

MARK THE KING AND THE CROSS

4. Applications

1. **EFFECTIVE PRAYER HAPPENS WHEN WE PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE THAT GOD HEARS AND RESPONDS.** Know God hears us, loves us and promises to respond to our prayers. He can even do the impossible when we pray. When we pray, we must still submit to God's will, trust God's wisdom, and God's timing on the answer.
2. **EFFECTIVE PRAYER HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE FORGIVING OF OTHERS LIKE GOD IS FORGIVING OF US.** Any time we refuse to forgive, we make a mockery of the costly forgiveness we have received from God through Jesus. Unforgiveness shuts down of our prayer life. If we persist in unforgiveness, it can even shut down our relationship with God.

5. Actions

1. **FORGIVE THE PEOPLE THAT HURT YOU DEEPLY.** That may be your spouse, your child, your parents, someone in the office, or someone at church. Refuse to keep thinking about the hurt. Focus on the great debt of sin we had to God and the infinite exorbitant cost Jesus paid to forgive us, then extend forgiveness for the much smaller sins others have done against you.
2. **PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING WITH CONFIDENCE THAT GOD HEARS AND IS EAGER TO RESPOND.**

Life Group Questions

1. Read Mark 11:20-25. Why is it wrong to see these verses as a promise for health, wealth, and prosperity?
2. Throwing a mountain into the sea is a figure of speech. What was it used to describe in the ancient world? What does this tell us God can do in response to our prayers?
3. What is the relationship between prayer, faith, and forgiveness?
4. Sometimes it is hard to forgive. What false belief is at work in our heart when we refuse to forgive others? (See Matthew 18:21-35)
5. What does your prayer life look like? How do you want it to change after this study? How does knowing God's eagerness to answer our prayers, yet answer those prayers according to His will, His wisdom, and His timing change the way you think about prayer and the result you expect?
6. What is the difference between forgiving someone and the losing trust in someone? When we extend forgiveness, does that mean we restore full trust? When does an unwillingness to trust become an unwillingness to forgive?
7. Is there anyone you struggled to forgive in your past? Why was it hard to forgive them? Is there anyone you need to forgive now?

Mark 11:22-25 – How Can I Pray To Make A Difference?

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When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" Matthew 21:20 (ESV)

1. Effective prayer starts with faith in God.

And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God." Mark 11:22 (ESV)

A. Effective prayer believes that God can do the impossible.

"Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him." Mark 11:23 (ESV)

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." Mark 10:27 (ESV)

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
James 1:6-8 (ESV)

B. Effective prayer is confident God will respond to our requests.

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Mark 11:24 (ESV)

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" Matthew 7:7-11 (ESV)

2. What about the times God doesn't answer our prayers the way we hope?

A. God promises to answer prayers to help us bring Him honor. He doesn't promise to answer prayers to give ourselves more glory.

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:9–13 (ESV)

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. James 4:3 (ESV)

B. We know God answers prayers in line with His revealed will. We don't know if he will answer prayers for His unrevealed will.

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. 1 John 5:14–15 (ESV)

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)

C. When we ask God for our will, we must still submit to God's will.

And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Mark 14:36 (ESV)

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Philippians 1:12–14 (ESV)

D. When we ask for things, we must trust God's timing on the answers.

...The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:16 (ESV)

3. Effective prayer happens when we forgive others completely, like we have been forgiven.

And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mark 11:25 (ESV) (But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses Mark 11:26 — ESV Footnote)

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times." Matthew 18:21–22 (ESV)

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt." Matthew 18:23–27 (ESV)

But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place." Matthew 18:28–31 (ESV)

Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." Matthew 18:32–35 (ESV)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)