

LifeGroup Questions

Based On: James 5:16, James 4:3, Matthew 6:9-13

July 16, 2017

Overview



Does the above sign describe your prayer life? Sometimes, whether you want to admit it or not, your prayer life can look a lot like a laundry list of wants. It has less to do with God and more to do with your current situation and desires. It isn't bad or wrong to make requests before God in prayer, but there needs to be balance.

At some point you have dealt with either family or friends that only contact you when they want something. You cringe when you see the caller id and wonder "what do they want now?" This can put a terrible strain on the relationship. Have you ever wondered what God thinks about your prayers? Does He look down at the heavenly caller id and wonder what do you want now?

Over the past couple weeks we have been focusing in on James 5:16 "The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect (Holman)." The NIV states the prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective. What does it take to have a powerful and effective prayer life?

Earlier in James 4:3 it states: "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." Could it be that our prayers are not powerful or effective because we simply don't know how to pray? Prayer becomes more self-centered than God centered. In Matthew 6:9-13 Jesus gives his disciples an example prayer. In just 5 verses Jesus summarizes how He wants us to pray. It focuses on praise, God's will, forgiveness, avoiding temptation, and daily needs. Maybe to have powerful and effective prayers they should come closer in structure to the Lord's Prayer and stay clear of just listing requests.

Bible Study

1. Read Matthew 7:7-8. Jesus is telling His followers to ask and they shall receive. Discuss some things you typically pray for and why you pray for them.
2. Read James 4:3. This seems to be in contradiction to the passage in Matthew 7. Why do you believe some prayers go unanswered?
3. The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is very short and simple. Discuss why Jesus would give such a simple prayer as the example of how to pray.
4. If you knew nothing about the Lord's Prayer and were reading it for the first time would you describe it as powerful and effective? Why or Why not?

5. How does your relationship with God change when He either answers or doesn't answer your prayers?
6. One way to have effective prayer is to understand ineffective prayer. Discuss some selfish motives people have when they pray. How can you keep your motives pure?
7. Most believers would like their prayers to be powerful and effective. Think of some steps you can take to strengthen your prayer life.