

## Weekly Study

### Praying Big in a Play it Small World | RRA Leadership Team | September 4, 2022

*\*A note to leaders: there have been two additional questions added to the “grow” and “move” portions of the Weekly entitled ‘Dive Deeper’. This is designed for you to help guide your group into deeper relationship with Jesus and each other, and take an additional step for owning their relationship with Jesus throughout their week.*

#### S T A R T

Go around and check in with your group with the following questions:

- What were the high and low points of your week?
- What is the most impactful or challenging thing you learned during Sunday’s sermon?
- What did that thing teach you about God? About yourself?

#### S H A R E

On Sunday Doug, Ryan and Ethan continued our “Right Side Up” series with a powerful message about praying big prayers. Life throws a lot at us, particularly so in the last two years, and the idea of getting your hopes up in the Lord and praying big, expectant prayers can feel futile and tiring. It’s logical that one would be tempted to play it small and pray broad, safe prayers, but when that happens, we have often forgotten that God is at work when we can easily see it and when we cannot see it. The guys encouraged us to be obedient in planting seeds of faith through prayer, enter into conversation with God and as a result of that, watch not only the ways that God can and will move but how we will be changed in the process as well.

#### G R O W

#### **Read Psalm 37:4.**

Have you ever prayed hard for something and it not be answered in the way you hoped? When that happens, it’s easy for the pain of disappointment to take center stage and cause you to start playing it small in your prayer life. We become convinced that God is holding out on us or there is something that we need to do in order to earn God’s favor in the form of an answered prayer. It becomes difficult for us to get our hopes up for the good things that He has in store for us as His kids.

Think about it: how often have you prayed for something and in time, looked back and been grateful for that unanswered prayer? God is true to His word and will work all of His good plans

and purposes out in your life. His character is to be faithful to His people and as we delight ourselves in Him - that is, spend time with Him and find our source of all fulfillment and joy in Him - our hearts, desires and ultimately our prayers will be shaped in further accordance with Him and we will see the desires of our hearts be fulfilled. Prayer is a mystery and there will be moments of joy and confusion as we grow in our prayer lives, but the process of prayer — praying through what we go through — will do just as much good (if not more!) for our souls as an answered prayer will.

- What has your understanding of/relationship to prayer been until now?
- What are some ways you play it small in your prayer life? Why?
- *Dive Deeper:* Spend time this week with Jesus and directly ask Him as many times as you need to give you His perspective on a lack of answer to prayer that has left you feeling discouraged or disappointed.

## M O V E

### **Read Mark 10:46-52.**

*Chutzpah:* it's the word we use for "energy" in our prayers. It is a kind of shameless audacity, and it gets Jesus' attention. This passage shows us that Bartimaeus is relentless in his efforts to get to Jesus, disregarding what people thought of him, and even throws off his cloak as he makes his way to Jesus. He demonstrates a level of confidence - or chutzpah - that is rarely seen today.

But then we see Jesus ask this blind man a strange question: "What do you want me to do for you?" It seems obvious to the reader that this man would want His sight back without having to say anything, but Jesus demonstrates the power and beauty of relationship in this encounter. He knew that the man would say he wanted to see again, but he still invited him to be a participant in the process. In the same way, Jesus is inviting us to get specific in our prayers. The same question is being posed to us today. It does not always mean that your prayer will be answered in the way you hope, but as we learn to get our hopes up in the Lord, we will realize that that is the best position to be in regardless of how and if that prayer is answered according to your desires.

- Imagine being in the crowd as the blind man yells out. What is your gut reaction?
- If Jesus asked you, 'What do you want me to do in your life?', what would your answer be? Is there any part of you that is holding back from being fully honest with Him about your

desires?

- *Dive Deeper:* When you pray regularly, irregular things begin to happen. Make a list of the big, impossible, amazing things you want to see God do and put it somewhere where you see it regularly. Each time you see it, pray for one of the things on the list and watch expectantly as God begins to move!

## P R A Y

Spend some time sharing prayer requests. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into separate groups to share more freely.

- Adopt the same mindset that the disciples posed to Jesus: “Teach us to pray.” Ask the Holy Spirit to stir a desire in the lives of your group members to pray and spend time in conversation with God.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to remove all lingering disappointment, hope deferred, confusion, and apathy in your heart and mind when it comes to the idea of prayer. Ask Him to replace it with renewed hope that He really is as good as He says He is and a confidence that He wants to communicate with you.