



Small Group Guide: The Forgotten Jesus

“Why Our Prayers Don't Get Answered”

Icebreaker

Think of a time when something you desperately wanted did not work out, and later you were grateful it did not. Share briefly with the group.

Key Scripture

Matthew 7:7-11 CSB

“Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.

Main Takeaways

- God is a good Father who gives good gifts. Jesus uses a "light to heavy" argument, called a "kal v'homer" in Hebrew, to make the point that if even flawed, sinful human parents give good things to their children, how much more will a perfect heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him. God is not withholding. He is not cruel. He does not give stones when we ask for bread.
- The biggest problem is not unanswered prayer; it is not asking at all. Many believers only cry out to God when everything has fallen apart. The call here is to maintain constant, ongoing communion with God rather than treating prayer as a last resort.
- Unconfessed sin creates distance in our prayer life. As Psalm 66:18 indicates, harboring sin in our hearts hinders our communication with God. Confession and repentance are essential to maintaining intimacy with Him.
- David and Saul represent two ways of living. David was a man who continually inquired of the Lord, waited on Him, and trusted His timing. Saul sought every other source but God and lived in a cycle of highs and lows as a result. The contrast challenges us to examine whose pattern we are following.
- Staying "plugged in" spiritually produces sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. When we maintain intimacy with Christ daily, we are more immediately aware when something is off, whether sin, a wrong decision, or a misaligned opportunity. We do not have to scramble to reconnect; we are already connected.

- "No" is sometimes God's greatest gift. As Pastor Robby shared, God sometimes places an open door in front of us not to see if we will walk through it, but to see if we will walk past it. Trusting God means accepting His "no" as an answer, not just a delay.
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Discussion Questions

The Text

- In Matthew 7:7-11, Jesus uses the image of a father giving bread or fish to his child. What does this illustration reveal about God's character and His posture toward our prayers?
- The Hebrew teaching technique called "kal v'homer" moves from a lighter, lesser example to a heavier, greater conclusion. How does Jesus use this in the passage? Why do you think He chose this approach rather than simply stating that God answers prayer?
- Luke's version of this teaching (Luke 11:13) says the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask, while Matthew says God gives "good things." What do you think is the significance of that difference? What does it tell us about what God most wants to give us?

Personal Reflection

- Pastor Robby said that the biggest problem for most Christians is not that prayer goes unanswered, but that we are not asking at all. Do you find that to be true in your own life? What tends to keep you from praying consistently?
- He described the contrast between David and Saul as essentially an issue of time; David waited on the Lord while Saul acted on his own when God seemed silent. Where do you see yourself in that contrast? Are there areas of your life where you tend to act like Saul rather than David?
- Kandi shared that reading through 1 Samuel revealed to her that she sometimes seeks answers through songs, books, or other sources rather than going directly to God and His Word. What are the sources you most naturally turn to first when you need guidance? What does that reveal about where you place your trust?
- Pastor Robby described staying spiritually connected as being like a refrigerator that is always humming because it is plugged in. What does that kind of ongoing intimacy with Christ look like practically in your daily life? What makes it difficult to maintain?

Application

- Pastor Robby offered three practical steps when prayer seems to go unanswered:
 - Examine and confess unconfessed sin
 - Ask God for wisdom, trusting the promise in James 1 that He gives it generously
 - Accept that "no" is sometimes God's best answer
- Which of these three is most challenging for you personally, and why?

- He also shared that "nobody ever asks you to do something for your benefit; it is always for theirs." How does that principle help clarify how to evaluate opportunities, requests, or open doors in your life?
 - Pastor Robby described God as someone flying a drone over a parade, able to see the entire procession at once, while we can only see what is directly in front of us. How does that image change the way you think about trusting God's perspective over your own in a current situation you are facing?
 - Think about a decision you are currently navigating. Using what was discussed today, what would it look like to genuinely seek God's wisdom in that situation before seeking any other source?
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Closing Prayer

- Thank God that He is a good Father who does not give stones when we ask for bread.
- Confess the ways we have sought every other source before seeking Him.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit's wisdom and sensitivity in the decisions each member is facing.
- Surrender specific "open doors" to God, asking for clarity about whether to walk through them or past them.
- Trust Him with the prayers that have felt unanswered, believing that His "no" is as good as His "yes."