



SERMON NOTES

ASKING FOR A FRIEND

Week 1 (January 24):
“Do My Prayers Really Matter?”
*Matthew 21:21-22,
2 Corinthians 12:7-10*

I. Jesus on Prayer

- A. Matthew 21:21-22 leads to confusion when our prayers go _____.
- B. Jesus often spoke using a figure of speech called _____.
- C. We need to consider what would our world look like if God _____ all our prayers?

II. Unanswered Prayers

- A. There are two _____ of unanswered prayer in the New Testament. (II Corinthians 12:7-10, Luke 22:42)
- B. God works _____ the situations from which we have not been delivered as we asked.

III. How God Answers Prayer

- A. God uses _____ to answer prayer.
- B. God will not suspend another’s free _____ to answer my prayers.

IV. The Purpose of Prayer

- A. Prayer _____ and comforts.
- B. Prayer puts life in proper _____.
- C. Prayer is how we enhance our _____ with God.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message

ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

For various reasons, people sometimes ask or think the question “Why should I pray?” God already knows what I need, I can’t change God’s mind, and God didn’t answer my prayers in time of crisis, so what’s the point. But what if there is something we don’t understand about the purpose of prayer?

Monday: Luke 22:39-46

Jesus encouraged his disciples to pray. Note the prayer focus he suggested to them. What temptations did the disciples face (and, mostly, give in to) in the hours ahead? In what ways can prayer strengthen you for your spiritual struggles?

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Paul did not blame God for his ailment but he did ask God three times to heal him. What good “case” can you imagine Paul, who often traveled on foot, making for God to give him full health? Did his constant physical struggle mean God didn’t care about him?

Wednesday: Luke 5:16; Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23

In Matthew 6:8, Jesus voiced the reason for not praying that some of us give: “your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” But he went on, “This, then, is how you should pray” (and taught the Lord’s Prayer). If prayer isn’t to inform God of your needs, what purpose(s) does it serve? What do we miss when we don’t pray?

Thursday: Luke 18:1-8

Often Jesus’ parables taught by similarity: “God is like this familiar activity or thing.” In this story, he taught by contrast: “God is not like this unjust judge. If even a bad judge can be persuaded, imagine how much more God wants to listen to your prayers.” The real question, he said, is not about God, but us: “Will the Son of Man find faith on the earth?” How hard is it for you to have faith?

Friday: Philippians 4:4-7

Paul was a prisoner when he wrote this letter (Philippians 1:13-14). (Many scholars think he was in Rome (4:22). 1:20-26 shows his uncertainty. He might be freed—or executed.) This background shows that Paul’s words weren’t just religious “happy talk.” With every reason to be anxious, he wrote about rejoicing, prayer and peace. Can you rejoice under difficult circumstances? Why or why not?

MOVING FORWARD

Phillip Yancey has written that “the simplest answer to the question ‘Why pray?’ is ‘because Jesus did.’ That should be reason enough, but there is a purpose to our prayers. Prayer encourages and comforts, prayer puts life in proper perspective, and prayer is how we enhance our relationship with God. This week spend some time in prayer.

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) unanswered B) hyperbole, C) answered. IIA) examples, IIB) through. IIIA) people, B) will. IIIA) encourages, B) perspective, C) relationship.