## LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## WHAT IF ... PART 2

Pastor Miles McPherson - September 14, 2014

This week, we're continuing to explore the idea that God has called us to pray into reality, "Thy Kingdom come... on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10)

Prayer is a gift from God, the primary means by which we commune with our loving Father. For that reason, the Bible is full of commands and instructions about prayer. Unfortunately, most of our prayer lives aren't entirely based on these truths; instead, most of us have bought into some lie about the nature of prayer. Until we confront those lies, we won't be able to be truly intimate with God in the way He desires.

## MEMORY VERSE

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

(James 5:16)

## **DISCUSSION STARTERS**

Describe your prayer life in one word. Why did you choose that word in particular?

# STUDY QUESTIONS

There are many lies concerning prayer we learn from Satan and the world around us. Three of the most common are:

- "My prayers can't be really honest"
- "My prayers don't really change anything" and
- "My prayers don't really matter to God"

Which of these is the most personal to you? Why?

How do you think God feels about these lies? Why?



What do these lies communicate about God's character?

Each of these lies is built on a subtle charge against the character of God. When we believe them, we are making a silent statement about what we believe. To combat these lies, we must base our prayers first and foremost on the character of God. When we remind ourselves of who He truly is, our prayer lives will fall in line with His character.

#### → Read Matthew 6:5-8

Put yourself in the place of the hypocrites Jesus described. What lies about prayer did they believe? How did those lies affect the way they prayed?

Based on the way they prayed, how would you describe the god they believed in?

How does the fact that God already knows our needs actually fuel our prayers?

Why is it important to recognize the difference between our wants and our needs when we pray?

We can pray confidently and honestly because we know that God is both all-knowing and all-loving toward His children. We don't need to hold anything back from Him because He knows our hearts better than we do. When we pray, we can trust that ultimately He is going to act in our best interest because He loves us.

### PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

#### → Read Matthew 6:9

How might truly recognizing God as our Father dramatically counter the lies we've discussed today about prayer?

What differences do you see between the attitude of Jesus' model prayer and the way you usually pray?



What specific action or attitude regarding prayer is God asking you to change right now?

# **PRAYER TIME**

Pray as honestly and simply as you can to close your group. Ask the Lord to remind you of His character, and ask that His character would be your focus when you pray.

# TAKE IT HOME

When we remind ourselves of God's unchangingly good and loving character, we can approach prayer with humility. Rather than using endless words that are meant to impress other people, we can simply and honestly talk to God, trusting that over time He will actually use our prayers to mold us into the image of Jesus.

Practice daily prayer with honesty today, sharing your inner thoughts and feelings. Check out the prayer in Psalm 43; notice the honesty of emotion, as well as the reflection on who God is and the deliberate choice to praise Him!

Use Matthew 6:9-13 as a prayer guide this week, praying slowly through the Lord's prayer, phrase by phrase, adding your personal prayers to each topic introduced.



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>i</sup> Study notes from smallgroup.com