

ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING

The Principle of Persistence

Matthew 7:7-11 (NKJV)

Series: *The Teachings of Jesus – The Sermon on the Mount*

INTRODUCTION

- In **Matthew 7:1-12**, Jesus continues to describe the Righteousness of the Kingdom as it relates to **man's relationship to man**.
- Three key subjects are addressed in this section:
 1. Judging Others (**Matthew 7:1-6**)
 2. Asking, Seeking, Knocking (**Matthew 7:7-11**)
 3. The Golden Rule (**Matthew 7:12**)
- In the previous section on judging others, Jesus taught us:
 1. To refrain from hypocritical, censorious judgment while still exercising spiritual discernment (not giving what is holy to dogs or casting pearls before swine).
 2. To be humble and patient, yet not naive or undiscerning.
- This raises an important question: How can we possess the wisdom and discernment needed to judge righteously without violating the heart of our Lord's command?
 1. **James 1:5-8** tells us that true wisdom comes from God and is received through prayer.
 2. It is therefore no surprise that Jesus immediately follows His teaching on judging with this powerful instruction on persistent prayer.

Transition: *What is Jesus teaching us in this section on "Asking, Seeking, and Knocking"?*

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSISTENCE (**Matthew 7:7**)

A. The Command to Keep on Asking, Seeking, and Knocking

1. Jesus is not describing a single act of prayer but an ongoing lifestyle of faith and dependence upon God.
2. The Greek **present imperative** carries the idea of continuous action: “Keep on asking... keep on seeking... keep on knocking.”
3. This is not just talking about isolated instances, it’s talking about asking, seeking, and knocking as a lifestyle. Every time you experience a challenge, a need, or desire wisdom, **go to God first!**

B. Persistence Demonstrates Genuine Faith

1. Giving up too soon reveals a lack of trust in God’s timing and goodness.
2. Those who persevere demonstrate that they truly believe God hears and answers His children.
3. **Persistence keeps God in the center of the answer.**

C. Jesus Repeatedly Applied This Principle to Prayer

1. **The Parable of the Persistent Friend** (**Luke 11:5-8**) – The power of importunity moves even a reluctant neighbor.
2. **The Parable of the Persistent Widow** (**Luke 18:1-8**) – *“Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”*

II. THE PROMISE THAT ENCOURAGES PERSISTENCE (**Matthew 7:8**)

A. The Certainty of the Promise

1. *“For everyone who asks receives...”*
2. *“...and he who seeks finds...”*
3. *“...and to him who knocks it will be opened.”*

B. The Promise Is Universal and Personal

1. It is not limited to Apostles, Pastors, or “Super Saints.” It is for “everyone” who comes to the Father in persistent faith.
2. This promise gives us boldness to continue even when answers seem delayed.

C. This Promise Fuels Our Perseverance

1. We do not persist because we are strong, but because God is faithful to His Word.
2. The promise transforms persistence from a burden into an act of confident expectation.

III. THE MOTIVE THAT UNDERLIES THE PROMISE (Matthew 7:9-11)

A. The Illustration from Earthly Fathers

1. Jesus uses a simple argument from the lesser to the greater.
2. What father among you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?
3. Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

B. Even Fallen Fathers Desire to Bless Their Children

1. Jesus acknowledges that we, “being evil” (fallen and imperfect), still know how to give good gifts to our children.
2. This reflects the God-given desire within parents to provide what is best for their children.

C. How Much More Will Your Heavenly Father Give!

1. If imperfect earthly fathers give good gifts to their children who ask...
2. ...how much more will your perfect Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!
3. **This is the greatest motive for persistent prayer: God delights to give good gifts to His children.**

D. This Truth Is Confirmed Throughout the New Testament

1. **John 14:13-14; 15:7** – *“Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do...”*
2. **1 John 5:14-15** – We can pray with confidence when we ask according to His will.
3. **James 4:3** – We must examine our motives; asking with selfish intent hinders answered prayer.

CONCLUSION

- In light of these three truths, let us commit to a lifestyle of persistent prayer – asking, seeking, and knocking with unwavering faith.
- **The Principle** calls us to keep on coming to God without giving up.
- **The Promise** assures us that everyone who persists will receive from the hand of God.
- **The Motive** reminds us that we come to a Father who delights to give good gifts to His children.
- Especially as we seek wisdom to navigate our relationships and to judge with righteous discernment rather than hypocritical criticism, let us persist in prayer.
- Persistence is not about twisting God’s arm; it is about aligning our hearts in faith, dependence, and trust in a generous Heavenly Father who already knows our needs and delights to answer.

Closing Scripture

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

— **Matthew 7:7-8 (NKJV)**

Closing Challenge & Altar Call