



INTRODUCTION

Part 5 - Changes through Prayer

As Christians, one of the most powerful and underutilized resources we have is prayer. The New Testament writer James wrote, "You have not because you ask not."

God invites us to talk with him about everything we face in life! He is a Father who loves to give good things to his children. But often, we are like the disciples of Jesus, who said to him, "Teach us to pray." We don't know how to pray or what we should pray about.

This message series is titled, Ask. Let's explore together how amazing prayer is and how we can grow more effective in prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the reasons God may not give us some of the things we pray for? Why might a "no" answer from God be a blessing in disguise? Can you think of any examples from your own life?
2. Sometimes God uses prayer to change our circumstances, but other times, God changes us instead of our circumstances when we pray. How does prayer sometimes change us?
3. In the Old Testament book of Jonah, God told Jonah to preach to the people who lived in the city of Nineveh that judgment was coming. Jonah didn't want to do it because he knew that if the people responded to his message, God wouldn't end up judging them. Read Jonah 4:1-3. Why do you think Jonah wanted to die? Does his response to the situation seem reasonable to you? Explain your answer.
4. How might Jonah's description of God in verses 1-3 help us when we pray? Why do you think God refused to grant Jonah's request to take his life?
5. Read Jonah 4:4-11. Why did Jonah care so much about the plant? What do you think the "root problem" was?
6. How do you think Jonah could have been so hard-hearted toward the people of Nineveh? Why was it important for God to change Jonah's attitude concerning the people? What might help us grow in our concern for other people?
7. Have you ever prayed for someone else to "change," and God ended up changing you instead?
8. How might you apply this lesson to your life?

APPLICATION

Prayer is a dialogue with God. We ask God for things, but sometimes He has other plans. As we continue to pray, God can help us understand what He's doing or what He wants to do in us or through us. Sometimes we need to change.

When we don't see the answers for which we are hoping, we should come to God to ask for wisdom to understand what He wants to accomplish in our life through our situation. We may not realize that often God's answer comes in the form of a change that takes place within us.

When we ask God to remove a problem, He may change us to see it differently. When we ask Him to fix a situation, He may fix us to be able to handle the circumstance. When we ask God to open a door, He might choose to open our eyes to a new opportunity. When we ask Him to provide for a need, He may show us that we can meet the need. God doesn't always change our circumstances when we pray; He sometimes changes us..

KEY VERSES

Jonah 1-3	Jonah 4:1-11
Psalms 139:7	Exodus 34:6-7
Jonah 3:5	James 4:3