

March 28

James 4:2-3 (NIV) ²You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. **Matthew 7:7 (BSB)** Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.

In one of my composition classes years ago, I had two very good students who took different approaches to their writing. One student would agonize over what he was writing to the point that he hesitated to write. Once he wrote a few sentences, he would come to my desk and ask me to read what he had written and correct his mistakes. As he continued this pattern, I finally told him that he was asking me to write his paper for him. He needed to trust his abilities. If he was stuck, I would help, but I would not continue to “grade” his progress. The other student, when he struggled, would do so in silence. When he had turned in a rough draft of his paper, I could see he knew how to write, but he struggled to put his thoughts into a cohesive paper. When I handed him his paper, I asked him, “Why did you not ask for help?”

When I thought of Jesus’ words that we do not have because we do not ask, I wondered why we would hesitate to ask. When I asked myself that question, I realized that we often fail to ask Jesus because we believe we can succeed on our own. Also, we may hesitate to ask because we do not want to admit that we need help. Maybe we feel we do not deserve the Lord’s help. I assured the second student that he should never hesitate to ask for help. I assured him that when I wrote something, I often asked others for their help. Jesus also tells us that we sometimes ask with wrong motives, motives that are selfish in nature. I was always ready to help my students; however, I would not do the work for them. Jesus is always listening when we ask; however, He is not there to fulfill our wish list. This does not mean we cannot ask for personal reasons. We should not hesitate to ask Jesus for anything, but when we do, we need to examine our motives, because when we do, Jesus looks at the heart.