

small things BIG DIFFERENCE

Discussion

Talking through the message helps you to turn what God is saying to you into action steps. Begin with the key discussion question, the privately answer the personal reflection questions. Then, conclude by deciding on your next steps.

The Main Idea:

Prayer is putting faith into action. It is the act of taking ourselves off the throne of our hearts and admitting that we need help from the One who can give it. The lack of prayer = the growth of pride.

"Prayer is a personal, communicative response to the knowledge of God." - Keller

Key Questions for Discussion (to discuss in groups):

As a group read Luke 11:1-13 together.

- How does the first word that Jesus uses, to teach his disciples to pray, alter the expectations of our prayers?
- What does the term "hallowed be Your name" mean? Why is an important way to open the prayer?
- "Your Kingdom come" directs our attention and our prayers in which direction? Why is this important?
- In the context of the two previous sentences, why does Jesus mention food?
- Focussing on the the phrase "and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.". What does this say about those who can approach God? What does Jesus offer? What does this say about God's character?

Read the following story and try to make sense of it in the context of Luke 11:1-13. Ask:

- How is God's name hallowed?
- How is God's Kingdom furthered?
- What is God's provision for them?
- What is God's promise for them?

A newborn baby screamed and cried night after night until her parents thought they would go crazy. They prayed desperately that she would stop crying just long enough to let them get some sleep, but their prayers made no notable difference. If anything, praying seemed to make the crying worse and eventually they made a decision to stop asking God for help altogether. Jim and Molly's crying baby is now a happy, well-adjusted young adult and her parents are dedicated members of their local church. Yet in an honest discussion one evening, Jim opened up about the long-term impact of that simple unanswered prayer on his relationship with God. He admitted that he no longer expects God to answer his most personal prayer requests. So for twenty years he has only prayed for others, almost never for himself. He and Molly still expect the Father to do miracles for other people, just not for them.

For Personal Reflection (to do at home):

- Using your journal (or a piece of paper) write out Luke 11:1-13 in your own words.
- If you've ever experienced unanswered prayer, choose a Bible verse and use the A.C.T.S. process to reform your prayer request. How does this transform your thinking about prayer?

- Hints:
- How is God's name hallowed? - God is described by Jim and Molly's initial actions as the only One who can help them. This shows faith on their part and exalts the name of God.
 - How is God's Kingdom furthered? - Even though Jim and Molly are discouraged in their personal prayer life they still believe that God intervenes in people's lives (they just lacked the encouragement to pray for their own lives). Perhaps they didn't believe that God was THEIR Father. Think back to the first session when we discussed being adopted by God. Jim and Molly need to understand and believe their new position and condition in Christ.
 - What is God's provision for them? - God has graciously allowed Jim and Molly to become part of a church that isn't afraid of asking difficult questions. God is still drawing Jim and Molly to greater depths of knowing Him
 - What is God's promise them? - God is still their Father and although He didn't answer their prayer as they might have wanted, He knows what is best for them. From this process God is revealing more and more of his will and ways to them.