

It's a Wonderful Life – Keep Praying

Study Questions

Philippians 4:4-7

Warm-Up

1) Humans are imperfect communicators. Whether it's because of different backgrounds, languages, or assumptions about the universe, words don't always come across as intended. **Have you experienced any humorous (or maybe not-so-humorous) moments of miscommunication? What was the misunderstanding rooted in?**

A Little Deeper

2) [Luke 11:9-13] Prayer is a believer's communication with God, and oftentimes, that communication takes the form of a request. An analogy for prayer is often that of a child asking a loving parent for something. **What are some noteworthy requests you have made of your parents or your children have made of you?**

3) Our understanding of God distinctly shapes our communication with Him. **What are some misconceptions of God that could hold us back from speaking with Him as we should? What are some truths about God that can empower us to pray rightly?**

4) [Matthew 6:6; Romans 8:28] The Bible assures us that God is eager to do good to us; but sometimes, we do not get what we ask for, like when George Bailey got punched in the mouth immediately after his prayer for help. **Have you had an experience where you prayed in a time of need and then felt like your prayer was unheard or like you were punched in the mouth?**

5) [Matthew 11:28; Philippians 4:7] God is not Santa Claus, so maybe our communication with Him should not always just be asking for things. What if the point of prayer is not primarily to get stuff? Even if the words of our prayers often take the form of requests, **what can communication with God do for us that is even better than getting what's on our "Christmas list"?**

Bringing It Home

6) Frank Laubach wrote, *"The trouble with nearly everybody who prays is that he says 'Amen' and runs away before God has a chance to reply. Listening to God is far more important than giving Him your ideas."* Do you find this to be true in your own life? If prayer is communication WITH God, **how might you adapt your prayer habits to give God more space to share in the conversation?**

7) Jesus is our greatest example of a pray-er. We see many glimpses of His lifestyle of prayer throughout the Gospels (*e.g.* Matthew 11:25-26; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12-13; Luke 9:28-19; Luke 22:39-41; John 12:27-30; John 17). **What are some characteristics of Jesus' prayer life, and what is one characteristic that you would like to have more in your own life?**

8) [Hebrews 4:15] It is certainly possible to look at Jesus' example and think, "I could never pray like that." But as the Christmas tune reminds us, "The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger, In all our trials born to be our friend. He knows our need, to our weaknesses no stranger." **How can recognizing Jesus' full humanity help us in our prayers?**

Prayer

We've talked about it. Now, let's do it! Take a shot at putting into practice at least one of the things we've learned together about prayer, as we encourage and bless each other through our prayer time.