

## **PERSISTENCE PAID OFF**

Ever since my daughter was in grade 6, she has been excited for the day when she could play high school basketball. For three years we sat in the stands cheering on the BCI&VS Mustangs girls' basketball teams. We not only attended their games here in Brantford but also went to see them in Guelph and Kitchener when they played in CWOSSA championships. I remember when my daughter was in grade 8 saying to her at one of the games, "next year that will be you out there!" Little did I know when I said it, that COVID would happen and prevent high school sports taking place last year. Sure enough, my daughter made the junior basketball team at BCI this year. She even got the jersey number she had hoped for.

When they posted the regular season schedule the students were informed that no parents would be allowed to attend the games. We understood the reasons why but still were disappointed to think we could not be in the stands cheering for our daughter. In late September when the season started, I contacted one of the superintendents at the Grand Erie District School Board to see if plans were being made to eventually allow parents to attend. I was told that they had to peel back many layers of protocols, but they hoped to have a plan in place before the season ended. I had hope and so too did my daughter that eventually she would see her parents in the stands. After the first few weeks of the season passed, there was still no news of a plan in place to let parents in. I decided to take a lesson from the Bible and be persistent when it came to asking. Each week I would email the superintendent asking for an update. On one occasion I shared with the superintendent what a neighbouring school board was doing to allow parents to attend indoor games. At times, I reminded this superintendent how many games were left in the regular season and that time to put a policy in place was running out. When news was announced last week that the Catholic school board would now be allowing parents to attend games, I emailed the superintendent right away to see if our Board would be doing the same.

As you can see, I was very persistent on this matter. The reason for my persistence was three-fold. First, I could see how much it meant to my daughter to have us at the games. So many times, she would say to us after

a game, "I wish you could have been there to see me." What parent would not want to make this wish happen? Second, she was losing faith that any progress would happen. As the season progressed, she kept saying, "I am losing hope that you will get to see any games this year." I did not want her to lose hope. I wanted her to learn that if you stay persistent enough that what you hope for may indeed happen. She knew all along how persistent I was in trying to get a decision made on this matter. Thirdly, during the three years when my daughter and I watched all those games I too was looking ahead to the day I could be both a parent and a spectator cheering for my daughter.

Staying persistent on this issue for the past seven weeks has not always been easy. I admit that I got frustrated at times when there appeared to be no movement happening. I was envious at times seeing parents being able to attend high school football games outdoors, but we could not watch our daughter play basketball indoors. I am sure I came across to this superintendent at times as "a pain in the you know what" whenever they saw my name on an email. As hard as it was, persistence paid off. Later today, Nadine and I have tickets to go watch our daughter's basketball game at BCI as they play in the quarter finals. We could not be more excited, and our daughter is even more so knowing her parents will be watching her in the stands.

As I mentioned earlier, I took a lesson from the Bible to be my inspiration to stay persistent and hopeful. In Luke 11 Jesus taught about the importance of staying persistent when it comes to asking in prayer. He told the story of somebody who went to a friend's house at midnight wanting to borrow three loaves of bread, because he had unexpected guests. At first the friend was not willing to help because it was late, and everybody was asleep. Jesus acknowledged that if this man kept knocking long enough, his friend would get up and give him the bread he had been asking for because of his shameless persistence. Jesus told this story to keep us hopeful and persistent when it comes to asking God for things in prayer. We sometimes wonder why God might not answer our prayer requests immediately. Instead of giving up, God wants us to remain persistent in our prayers to Him. By staying persistent, it helps us to change in the following ways:

1. It helps us better understand and express the intensity of our need.
2. It draws us closer to God, so we learn to rely on Him to answer prayer.
3. It helps us recognize God's work in fulfilling our need, so we give Him thanks for making it happen.

I learned a lot of things by being so persistent in praying for this opportunity to happen today. As I shared with you earlier, persistency helped me to understand the reasons why this need was so important to me. One of the reasons I shared was to hopefully show my daughter the importance of being persistent and never giving up. I hope this lesson will be one she carries with her the rest of her life. Secondly, as I relied on God with this request, He once again showed me, that He comes through in the end. I wished it would have happened sooner, but God came through as He always does.

Perhaps there is something that you are hoping for right now that is not happening at the time or pace you desire. I encourage you to ***keep praying, and stay persistent, never losing hope***. As you do this, there will be **many things that God will help you learn** about Him and yourself as well. When your persistence finally pays off with answered prayer, you will be thankful that you stayed persistent just as I am now. It's game day. I haven't said that to my daughter in a very long time. I said it to her today when I dropped her off at school this morning. She smiled and said, "You bet it is game day. I can't wait to see you two in the stands." We have God to thank for making this happen.

**Keep Safe and God Bless**

**Pastor Dean**