I remember well.  
Excitement, sure! But also fear;  
It wasn't hard to tell.

They all lined up so full of hope;  
Each thought to win that race.  
Or tie for first, or it not that,  
At least take second place.

And fathers watched from off the side,  
Each cheering for his son.  
And each boy hoped to show his dad  
That he would be the one.

The whistle blew and off they went!  
Young hearts and hopes afire.  
To win and be the hero there  
Was each young boy's desire.

And one boy in particular  
Whose dad was in the crowd,  
Was running near the lead and thought,  
"My dad will be so proud!"

But as they speeded down the field  
Across a shallow dip,  
The little boy who thought to win  
Lost his step and slipped.

Trying hard to catch himself  
His hands flew out to brace,  
and mid the laughter of the crowd  
He fell flat on his face.

So down he fell and with him hope  
He couldn't win it now--  
Embarrassed, sad, he only wished  
To disappear somehow.

But as he fell his dad stood up  
And showed his anxious face,  
Which to the boy so clearly said:  
"Get up and win the race."

He quickly rose, no damage done.  
Behind a bit, that's all--  
And ran with all his mind and might  
To make up for his fall.

So anxious to restore himself  
To catch up and to win--  
'His mind went faster than his legs;  
He slipped and fell again!

He wished then he had quit before  
With only one disgrace.  
"I'm hopeless as a runner now;  
I shouldn't try to race."

But in the laughing crowd he searched  
And found his father's face.  
That steady look which said again:  
"Get up and win the race!"

So up he jumped to try again  
Ten yards behind the last--  
"If I'm to gain those yards," he thought,  
"I've got to move real fast."

Exerting everything he had  
He gained eight or ten  
But trying to hard to catch the lead  
He slipped and fell again!

Defeat! He lay there silently  
A tear dropped from his eye--  
"There's no sense running any more;  
Three strikes: I'm out! Why try?"

The will to rise had disappeared  
All hope had fled away;  
So far behind, so error prone;  
A loser all the way.

"I've lost, so what's the use," he thought.  
"I'll live with my disgrace."  
But then he thought about his dad  
Who soon he'd have to face.

"Get up," an echo sounded low.  
"Get up and take your place;  
You were not meant for failure here.  
Get up and win the race."

"With borrowed will, get up," it said,  
"You haven't lost at all,  
For winning is no more than this:  
To rise each time you fall."

So up he rose to run once more,  
And with a new commit  
He resolved that win or lose  
At least he wouldn't quit.

So far behind the others now,  
The most he'd ever been--  
Still he gave it all he had  
And ran as though to win.

Three times he'd fallen, stumbling;  
Three times he rose again;  
Too far behind to hope to win  
He still ran to the end.

They cheered the winning runner  
As he crossed the line first place,  
Head high, and proud, and happy;  
No falling, no disgrace.

But when the fallen youngster  
Crossed the line last place,  
The crowd gave him the greatest cheer  
For finishing the race.

And even though he came in last  
With head bowed low, unproud,  
You would have thought he's won the  
Race to listen to the crowd.

And to his dad he sadly said,  
"I didn't do so well."  
"To me, you won," his father said.  
"You rose each time you fell."

--"The Race" by D.H. Groberg

## **Bits of Feedback**

“Thank you for this great evening! The teaching & the stories are so encouraging.” --Jeffrey & Katy B., Ventura Healing Room.

