

Persistent Prayer

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 12**Focus:**

Keep on praying.

Lesson 12**Bible Basis:**

Genesis 18:17-33

Lesson 12**Memory Verse:**

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people. —1 Timothy 2:1

Students will watch a news story about two pen pals meeting in person after nearly 70 years as they explore developing communication with God.

Materials:
 Internet access

Do you get frustrated when your friend doesn't answer a text or message right away? What would happen if you had to wait weeks, months, and years before your messages were answered? We're going to watch a news clip about two friends who persevered through decades of communication before finally meeting in person.

Share the following video with your students [3:58]:

This Is Carolina: Longtime international pen pals meet for the first time

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2KLB7tjggc>

When you finish watching the video, discuss the following questions:

➤ **What do you admire about this long-distance, cross-cultural friendship?** (Their friendship required steady, persistent communication over many years. Neither one gave up despite age or distance. Let students share their reactions.)

➤ **Would this kind of long-term friendship be more or less likely today? Why or why not?** (Most friendships today are of shorter duration. They are based on geographical location or situational context rather than a slow investment of generosity and love.)

➤ **How has communication fundamentally changed in the past seventy years? Is it better or worse to have instant feedback from our friends?** (Texting and digital messaging is convenient and immediate, but it also promotes impatience and impulsivity. We are much less patient and often expect quick reactions to our requests.)

➤ **How do we sometimes project our "instant response" expectation onto God when we pray?** (We can sometimes treat prayer like using Alexa or Siri . . . we expect Him to respond immediately to our wishes.)

These days it's harder to be patient for answers. We expect instant feedback whether we are searching for an answer to something online or waiting for our friends or parents to respond to a text. Today we will learn about God's divine timing and the importance of persistent prayer even in a digital age.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Persistent Prayer

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 12
Focus:
Keep on praying.

Lesson 12
Bible Basis:
Genesis 18:17-33

Lesson 12
Memory Verse:
I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people. —1 Timothy 2:1

Materials:

- Butcher Paper (or printer paper if meeting online)
- Pens

This step will help your students identify and practice patience in prayer. Place students in small groups of 3-4 each. (If your class is meeting online, you can use the breakout room feature of your video chat software.) If you have enough adult leaders, place one in each group to help facilitate during discussion. If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class.

God's timing is divine and often unknowable. In a digital age where knowledge feels instantaneous and customizable, the principle of persistent prayer can feel discouraging.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have supplies ready at home). Instruct groups to select someone with good handwriting to record their answers. (If students are in a virtual group, they can each keep their own notes at home as they discuss.) Read the following prompts to your groups, allowing enough time in between questions to share and write. Encourage students to respond to the prompts on their papers as you give instructions.

Draw a line on your paper, creating two columns. Label one column GOD'S WAY and the other column OUR WAY. As I ask each question, discuss and write down your answers.

- **What are three words that describe God's timing? Write them on the first column.** (Students might write words like *eternal, perfect, mysterious, unknowable, complex, slow, everlasting, unchanging, etc.*)
- **What are some words that describe our understanding of time?** (Students might write words like *temporary, immediate, limited, quick, short-term, simple, small, or cropped.*)
- **What are some words that describe God's character? Add them to the first column.** (Possible words might be *trustworthy, righteous, holy, all-knowing, merciful, consistent, just, compassionate, etc.*)

➤ **In the OUR WAY column, how do we often respond when we pray?** (Possible words might be *impatient, immediate, selfish, demanding*, etc.)

When students have had time to finish, go around the room or virtual classroom, letting groups or individuals share the words in their columns.

Digital communication is an inevitable part of the modern world. Challenge your students to do one of several things this week. First, encourage them to write down prayers that God answered slowly rather than quickly. Remind them to see the long view of God's planning rather than their limited view. Secondly, encourage them to persevere in intercessory prayer for others. If time allows, provide private space for individual prayer and journaling.

Close in prayer.

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