



## BIBLICAL CONTRA- DICTIONS

Did you know there are a lot of contradictions in the

Bible? This is what a friend told me last Summer. I suggested that, if he would make a list of these, I could give him an explanation why these were not contradictions. He did not accept my offer.

Let's look at one dealing with prayer - one with some practical applications. Jesus said . . . *and when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.*

Matthew 6:7

Now I know of people who have prayed for the same thing (or person) every day for years! On the other hand, Jesus also taught using the following parable, saying: *"There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "* Then the Lord said, *"Hear what the unjust judge said. 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 18:2-8

This passage seems to indicate that, if we pray for something long enough, God will answer just to keep from being wearied by us. So, should we continue to pray for something (or, especially, someone) day after day after day? Should we pray once and leave it with God? The real answer to both question is "yes!"

Sometimes we should pray once and leave it with God, sometimes we need to pray "without ceasing." As far as the above Scriptures are concerned, "vain repetitions" is the translation of βαττολογέω (battologeo). The last part of the word is the common

Greek verb for "to speak." The first part is an onomatopoeic word ("nursery word") for stuttering (i.e. "bu-bu-but"). It refers to prayers that are uttered over and over again without stopping (such as saying ones "Hail Mary's.") The passage does not have anything to do with praying for something with a heartfelt need day by day.

As far as the passage concerning the importunate widow, E.M. Bounds, in his book, ***THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER***, states *"This parable stresses the central truth of importunate prayer. The widow presses her case till the unjust judge yields. If this parable does not teach the necessity for importunity, it has neither point nor instruction in Take this one thought away, and you have nothing left worth recording. Beyond all cavil, Christ intended it to stand as an evidence of the need that exists, for insistent prayer."*

John Calvin wrote, *"We know that perseverance in prayer is a rare and difficult attainment; and it is a manifestation of our unbelief that, when our first prayers are not successful, we immediately throw away not only hope, but all the ardor of prayer. But it is an undoubted evidence of our Faith, if we are disappointed of our wish, and yet do not lose courage. Most properly, therefore, does Christ recommend to his disciples to persevere in praying."*

Commentary on Matthew, Mark and Luke, Vol 2.

There is a fine line between repetitious prayer and importunate prayer. I am not sure of a certain way of knowing which is which. I know that if we pray for something in faith and God responds by giving us rest and assurance that He will answer, we need to leave it with Him and rest on His promise and not continue to pray. On the other hand, if we pray for the salvation for a loved one today and that person is not saved today, we need to pray again tomorrow. Jesus promised, *And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.*

Matthew 21:22

Note that Jesus taught us to pray, *"Give us this day our daily bread."*

Matthew 6:11

Tomorrow is a new day and we can pray again for a loved one tomorrow.

Wayne

