

C3 LEADERS QUESTIONS

S2021-WEEK 7

3/14/21

Getting Started with a Warm-Up:

- What do you find it easier to do consistently, read your bible or pray?
- Share with the group a time when God gave you a significant answer to your prayers?
- Share with the group a time when you felt your prayers were not being heard?

Getting Down to Business:

The following questions are following this format: Scripture/Observation, Application, and Prayer (SOAP).

1) Scripture/Observation:

- A) Read Psalm 37:3-7. *What are the four actions you see in these verses that would enhance your prayer life? How can these four actions enhance your prayer life?* (Below is an excerpt from the Bible Panorama commentary that you can access by following the link after the excerpt.)

3 Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. 4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. 5 Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. 6 He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun. 7 Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. (Psalm 37:3-7, NLT)

The Bible Panorama

V 1–8: RESTFUL RELATIONSHIP - David is troubled by what seems to be the success of the wicked. He passes on to others what God has shown him. God tells him not to fret because that 'only causes harm'. Rather, he must trust in the Lord, to dwell and feed on Him, to delight himself in God, to commit his way to God, to rest in and wait for Him, and to cease from anger and wrath. These

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responses enable a man of God to stand, regardless of the outward circumstances or inner pressures.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+37&version=NLT>

- B) Read Matthew 7:7-12 (especially verse 11) and Psalm 37:4. How do you understand the importance and purpose of prayer? [hint: God wants to give us the desires of our hearts, and He wants to give us good gifts] (Below are excerpts from the Bible Panorama commentary and IVP New Testament Commentary Series that you can access by following the link after the excerpt.)
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Effective Prayer

7 “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 “You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? 10 Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! 11 So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.* (Mt. 7:7-11, NLT)

The Bible Panorama

V 7–11: FAITH - Faith consists of asking, seeking, and knocking, with the sure promise that God will answer even more than any earthly father will answer the needs of his own children.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+7&version=NLT>

The IVP New Testament Commentary Series

Good Gifts Guaranteed (7:7-12)

Although Matthew has already offered a longer section on prayer (6:5-15), he emphasizes prayer again here. Because in the context the supreme object of "seeking" is the kingdom (6:33) and the door to be opened is the gate of salvation (7:13; contrast Lk 11:5-13), this prayer may especially represent a prayer for God's rule (compare 6:9-10 and the prayer for empowerment by the Spirit in Lk 11:2-13). But in any case, the specific application of the saying depends on its more general principle concerning how God hears prayers of faith (21:21-22; compare 14:28-31).

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God's Fatherly Care Is Our Assurance That He Will Answer (7:11)

Jesus uses the familiar Jewish method of arguing by a "how much more" analogy. God who gives good gifts to children may not give everything every child asks, but he will not withhold his gifts from those who desire and seek what is right (Ps 37:4; 84:11). Our Father will give appropriate consideration to each request his children make, watching out for their true needs (compare Mt 6:8).

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mt.+7%3A7-12&version=NLT>

- C) Read Luke 18:1-8. What parallels or similarities do you see between this passage and the Matthew 7:7-11 passage? [Hint: "ask, seek, knock" and the widow's persistent request for justice, and our heavenly Father gives good gifts and an unrighteous judge shows justice to the widow] (Below is an excerpt from the Bible Panorama commentary that you can access by following the link after the excerpt.)

In Luke 18:6 Jesus said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge." So, what is the lesson? (Hint: Also read verse 7. There are two purposes in this lesson: God will grant you justice, and be persistent in your prayers.)

Parable of the Persistent Widow

1 One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. 2 "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. 3 A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' 4 The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, 5 but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'" 6 Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. 7 Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?" (Luke 18:1-8, NLT)

The Bible Panorama commentary

V 1–8: PERSISTENT PRAYER - Jesus teaches by a parable how a persistent widow gets the results she wants from an unjust judge by going to him repeatedly. Our heavenly Father is more willing to answer prayer than that, and

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we must never give up. Jesus asks a question which reveals that true faith will be hard to find when He returns. God's people have always been in a minority.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+18%3A1-7&version=NLT>

- D) Read John 15:7-10. In verse 7, Jesus said, "you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted." But what does His granting of our request depend on? [Hint: verses 7 and 10] (Below is an excerpt from the IVP New Testament Commentary Series that you can access by following the link after the excerpt.)

7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. 9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. (John 15:7-10, NLT)

The IVP New Testament Commentary Series

The first section (vv. 7-10) draws out once again the relation between love and obedience (cf. 14:21, 23-24) and views this relation in light of the theme of mutual indwelling. Jesus' dwelling in the believer is now referred to as his words remaining in them (v. 7). If they remain in him and his words in them, Jesus promises their prayers will be answered (v. 7; cf. 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24, 26). To have his words remaining in them means to share his mind and his will. They are to be caught up into his own focus on the doing of God's will. Accordingly, they will pray for his purposes rather than for their own selfish desires. Jesus' purposes have been to reveal God and share his life and love so people will be brought into union with him in his new community. Such will be the concerns also of the disciples who have Jesus' words in them, and God will answer their prayers as they live according to their life in Christ and his life in them.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15%3A7&version=NLT>

2) **Application:** What important truth about prayer from the sermon and/or from this study have you learned or been reminded of?

3) **Prayer:** Pray that God will give us persistence, patience, and perspective in our daily prayers.