

Before we can begin this study, we must first establish the context of this passage. Read Matthew 7:7-12 and Luke 11:1-13. The latter passage in Luke is a different occasion, but the Lord provides the same instruction almost verbatim. Who is “ask, seek, and knock” written to? Why is this important?

It is written to Christians, those who are the children of God. These are promises available to Christians and are not promised to unbelievers. Those who earnestly seek the Lord for salvation will find Him

One of the great blessings of childhood is the unconditional love of a parent. A stable and loving home is a breeding ground for competence, compassion, and confidence in a child. Many of the evils in our world can be traced back to the absence of biblical parental love in the life of a child.

As we consider the Christian calling to holiness and love and our natural bent toward sin, how can God expect so much from every Christian? Well, we come from a good home... the best there is! Matthew 7:7-12 teaches us of the privileges of being a child of God and the constant love of our father, which enables us to competently and confidently show compassion to others around us.

Ask, Seek, Knock (7:7-8)

Jesus gives us three simple commands that often fall off our radar. I think to some degree we do not understand the nature of discipleship and therefore fall into frustration, confusion, and discouragement rather than simply falling on our knees. Ask, seek, and knock all presuppose something important... the presence of need. Read Lamentations 3:22-23, Matthew 6:11, 34, Luke 12:16-21, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, and Hebrews 4:14-16. What do these passages teach us about the dispensing of God’s grace and mercy? What does this teach us about the frequency of our need? **God provides for us day by day. We may appear to have all we need for today and the future but it is potential provision at best. The rich man thought he had plenty for years to come and did not realize that food was not what he needed, but rather the salvation of his soul. He did not have enough for tomorrow. God has an endless provision of grace and mercy but dispenses it to us in measured doses that keep us coming back for more.**

Importunity (the relentless pursuit of God) is interlaced through the words of this passage, as if a progression of intensity is portrayed. The words themselves are simple and straightforward: ask, seek, and knock. What constitutes asking, seeking and knocking? Consider Luke 11:1-13, Acts 2:41-42, and 17:11. **Prayer, sitting under the teaching and preaching of God’s Word, fellowship with believers and the study of God’s Word are all part of seeking the Lord.**

On face value, it appears the Lord is writing us a blank check here. Yet, when we compare scripture with scripture (Theological Analysis), we find there are three conditions God places upon answered prayer.

Ask in **faith**. (Mark 11:22-24, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:5-6)

Ask with a **surrendered** and **obedient** life. (Romans 12:1-2, 1 John 3:22)

Ask in accordance with His **will**. (John 14:13-14, 15:7, James 4:3)

The Gospel of Matthew

SERMON ON THE MT: ASK, SEEK, KNOCK (7:7-12)

A Father's Love (7:9-11)

Such a bold promise of provision as we just studied is bound to be met by human skepticism. As my high school economics teacher repeatedly reminded us, "Nothing is free!" A little bit of life experience and hard knocks soon erases gullibility and faith in the goodness of mankind. How could such a promise be true? The answer is found in the nature of our relationship to God (remember the context of this passage) and the character of our God.

Jesus tries to provide a point of reference that even depraved humans can understand: the love of a father for his child. Although there are exceptions, most parents love their children and want what is best for them. Most parents try to provide what they believe is good for their children. Jesus uses this universal principle to explain why the Father would provide for the godly desires of His children.

Giving a hungry child something that would harm them (a stone) or unholy (a snake) defies common sense. If even "evil" men know this, how much more will our Father in heaven provide what is good when we have need? What does this imply about the character of our Father? Consider James 1:17. **God is a good god, with no sliver of darkness or sin cast upon His character. God is not good seasonally, but it good all the time. Every good and perfect gift comes from Him. If depraved mankind can generally follow this principle of righteousness, how much more does a Holy God follow it?**

For some reason, we need continual encouragement to enjoy and make use of this privilege of adopted life. Read James 1:5-6 and Hebrews 4:14-16 and describe the instruction given to us.

We are encouraged to go to God for our needs with boldness, not with fear of reprisal. He is not a father who tires from our presence or is unable to provide us attention. He delights in the humble and loving presence of redeemed souls coming to Him for strength and provision day by day.

Our confidence in prayer (faith) is based in the character of our Father and His love for His children.

The Golden Rule (7:12)

"Therefore" is the hinge upon which this prominent passage hangs. It links the former thoughts with those that follow. God's abundant and consistent love is the foundation upon which we may show goodness to others, not in a limited fashion but generously, not in a judgmental spirit but in compassion.

This verse has been called, "The Golden Rule" because it is such a simple yet elegant and profound answer to so many of life's questions. It is also the summation of the, "law and prophets". Let's begin by defining the word, "would", as in "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you..."

Would – to wish, choose, prefer, delight in, desire, want, or intend (according to Strong's)

Why is this definition important to the passage? **God is asking us to proactively treat others the way the way we WANT to be treated. Not the way we expect them to treat us, nor the way we believe we should be treated. This word shapes our actions.**

The Gospel of Matthew

SERMON ON THE MT: ASK, SEEK, KNOCK (7:7-12)

Jesus calls the Golden Rule the “law and the prophets”. This is the first use of this phrase in the New Testament. Read Matthew 11:13, 22:37-40, and Acts 13:15. Describe the meaning of “the law and the prophets”, especially as it is used in the context of this passage. **The phrase, “law and the prophets” refers to the teachings of the Old Testament. This teaching continued unto the days of John the Baptist, often considered the last Old Testament prophet. Even to this day, the Jews exclusively read the law and the prophets (Old Testament) in their worship. In this passage, the “law and the prophets” refers to a summation of Old Testament teaching. Treating others the way we want to be treated is the spirit of Old Testament teachings.**

Now read John 1:45, 5:39, and 13:34 and further consider how the Golden Rule is the “law and the prophets”. **The Golden Rule goes beyond being a summation of teachings. It is the spirit of love and benevolence toward all men embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The O.T. teachings were a reflection of God’s righteousness, most completely revealed by the actual life of Christ.**

Finally, discuss how Matthew 7:7-11 informs our practice of the Golden Rule found in verse 12. Consider also Philippians 1:27, 2:1-2, and 1 John 4:10-11. **To be taken from enemy status and then stripped of our sin, clothed with a robe and ring, and brought to a feast with the fatted calf is an amazing display of grace; yet that is the essence of the gospel. The receipt of such grace is the origin of our love for others. Because we have been so freely loved, we can freely love. This is living according to the gospel and it is how the continual display of God’s fatherly love gives us the spiritual confidence to show like love to others and treat them the way we want to be treated, the way we have been treated by our Father.**

The bountiful receipt of our Father’s grace (the gospel) must transform the way we think and live!