

Matthew 7:7-11
Praying with Persistence
(The King and His Kingdom)

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. **9** Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? **11** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Question: Have any of you ever prayed a prayer to God that wasn't answered?

A) Trick question: God always answers prayers – either Yes – (Yea) No (Bummer) Wait (really)

B) So let me rephrase my original question: Has God's answer to your prayer – not been the answer you wanted to hear?

C) Yes – We have all been there – right?

God answers Yes – His will – He wants to bless

A) He answers no because He is All knowing and He knows what is Best

B) But why does he answer WAIT – Simple answer is it is not His timing yet – but there is more to it

C) Consider this today. { Why Persist in prayer?

First let's consider the context of this teaching – Broad Context - Sermon on the Mount. –

A) Poor in Spirit – Utter dependency – surrendered

B) Your kingdom come your will be done on earth

C) Seek first the kingdom –

D) SO the broad context is already assuming – that our hearts are in the right place – motives are right

The immediate context is the verses that precede this – look at in detail on Wed. night – Judging

A) Idea is judging to condemn – writing people off Giving up on people

B) Jesus says: You are worried about the speck in your brothers eye – Plank Side of your head.

1) Jesus had a sense of humor – Plankman

C) So the immediate context is help in our personal relationships – and judgmental spirit.

1) Jesus is once again – stating –the heart – gives us away – Reveals where Our spirituality is really at

D) point the finger 3 pointing back at you. Remove the plank –

E) We need help! – SO broad context over all message of the Sermon on the Mount – Kingdom

1) Immediate – Relationships – Heart issues

Important to note because: Some have said: "The Bible says, 'Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.'

A) That means:, all we have to do is ask for it with faith and persistence, and we will get it. Quote: James 4:2 'You do not have because you do not ask'

B) So go for it! Name it and claim it!" Blab it and grab it

C) That view sees God as a celestial slot machine.

1) Pull the handle enough times in prayer, be persistent, and you will get what you want!

D) That is what you get when you ignore the context – A text without a context is a pretext.

1) Remove the plank – point the finger – 3 pointing back at you.

So Jesus says: 7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

A) Ask – Seek – Knock – C. H. Spurgeon - Faith asks, hope seeks, and love knocks.

B) Consider each one of these words: learn some Greek - Ask - aiteo –ITEO

1) Means to ask for with urgency, even to the point of demanding.

C) Call out expecting someone is listening – Call expecting an answer!

When I call my wife – I call expecting her to answer! Because – I am the one calling right.

A) Listen: When she calls me 99.9% of the time I will answer

B) If I am in an appointment – she calls I am answering..

1) I don't do that for just anyone.

C) But I do that for my wife! – I expect that she would do the same when I call.

But you know what – not the case!

A) I call – and I get her Voicemail – nice Voicemail – cheerful greeting Hi this is Denise – sorry

B) But I don't want her Voicemail – or a nice pre-generated text – Love you can't talk right now.

1) But sometimes – that is exactly what I get

C) Can you tell – it bugs me!

Jesus saying: You can pray asking and expect a God on the other line. Not Voicemail – not dead air.

A) Reception is always good!

B) Priest and the Rabbi - Rome – Vatican God phone – red – \$100 a minute / Israel Blue – Free – Local call

1) Always a local call for the believer!

2nd Word Seek (zeteo) ZAteo means to attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching,

A) Seeking is asking plus acting

B) It implies an earnest petitioning coupled with an active endeavoring to fulfill needs.

C) In other words - When you seek something, you rearrange your priorities

1) You rearrange your priorities so that you can search for what you desire until you find it.

Seeking implies that you are looking for something of great value.

A) Do you prioritize prayer? DO you consider the time you spend with God – GREAT VALUE?

B) Matthew 13 The Pearl of great price – the man traveling – through a field – finds a pearl

1) Really expensive – Pearl of great price. – But it belongs to the field

C) Sells everything – to buy the field in order to get the pearl.

D) Parable of the lost – coin – Women sweeps the house until she finds it

1) Seeking is active – pursuing – there is not just an expectation – but an earnestness to the prayer

Reminded me of the young man who went into a CVS drugstore to buy 2 boxes of chocolates.

A) The manager of the store – rang up the young man's purchase. – He asked about the chocolates – Special occasion?

B) The young man responded, "I am going over to my girlfriends house for supper tonight to meet her parents for the first time.

I guess her mom is a real nut-job...so I'm going to give her some candy to try to win her over.

If nothing more, maybe she'll just keep her big mouth shut and chew the delicious candy."

He made his purchases and left.

That evening as he sat down at dinner with his girlfriend's family, the young man asked if he could say the prayer before the meal.

He began to pray, and he prayed an earnest, intense prayer that lasted for almost five minutes.

When he finished, his girlfriend said, "**You never told me you were such a religious person...**"

He said, "**And you never told me your dad was the manager at CVS!**"

C) Seek is active – earnest – Agnst -

Knock (krouo) Crew/O means to rap at a door for entrance

A) IT implies an even greater and more repetitive intensity than either asking or seeking.

B) No one knocks on a door once – RIGHT

1) Especially if you know the people are home – can't hear you – **KNOCKING LOUD**

C) The English word "knock" comes from German word meaning to press!

D)The thing that we need to see about this is – it is building in it's intensity

1)As well as it's persistence.

