

ASK, SEEK and KNOCK (Part 3)

Matthew 7:7–8

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

We come now to the *third* and final appeal that Christ makes in this passage—“KNOCK, and it shall be opened unto you.” What is Jesus actually saying when He invites us to “knock”? Once again, we have to look at the *context* because there’s just not enough information given to us in these verses. The difference this time is we’re going to the Gospel of Luke. Luke records the same words, but in a context that I think really highlights Jesus’ appeal to “knock.”

Luke 11:9–10

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Again, we have essentially the same words recorded here in Luke as we find in Matthew, but in a slightly different context.

Luke 11:5–8

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? 7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

This parable really gives us an idea of what Jesus meant when he said, “knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” In this parable, a man comes, at midnight, to a friend seeking loaves of bread. And, according to Jesus, the man is not heard because he is in *need*. Nor is he heard because he is a *friend*. He was heard because of his **IMPORTUNITY**. This is what the act of ‘knocking’ represents. It represents *importunity*, particularly when we pray or approach God.

WHAT IS IMPORTUNITY?

Importunity means *two* things.

I. PERSISTENT

First of all, importunity means *persistent*. It means not taking no for an answer, or refusing to stop until you get what you want.

Some people are successful in life, not because they're the smartest, or the most talented, or even because they are the most likable. They're successful because they're the most *persistent*. They're like that knock on the door that won't stop until someone answers it.

Acts 12:5, 13-16

⁵ Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. ¹³ And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. ¹⁴ And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. ¹⁵ And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. ¹⁶ But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

The door didn't open because the people inside knew who Peter was. Nor did it open because he was the answer to their prayers. It opened because he kept knocking. There are some doors that just won't open unless we keep knocking! There are things God is going to do for His people simply because they won't stop knocking. Sometimes you can do everything the right and still not see results because you failed to do them long enough!

SHAMELESS

The word importunity also means shameless. A shameless person is someone who is so bold and assertive that their actions often seem reckless.

Sometimes the reason we're not seeing the results we want is because we're playing it too safe. Our prayers and our pursuit of God haven't quite reached the level of what could be classified as reckless.

Luke 16:16

¹⁶ The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

The word “press” means *to rush into something without considering the consequences* (i.e. to be reckless). Apparently, this is what it takes to seize or gain the kingdom! (I’m convinced that some of us will never find what we’re looking for because we’re unwilling to take risks or get out of our comfort zone. We’re like the rich young ruler **Luke 18:22-24!**)

Now, we haven’t said a lot about why, it seems, God intentionally makes us wait? Why does He, for example, require us to seek and knock for things He intends to give us? Does He enjoy seeing us squirm?

If God is making us wait, then He’s probably looking for *fruit*.

James 5:7

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

When God waits, He’s almost always waiting for fruit. More specifically, He’s waiting to see if we will produce any fruit. He does this to ensure that He gives His promise to the *right* people. How does He know who the *right* people are?

He knows them by their *fruit!*

Matthew 7:15–18

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Most people interpret the word “them” in **verse 16** to mean “false prophets”. In other words, these verses teach how we can “know” *false prophets*. However, we never consider that these verses teach how God “knows” us!

Matthew 7:23

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Jesus is not talking about not knowing false prophets in this verse. He’s talking about not knowing believers!

It seems that God uses the time we're waiting or suffering to 'know' His people (i.e. to see if they will bear fruit). Therefore, what we do during this waiting period will reveal if we're the right person to inherit the promises.

Deuteronomy 8:2

2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

The tests and trials reveal what is in our hearts (i.e. who we truly are). Thus, what we do in the midst of our tests and trials matters. Do we continue to pray (ask)? Do we continue to seek? Do we remain consistent (persistent) and continue to knock?