In response to the evaluation question: these elements proved unhelpful to us: “1) way too much autobiography. I felt too much like marketing. 2) Comments on liberals, gays, Bp. Spong, etc unseemly. In times like these, it is difficult to reconcile, edify, and strengthen the church. Forming stronger factions, it seems to me, is contrary to the work of the Holy Spirit.” --Rev. Aloha S., Riverside CA

“Just a word of thanks for the Seattle conference you spoke at this past weekend at Calvary Chapel--it was an especially impactful time for me, since I really consider myself a beginner with my understanding of the Holy Spirit.” Sue L., Seattle WA

“There are no words to say how powerful the weekend was! I want to say ‘Thank you for being you!’”

and allowing the Holy Spirit to use you so powerfully.” Barb B. re Riverside event

“I wanted to thank you again for giving me the opportunity to go to Riverside (as a team member). I was blown away by all that God did. Seeing the Lord work in a mighty way and being able to be part of his working has changed my life.” --Meg V. from Bakersfield

“Thank you for sharing your experiences this past weekend at Yes These Bones Can Live. I am confident that this program will make a difference in the lives of those attending, and in the lives of our churches and our diocese.” --John H., Glen Carbon IL

“I can’t thank you enough for what you are assisting God to birth in this Diocese. (The weekend) exceeded every expectation I had. Through you, I am most confident God is doing a marvelous thing here which surely will impact His whole Church.” --Bp. Peter B., Springfield IL

“I bought all of Mike’s books. So far, I’ve finished the Mustard Seed Book, and think it is the most helpful book I have ever read on faith. I have paraphrased parts of it repeatedly in my Cursillo group and in two Bible studies that our rector leads each weeks.” --Ray E.

## **Want To Promote Mike’s Books?**

Amazon.com has told us that sales increase an average of 12% when books have at least 2 reviews. If you want to help “get the word out”--Mike’s reason for writing--then do this: find the main page for one of Mike’s books on Amazon.com. Second, click “Customer Reviews” just to the right of the cover image. And third, click “Write an online review.” After that, fill in the form and submit it. Thanks!

## ***Faith Pledge***

If God has touched you through FreshWind Ministries, would you consider making a faith pledge to support FreshWind’s work? It would just be between you and God. If the money comes in, then thank God and relay it to FreshWind. Thank you.

## Responses

FreshWind often donates its time and energy to foreign and domestic churches and organizations that cannot afford to pay normal honoraria and travel expenses. Many of these are missions-focused, as is FreshWind.

About 75% of FreshWind's budget comes from people like you who believe in and feel led to support what we're doing to extend the kingdom.

**Here's the bottom line:**

+ **renewed, disciplined, and anointed people produce ministry and mission**

+ **FreshWind produces renewed, disciplined and anointed followers**

**We ask you to help us "produce" FreshWind.**

We highly value all forms of aid: prayer, finances, and ministry team participation. Please look over this response form and see if the Lord would speak to you about your support of this ministry.

### PRAYER:

\_\_\_\_\_ I/we would like to receive Mike's monthly intercessor's letter and pray regularly for your ministry. If we're on email, our email address is \_\_\_\_\_. Please copy and email this to Mike or mail by postal system.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

• I/we pledge: \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month for the support of FreshWind Ministries. I understand that FreshWind is a 501(c) (3) religious non-profit corporation and that I will receive regular IRS-approved statements for tax deduction purposes.

• I do not feel that the Lord is leading me to pledge regularly at this time, but I want to send a one-time gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

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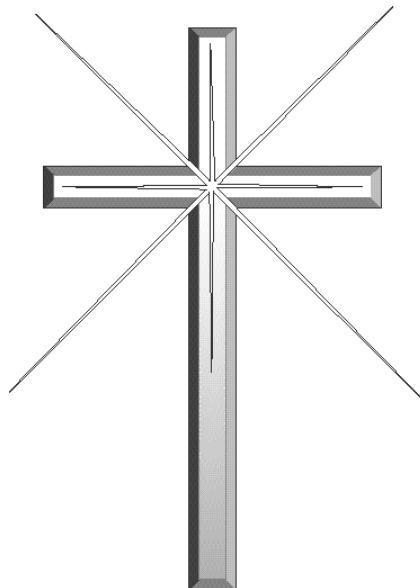
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Please make contribution checks to FreshWind Ministries. Thank you.





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*Making Disciples, Following Jesus' Model. \$5*

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*Holy Vulnerability, The risks and rewards of opening up to God. \$12*

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