

**The Commands of Jesus pt. 18**  
**Practicing Our Prayer Pursuit Matthew 7:7-8**

While no one likes delays, for we Christians, when it seems like the answer to our prayers are being delayed, God wants us to know that it is actually a good thing that He is up to. Let's talk about why that is.

I think that you would agree that as a Jesus follower, the manner in which we pray makes a huge difference to whether or not our prayers will be answered. This is why throughout the Gospels we find Jesus calling us to shape our prayers in some very specific ways.

For instance, Jesus calls us to pray privately (Matt. 6:6), to pray succinctly (Matt. 6:7-8), to pray relationally (Matt. 6:9-13), to pray expectantly (Mark 11:24), to pray shamelessly (Luke 11:8-10), to pray persistently (Luke 18:1) and to pray according to His heart (John 14:13).

But even when we are praying in these ways, rarely do we get a slam dunk where our prayer is answered immediately. Commonly, we find that there is a time gap (sometimes a long one) between prayerfully requesting something from God and getting that prayer fully answered.

These delays are wisely purposed by God and are a gift to us (though it might not feel like it).

You see, the answer to our prayer is being delayed because God intends to answer it in the way where it is exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or imagine (see Eph. 3:20). So, He will require us to make some necessary adjustments and modifications to our prayer.

The question we need to answer is, "how do we find out what those needed adjustments and modifications are?" This is where Jesus commands us to practice the prayer pursuit found in Matthew 7:7-8.

**Matthew 7:7, Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.**

This prayer pursuit is found in the progression that Jesus gives us in this verse; where we ask, then we seek and finally we knock. It goes something like this:

We begin our prayer pursuit with Jesus' first promise, "Ask and it will be given you": With the surety that Jesus gives us in that it "will" be given us, it is obvious that Jesus is talking about us praying for those things that are in alignment with God's Will according to 1 John 5:14-15.

**1 John 5:14-15, This is the confidence we have in approaching God: That if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And we know that if He hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of Him.**

*(It's a given that if we are asking for something that opposes God's heart, His character and His Word, it's always going to be a hard NO from God according to James 4:3).*

Once it becomes apparent that there is a delay to our prayer being answered, we go to the next phase of our prayer pursuit with Jesus' second promise, "Seek and you shall find". What we are seeking God for is if there are any adjustments and or modifications required to our prayer.

When it comes to adjustments, we are seeking God if there is something about us that is hindering the prayer from being answered that needs to be adjusted/corrected first, like a sin issue or a relational issue that needs to first be dealt with.

**Psalm 66:18, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened"**

**1 Peter 3:7, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so nothing will hinder your prayers."** (see also Matthew 5:23-24, Malachi 2:13-15).

Concerning modifications, we are seeking God to show us if there are some ways He wants us to enhance the prayer. There are many ways to do this but three of the most basic ways are:

By adding to our prayer a specific promise from God, **2 Corinthians 1:20, "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through Him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God."**

By having the Holy Spirit direct areas to focus our prayer on, **Ephesians 6:18, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."**

By offering thanksgiving in faith. **Philippians 4:6, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God."**

Once those adjustments and modifications are revealed and made, we go to the final phase of our prayer pursuit with Jesus' third promise, "Knock and the door will be opened for you".

As a natural door by design is a specific place where access is attained. When it comes to our prayer pursuit the spiritual door we are accessing is the place where further revelation is given us concerning some other ways that God wants us to enhance our prayer until it's answered.

Proper prayer is an ongoing process that we do in partnership with our loving Father God. This ongoing process is found in practicing our prayer pursuit as many times as the Lord calls us to. This is seen in the tenses Jesus used in Matthew 7:8.

**Matthew 7:8, "For everyone who asks [and keeps asking] receives; he who seeks [and keeps seeking] finds; and to him who knocks [and keeps knocking], the door will be opened to him."**

Remember God's heart is to answer your prayer in a way that is exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or imagine (see Eph. 3:20). So, let's keep practicing our prayer pursuit.