

**PRAYER: AWE & INTIMACY**  
**Discussion Guide 7, Week of Feb 24**

**For Small Groups:** How was your experience with last week's challenge to Bring Your Sins To God?

**INTIMACY: STRUGGLE SERMON SUMMARY**

**Petition and supplication are our most common ways to pray, but we struggle with asking for help.** Here are three obstacles to asking for help, and what we can do instead:

1. We struggle with self-sufficiency, which leads to wrong desires and motives (Rev 3:17-20, James 4: 2-4.)  
Instead, we can **talk it out with God**, explain our reasons for why we think what we're asking for is best, and allow the Spirit to guide our thinking.
2. We struggle with safe and shallow prayers (Psalm 60.)  
Instead, we can pray **honest and vulnerable prayers**, trusting God with what's on our hearts. We can think of prayer like talking with a good, good father or a best friend.
3. We struggle with doubting God's goodness (Matt 7:7-11.).  
Instead, we can **tell God we want his best**. It might take time, thought, energy to be able to say it from the heart, but we can make the choice to trust that God is good, loving, powerful, and sovereign.

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. How do you usually feel about asking another person for help? What do you think about? Do you think the same way, or differently, when asking God for help?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why should we ask God for help? How have you experienced God's help and answers to prayer recently? Share any positive experiences to encourage one another!

3. Timothy Keller says: *If we believed that God was in charge and our actions [and prayers] meant nothing, it would lead to discouraged passivity. If on the other hand we really believed that our actions changed God's plan - it would lead to paralyzing fear. If both are true, however, we have the greatest incentive for diligent effort, and yet we can always sense God's everlasting arms under us (Prayer, p. 225).*

How do God's sovereignty (being in charge) and God's goodness (responding to our prayers) affect your prayers? What other attributes or beliefs about God are meaningful to you when you pray?

4. What obstacles to asking for help do you struggle with? Do any of the 3 obstacles mentioned in the sermon (self-sufficiency, safe prayer, doubt) get in your way? Are there other obstacles for you? What are some ways you can face and overcome them?
5. Is there an unanswered prayer that you are struggling with? How does it affect you, your faith, and/or your relationship with God?
6. As we end the prayer sermon series and discussions, consider how you want to grow in prayer. Share one thing you've learned, want to continue to do, or want to do differently in your prayer life.