THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

April 12 &13 '08

"Reboot" Series

When its time to adjust the "default" settings...
Studies from the Sermon on the Mount

This Week's Message: "Just Ask...?"
Pastor Mark Burch

Matthew 7:7-12

We witness it nearly every day…the sacrifices that good parents make for their children. The financial and time commitments that go into raising healthy kids are HUGE but you seldom hear a parent complain! Jesus points out the best of our traits as earthly parents and then draws a comparison…if this is how good moms and dads look after their children… how much more will your heavenly Father…?

How much have we understood about the Father's generous heart toward His children? Will we trust? Do we believe? Will we be bold enough to ask?

I John 5:14-15 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.

Do you have questions about Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount? Send them to sermonquestions@willowparkchurch.com and then listen to future messages for the answers!

Home Group Study Questions

History (Making it Personal)

1. Are we afraid to ask God boldly to bless us – to lead us – to provide for us? What has been your experience in prayer? Have you known someone who God seemed to "really" listen to? What was it about their praying that was different?
2. Some people could take this "blank cheque" Jesus offers and abuse the privilege…Has anyone ever given you an outrageously generous gift? Almost like a blank cheque? How did it make you feel? How did you respond? Can you explain your emotions at that time?
3. Off the top of your head…list things that we can say with confidence would be "God's will" for us to ask for …then take some time to reflect on your list…do we REALLY pray boldly?

Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)

4. Read Matthew 7:7-12 and talk about what stands out to you in the first reading of the text. If a person were hearing this for the first time – how do you think they would hear it? What does it tell us about ourselves and about God?
5. Read I Kings 3:4-15. Focus especially on vv 7-9 and talk about the humility expressed in Solomon's request. How does this attitude affect what we choose to ask God for?
6. This story sounds almost like finding a genie in a lamp and being offered three great wishes…? How do you think most people would "use" it today? Read also James 4:1-3 and talk about how prayer can be abused.
7. How do we balance God's promise to bless us with an understanding that "blessing" does not always mean "additions". Sometimes our greatest blessings come through difficult "subtractions" and trials. What is the danger – or potential misunderstanding of this text?
8. But now, having talked about the danger of abusing prayer…talk about how we may miss it's power because we are hesitant to ask for too much – or to ask wrongly. Has Satan stolen our faith in prayer – because we don't want to "abuse it?"
9. Read John 15:5-7 and talk about the "conditions" for prayer.
10. Read Psalm 2:8 and scan the context. Read also Psalm 67. How can we pray for the "nations" today and know that we are praying in God's will?
11. Talk about prayer in difficult situations. How does Romans 8:26-28 help us in these times?
12. Talk about the "signature" on that blank cheque. When we ask "in Jesus name" we are drawing on HIS account. How does this affect our praying?

Taking It Home (Application)

13. Spend some time in prayer as a group – praying for some things that YOU KNOW are in God's will…pray for the nations! Pray for unsaved friends and family! Pray for God's glory to be revealed in how you live your life! Pray that Jesus' name would be lifted up in your life and in our city!
14. On a personal note, write yourself a reminder and pin it somewhere you'll see it – to Ask – seek – knock with boldness!