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Mighty Prevailing Prayer: Experiencing the Power of Answered Prayer

14. The Dynamic of Importunity

This chapter defines importunity as a key part of intense prayer. Importunity is shameless, bold persistence—refusing to accept 'no' and pressing a request to its limits until God answers. The author argues this kind of praying is holy, selfless, and mostly offered on behalf of others.

Key takeaways

- Importunity is more than fervency or desire: it is bold, shameless persistence (Greek *anaideia*) that will not take no for an answer.
- It must be unselfish—true importunity pleads for others (a demon-possessed daughter, a sinning nation, a friend's need), not for self-benefit.
- God is not offended by holy boldness; He welcomes it and even invites it, as with Abraham bargaining for Sodom and Moses pleading for Israel.
- The only limit on importunity is the will of God. God is already merciful and loving by nature; we don't persuade Him to be good, we ask Him to show what He already is.

- God has chosen to tie much of His working to His people's intercession—'our importunity is God's opportunity.' Timid, weak prayer forfeits blessings He would gladly give.
- We must rouse ourselves and take initiative; the Holy Spirit then joins and intensifies our praying with His own groaning and power.

Passages worth keeping

"He prays not at all, who does not press his plea. Cold prayers have no claim on heaven... Fire is the life of prayer."

Bounds captures the chapter's core: prayer without pressing urgency is barely prayer.

"We do not persuade God to be merciful—He is already merciful... We only ask God to manifest what He so infinitely already is."

Corrects a wrong view: importunity isn't wearing God down, it's giving Him occasion to act.

How it connects

The chapter frames importunity as a form of friendship with God: both Abraham and Moses become 'the friend of God' precisely through bold intercession. It only counts as holy when God's own will, name, and glory are what's at stake.

Scripture referenced

- **Luke 11:8** -- The source word 'importunity' (anaideia)—shameless persistence rewarded.
- **Genesis 18:16-33** -- Abraham's bold, respectful bargaining for Sodom; God concedes each point.
- **Exodus 32:10** -- God's 'Leave me alone' tests Moses, who refuses to stop interceding for Israel.
- **Matthew 15:21-28** -- The Syrophoenician woman—her persistence is commended as 'great faith.'
- **Hebrews 4:16** -- Approach the throne of grace with confidence (parrhesia, bold courage).
- **Isaiah 62:6-7** -- Give God no rest until He acts—the mandate to persistent, wrestling prayer.