

Dear God... Sincerely, Me

Discussion Questions

1. When it comes to prayer, what are some aspects of prayer that come easy for you and what ones are harder? Share a bit about your own prayer life.
2. We talked about “learned helplessness,” a psychological reality that happens when a person comes to believe that nothing they do will change or improve the outcome. When it comes to prayer, learned helplessness can be a factor. Is there something in your life that you have simply stopped praying for? What was the turning point where you shifted from persistently asking to putting that request into the "I'm not going to pray about it anymore" category?
3. When we stop asking God for things, it can erode our trust or make us less likely to believe that big things can happen. How have you seen an unanswered prayer—or a "no" from God—affect your intimacy with Him or change the way you view His willingness to help?
4. As a group, read the story from Luke 11:5-8. Try to hear it through the cultural lenses we talked about on Sunday: "Who among you" implies that no neighbor would ever say no, and "shameless audacity" actually refers to the neighbor's deep sense of honor and his duty to protect the village from shame. Growing up or hearing this story in Western culture, many of us were taught that the neighbor represents a reluctant God who only answers if we pester and annoy Him enough. How does it change your view of prayer to realize that the neighbor responds because of his own goodness, honor, and character rather than because he was nagged into submission?

5. The neighbor in the story cares deeply about his community and refuses to let shame fall on the village by letting a traveler go hungry. In what ways does it comfort or challenge you to think of God acting not just for your individual comfort, but out of a massive commitment to His own character and the overarching good of the world?
6. We said: When you don't get what you asked for, look for what you did receive from God. Jesus talks about the gift of the Holy Spirit in Luke 11:11-13. Reflecting back on things you've prayed for, where might the Holy Spirit have been moving?
7. Where do you think God might be intervening in your life now, whether in the macro (big picture) or micro (small detail) layers? How do you see that movement connected to your prayers?
8. The invitation this week is to revive a prayer request you previously gave up on and commit to asking for it again—while actively retraining your eyes to watch for how he responds. To the extent you feel comfortable, share with the group what that resurrected prayer request is.