

# Christian Atheist: "I Believe in God, but My Prayer Life is Horrible!"

## John 15:15

8/21/22

### Discussion Guide

#### Preparation

Begin the meeting by talking about your prayer life. In your estimation, how is it? Have you had struggles similar to those of that Pastor Richard?

#### Today's Text

*"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."* John 15:15

1. Describe prayer from the perspective of a slave. What did you hear?
2. When it comes to prayer events, practices, techniques, formulas, etc., what have you tried and/or experienced?
3. Did you grow up or attend a church that emphasized having a devotional life? What did you learn about it? Share practices that you found helpful and ones that were not.
4. Have you read any books on prayer? What did you think of them? Were they performance driven or relationally driven (Having a heart-to-heart talk with God)?
5. Describe prayer from the perspective of a friend. What did you hear? Does viewing prayer from this perspective liberate you in any way? Does it make prayer easier, something to look forward to more, fun, and less guilt producing?
6. What do you think of Pastor Richard's take on praying continually? Does it resonate with your practice?
7. Reflect on the Lord's Prayer. It's Jesus model for prayer. What does it teach you about prayer that is in contrast to how the religious leaders prayed and how the pagans prayed in Jesus' day?

*"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,  
your will be done,*

*on earth as it is in heaven.*

*<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.*

*<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

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<sup>13</sup> *And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.* Matthew 6:9-13

8. Can you pray to God honestly and at times frankly? Are you able to talk to God the way Job, Habakkuk, and Jesus did?

*"I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul."* Job 10:1

*"How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save. Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong?"*  
Habakkuk 1:2-3

*"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* Matthew 27:46

9. When we think of prayer we tend to think of speaking to God but prayer also involves us listening to God. How does that happen? How has God spoken to you? What's the most frequent way God has spoken to you?
10. How do you discern if a message is from God or from yourself or not from God? Has anyone ever told you, *"God told me..."* and it was clear to you that the message was definitely not from God!
11. Any unanswered questions or areas of prayer to explore like best practices, faith and prayer, unanswered prayers, worst thing someone taught you on prayer, the best thing you were taught about prayer....etc.