

Matthew 7:7-8 Ask Him, Seek Him and Keep Knocking.

First Jesus cautioned us against judging in the flesh with its biases in not being able to see the truth because of our own prejudice and in hypocrisy. Then Jesus tells us that we can't refuse to make discerning judgement. Jesus gave us the responsibility to judge righteously and with grace. Who is sufficient to be able to accomplish what Jesus is asking? We need help. And that's exactly how we're supposed to feel. **Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**

1 Cor 2:15 tells us **14 But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.** It's the very act of giving our lives over more and more to God that causes us to be quick to hear the Holy Spirit's direction, and to obey what He has to say. This requires God's wisdom and guidance, and it requires power from God. And that means that it requires the Holy Spirit.

7 "Ask, and it will be given to you;

The phrase "Ask, and it will be given to you" does not mean, "whatever I want or desire, and ask God for, He is going to give me". God would never put Himself in the position of having to obey us, because we have such a skewed, fallen, biased view due to our sinful nature. Far from being a universal promise that God is required to do for us anything that we may ask of Him, this is actually a much bigger promise than that. It's the promise that God is Giving us Himself, the Holy Spirit more and more. He tries to tell us that He knows what is good for us in verses like Jeremiah 29:11 **For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.** He doesn't have plans to harm us, and that's why He doesn't just give us everything that we ask for, because often it will harm us in some way. He wants what's best for us, from the eternal perspective. And yet so often we persist in insisting on what will be harmful to us. We must let God reveal our hearts to us. That's why David in Psalm 139:23-24 says **23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.** We need God to show us our own heart. God doesn't need us to explain what we need and ask Him, rather we need God to mold and shape our hearts. Psalm 37:4-5 **4 Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.** As we conform our will to His, we find that we ask, and it is given to us, we find that we can trust in Him and He will do it, as we make His desires for us, our desires for our lives. It is the consciousness of our need that brings us to the realization of the riches of His grace. It is only those who realize their need who "ask" truly, because they are the only ones who first realize their need saying 'O wretched man that I am', seeking deliverance.

For everyone who asks receives,

God is not stingy regarding giving of Himself to us. He's already given His Son for us. Jesus says in verse 8 everyone who asks receives. Not some, everyone. God will give you as much of Himself as you're willing to receive. He is willing to give us more of the Holy Spirit. **Luke 11:13 says So if you, despite 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?"** There is no supply shortage of the Holy Spirit.

seek, and you will find;

Seek and you WILL find. Not Seek and you MIGHT find. There is an assurance and a promise that if we are diligent in our seeking that we will find Him. We must seek, and keep seeking God. He isn't trying to hide Himself from us! The seeking has a purpose.

and the one who seeks finds

We find this in the lives of believers, Old Testament and New. It is the ones who kept seeking after God, who persevered, who fulfilled their purpose in life, their purpose for God. They were not content with the passing desires of this life, but sought God with their whole heart. Jeremiah 29:12-13 **12 Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find**

Me when you search for Me with all your heart. The seeking with our whole heart, changes our heart to begin seeking the things above more and more. Col 3:1-3 **Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

Perseverance in faith is like a muscle, the more we exercise it, the stronger it gets. Without Abraham obeying God and moving his whole family through a dangerous wilderness to a land that God would show him, you don't have an Abraham strong enough in his faith to rescue his nephew Lot from the combined armies of 4 kings. Without his faith and obedience on lesser things you don't have his willingness to obey God, in faith that God would raise Isaac from the dead if need be. And so, like a barbell with weights, we strengthen our perseverance by maintaining our faith through trials and tribulations--which is one of the reasons why God sometimes allows them. We read in Romans 5:3-5 **3 And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.** And so, if we react to these troubles with the perseverance of the saints, then it results in a more rock-solid hope, certified and sealed by the Holy Spirit's witness within us! There's nothing in life that is more valuable!!

This asking, seeking, knocking in prayer is so essential for us. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 we are to **16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.** This continual communication with God, is so important for us that we shouldn't need reasons, it should be our automatic response. But for those who aren't convinced, here are 10 reasons that we should pray.

1. For the Christian, Prayer is a Need (Matthew 26:41)
2. We Pray in Petition to God because He is our Provider (James 4:2)
3. Prayer Brings Joy to the Believer (John 16:23-4)
4. God will Deliver us from our Troubles when we ask. (Psalm 34:4-6)
5. Prayer can unlock the treasure of God's wisdom. (James 1:5)
6. Prayer brings God's power to bear in a situation (Acts 9:40)
7. It's sinful not to pray (1 Sam 12:23)
8. Sinners can be saved when they pray, and we can intercede for them when we pray. (Acts:21; Acts 22:16; Eph 6:18; Tim 2:1)
9. We are to follow Jesus' Example (Luke 22: 44)
10. We can expect results when we pray (Mark 11:23-4)

7c knock, and it will be opened to you. 8cand to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Jesus is trying to emphasize that we are to show persistence and perseverance. When prayer doesn't immediately open a door, then we keep praying, until either the door opens, or God shows us that it's not the door that we're supposed to open. (Luke 11:5-8). The Holy Spirit intercedes for us on our end, shaping our requests and interceding on our behalf. Romans 8:26 **26 Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with [a]groanings too deep for words** And at the other end of the connection, we read in Hebrews 4:14 **we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let's hold firmly to our confession.** And he continues in 16 **16 Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need.** Keep Asking, Keep seeking, Keep knocking, and you will be astonished at what God will do. James 5:16 **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much!**