E)The persistence is underscored by the fact that all 3 words are in the **present imperative**.

1)Keep on Asking – Keep on seeking
.....Knocking

So this is the big question: Why does God want us to be persistent in prayer? 3 Reasons

A)#1 It Develops our relationship with Him

B)God is smart – He knows that if He answered our prayers the first time we prayed.....

1)He knows that for many of us – ONLY TIME HE WOULD SEE US!

C)So he waits – He wants us to keep coming!

Psalm 46:1 The Lord is a very present help in time of trouble

A)He is never bothered when we come to him – **Lord I need help again** – that is ok –

B)He is never like: Rob again – man that guy is a pest – or man he is so needy!

1) **He is not bothered by our REPETITION!**–

C)But he wants more for our relationship with him than simply being the guy who – responds to needs

1)He is all about relationship – He wants that relationship to build.

D)So He wants us to keep coming – builds on the relationship with Him – more we communicate

1)More we wait upon Him!

#2 It develops our heart!

A)Allows time for our hearts to be brought into unity with his heart

B) Alignment - Agreement- Assignment

1)**PERSISTENT PRAYER** helps my heart to get aligned with God's heart

C)Sometimes this is how we pray: We come to God because our heart is burdened for something.

1)But we have an idea about how God should work We have an idea of what the answer should be

We start – Lord my heart is burdened for this....

A)Lord I need you to move and work in this way.

B)Lord heal – Lord provide – Lord release

1)That is what is on our heart – our limited perspective – this seems best

C)So we pray in earnest – God you need to move!

We pray and nothing happens. – We know God hears but He is not doing what we ask.

A)We keep coming - but after a while – this is what happens to me.

B)Lord you know best – you do what you want to do in this situation and help me to receive it

1)My heart is being brought into alignment with His heart.

C)**The More I do that the more and more I am convinced that His way is best –**

1)Coming into agreement – Lord your will be done not my will –

D)**YOUR KINGDOM COME – NOT MY KINGDOM**

E)Alignment – Agreement – ASSIGNMENT

1)Ready to be a vessel – Bring hope and healing

#3 It develops our Faith

A)Jesus is going to contrast – sinful earthly fathers with our heavenly father V.9-11

⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

B)Imagine: "Dad, can I have piece of bread?"
"Sure son."

1)There's a little mischievous smile on Dad's face as he slips in a stone that looks just like a piece of bread.

C)Imagine if family went to McDonald's and the dad ordered a Big Mac and took out the patty and put in the little stones,

1)"Here son. I love you." How cruel.

D)That would break the son's teeth and his heart at the same time.

Or can you imagine, "Dad, I would love a fish sandwich." "Sure, here you go."

A)"Dad, what's that rattle doing in my

sandwich?" "Oh, it's attached to THAT snake."

B) Jesus using the most intimate, selfless human relationship, which is parents who care for and love their children.

1) IN COMPARISON TO A HOLY GOD YOU GUYS ARE EVIL -

11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

A) HIS LOVE IS PERFECT – His motives are always right – he is never too tired – too busy – to listen

B) He is a good, good father – who loves to give good things to those who ask Him !

C) This is the point – when we really believe that we ask in faith – approach with Confidence

Knowing the nature of our Father is Key to our prayer life!

A) If a young man wants to ask his father for something,

B) He will pattern his request on **the nature** and the **temperament** of his father.

C) If the father is **ill-tempered and stingy**, the young man will ask for little.

1) He will anticipate his reluctance and be very careful about what he asks for and how he asks

D) His asking will often be in the form of **building a case** for why he deserves what he is asking for –

1) or how this will benefit – his father in the long run.

If the father is good-natured & generous, the child will present his need openly & with great confidence.

A) It is the same spiritually. When a man prays, he will pray in harmony with his view of the God to whom he is praying.

B) To The Greeks the gods were unpredictable – given to great mood swings (**What kind of mood today**)

C) The Greek gods were vengeful, - so man was always fearful in their approach

D) But if we truly believe that our GOD is a GOOD GOOD FATHER –

1) That is how we are going to approach Him!

When we believe in the heart and nature of our father we are quicker to get our hearts into ALIGNMENT WITH HIS!

A) When he doesn't answer our request the way that we want – we are quicker to say – what you want?

B) Lord what is your plan – what do you want to do in this situation.

C) We can pray with Confidence because we know that heart of our heavenly Father

1) He is a Promise keeping God

Seven promises in this passage

A) [#1] V.7 **Ask, it will be given to you; seek, and [#2] you will find; knock, [#3] it will be opened to you.**

B) Note the certainty – It will be given – You will Find – It will be opened.

C) V.8 For everyone who asks [#4] receives, and the one who seeks [#5] finds, and to the one who knocks [#6] it will be opened."

D) Then at the end of verse 11b (#7): **"How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"**

LUKE ADDS SOMETHING TO HIS ACCOUNT

11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

C) The Best gift? – The Holy Spirit

Helper in our time of need!

A) Empowering - Ask – Lord I need your help

B)Ask Seek – Knock – cry out

Good good father – Question: Is he Yours!

**A)God is NOT the father of every human being –
CREATOR – YES**

**B)FATHER – Only to those who are believers in
Jesus – followers of Jesus**

**¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave
the right to become children of God, to those who
believe in His name:- John 1:12**