

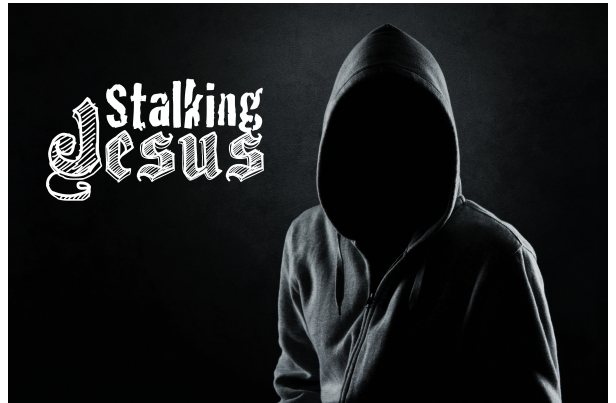


C¹ onechurch

bigIdea small group discussion

We've all been disappointed when our prayers don't get answered the way we hoped. Are we praying incorrectly? Is there a better way to pray? Does God just not care? This week, we'll look at why looking for specific answers in prayer can be disappointing, and what to do about it.

BIG IDEA: Prayer is not about getting the right answer as it is about talking to the right person.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. People pray for all kinds of things. What is the strangest prayer request you've ever heard (or made yourself)?
2. As a child, did you have a standard prayer that you recited? If so, how much can you remember?
3. What do you like about prayer? What aspects of prayer bother you?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 11:1.* What motivates the disciples to ask about prayer at this point?
5. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 11:5-8.* What does the parable (story) teach us about prayer?
6. How do you tend to react when waiting for answers to your prayers?
7. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 11:9-13.* How do verses 9-10 relate to the parable? What do verses 9-11 seem to promise? How do verses 11-13 clarify the intent of verses 9-10?
8. How is verse 13 a 'surprise ending'? Do you agree with Chris that the gift of the Holy Spirit is a better gift than whatever you happened to be asking for?
9. In this message, Chris said one of the reasons we feel we don't hear from God is because we think of prayer as a way of getting answers rather than of talking to the right person. If you thought of prayer as more of talking to the right person, rather than getting the right answer, how might that change your prayer life?

GOING DEEPER

1. Jesus was most concerned to tell His disciples:
 - a. What to pray for.
 - b. The proper attitude of prayer
 - c. What words to say.
 - d. Who they were praying to.
2. The point of the parable about the neighbor is that:
 - a. We give up too soon when we ask God
 - b. We should refuse to take "No" for an answer.
 - c. God is as responsive as our reluctant neighbor.
 - d. God gives us what we want not in exasperation, but in joy.
 - e. From God, the answer is always, "Yes"
 - f. We should keep praying, no matter what the answer is.
3. How have you benefited from persistently asking, seeking, and knocking?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 11:9-13.* In contrast to the sleepy neighbor, what is God like?
5. What difference would it make in your praying to think of God as your Heavenly Father who gives the best?

6. What do you learn from this passage about your part in prayer and God's part?
7. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Mark 9:14-29.* In your efforts to trust God's character and power, you may question whether your faith is strong enough. What do you learn about the father's faith?
8. How does this mixture of belief and unbelief affect Jesus' response?
9. What requests seem beyond the limits of your faith? Why?
10. When you focus on a problem, it seems to grow and faith shrinks. How can focusing on God rather than a problem stimulate your faith?
11. Based upon this study, confess any lack of persistence or trust in your prayers. Thank God for His eagerness to give you the best. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to keep asking.

MOVING FORWARD

Knock. Knock. Knock. Seek. Seek. Seek. Ask. Ask. Ask. If you badger God enough, He will give you what you want. Sounds like a strategy, doesn't it? That if we push the right buttons hard enough and long enough, we will get what we want. But **Prayer is not a button to be pushed; it's a relationship to be pursued.**

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

If you get the right answer, all you get is an answer. If you get the right person, you can get so much more. This week in your prayer life, focus on the relationship more than you focus on the result. See what happens.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." Luke 11:13

