

Intro: One of the things that is fun about having adult children in your life is discovering things they knew...you never knew!
For example: Couple years ago, talking and just in passing one of the girls said, "You just had to know who to ask!"

- Go somewhere...ALWAYS ask Dad...He will let you go! Ask him...he will let you go anywhere!
- Buy something...NEVER ask Dad...He will not buy ANYTHING...Ask Mom...she was the easy touch!

Conclusion: Just have to know WHO and HOW to ask!

That is what Jesus is talking about in Matt 7 this morning, as He teaches His disciples about prayer
Basically He is saying to them...and to you and I...You Gotta Know Who...and How to Ask!

Look at what He says. Matt 7:7-11 Page 685

Now, Some people want to use this as a blanket statement. God is the great Slot Machine in the sky!

Just put in your prayers, pull the handle...and wait for the jackpot!

In fact, I have heard preachers PREACH that way! GOD IS OBLIGATED TO GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU ASK!

Do you REALLY think that is what Jesus was teaching us? I don't think so. Lets take a few minutes and look at this closely

1. First, Pay Attention to the Context of What is Being Said and Taught.

You have to be careful when you read the bible. You have to look at what is actually being said and not just what you WANT
Three different kinds of context here that will help us understand what Jesus is saying.

- What comes immediately **BEFORE** Jesus says this? He has laid out entire SOM: Some very hard to DO! HELP!!!
Where do I find the GRACE to forgive, to NOT JUDGE, to do all the things you have been teaching? FROM GOD!
I can't do any of this in my own strength. So God...I am going to have to ASK YOU for strength to live how you want
- What comes immediately **AFTER**: God, I am going to trust your goodness when I'm asking...and your wisdom
Because to be honest...sometimes I ask you for things....are best! I can't see down road, I don't know
Sometimes I desperately want something that isn't good for me...so I'm going to trust your goodness to say NO!
- What the **REST** of the Bible says: Balance: Never intended to be a one off, this is a promise for ALL time, every way

6 Hindrances to Prayer!

~James 4:3 I can't be asking with a wrong motive...selfish and indulgent:

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

~Psm 66:16 Cherish and hold onto sin

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;

1Jn 3:22 Walking in obedience to Christ

(We) ... receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

1Jn 5:14 Ask according to His will

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Prov 21:13 Not listening to and having mercy on the poor!

If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.

1Pet 3:7 Husbands treat your wife well!

Treat them (wives) with respect...so that nothing will hinder your prayers!

So, as you can see, this isn't some "Blank Check" that God has given you, just pray...ask whatever you want...

There are a LOT of ways WE can short circuit our own prayer life.

Maybe, as you we went through those, you thought...wow....thats me!

Time to get that right. Come, Confess, Ask For God's help...and start a NEW prayer life...one that will be heard!

2. Secondly, Notice The Importance Of The Language In What Is Being Taught. Matt 7:7

Just like when my girls said, "Hey, you just need to know how to ask RIGHT!" That's what we need to know about prayer

We need to know how to ask correctly when we are praying and asking God for something.

There are a couple of things that show up in the original language that are important to note.

~Our prayer is to be ongoing: Present tense: Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking

~Our prayer is to be intensive: Imperatives: DO THIS! Command, not just quiet discussion

~Our prayer is to be persistent: Knocking that intense: Different ways of knocking (Real Cop shows) KNOCK!!!

Illus: Every have a young child REALLY want something...Now how they ask...

Mommie...Mommie....MOMMIE! MOMMIEEEEEEE

That is the exact idea Jesus is communicating to us about prayer in these verses.

3. Third Thing I Want You To Notice Here Are The Three Different Ways Jesus Talks About Praying.

For many of us when we think about prayer, we are kind of simple.

God, this is what I want. So would you please do this, solve this, take this away, or add this to my life!

For many of us Prayer is simply talking with God...and that is certainly true...accurate, and nothing wrong with it

But, the more mature you get, and the more you read and understand the bible, the more you understand prayer diff ways

Illus: Think of it this way: A knife is a knife...is a knife, right? A knife CUTS things... BUT

Every tried to use a BUTTER knife to cut a tomato?

Or ever had the blessing of using a true BREAD Knife to cut bread

Or ever used a true fillet knife to fillet fish?

While a knife is a knife is a knife...the RIGHT KIND of knife can make all the difference. Same is true with prayer!

3 Ways Jesus talks about Prayer

- **Ask:** Lit = *to ask (strongly) for something you need, crave or desire*
In this immediate context...He is probably talking about grace and strength to Forgive, Not Judge
You can certainly take it beyond that...and include asking for OTHER things you need...but this is key
Key: Here I think the key you want to pay attention to is BE SPECIFIC! ASK God for what you need/Desire
Don't throw out a general..." Oh God...if you could just do "something" to help
No, God I need you to provide what I need to pay my mortgage, and provide for my family
Given: *to have bestowed or handed over!*
- **Seek:** Lit = *to search for something unseen, hidden or missing*
Here is where our personal action and responsibility kick in. Yes we ask God...clearly and specifically
But we also are to invest the care, attention and personal responsibility needed and expected
Key: We ask God...but we also get up in the morning and go to work! Don't just wake up, roll over, check account
Find: *To perceive, see or obtain*
Jer 29:13 *"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*
- **Knock:** Lit = *To rap on...To persist in pursuing something with diligence and earnestness*
Here Jesus is talking about pursuing what we ask for with earnestness and perseverance
Eph 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.*
Parable of Persistent Neighbor Luke 11:8
I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

"We ask for what we need, we see for what we earnestly desire and we knock when our desire becomes persistent!"

R. C. H. Lenski

4. The Final Thing I want you to notice here is, The Confidence We Have When We Pray.

Mt 7:9-11

Jesus finishes His instruction on prayer by reminding us of the Character of the God that we serve and call Father!

He does that by giving us a wonderful illustration. (7-9)

- ~You have a Heavenly Father
- ~He loves you Deeply and Completely
- ~He desires ONLY the best for you
- ~He will give you what you need
- ~He will NEVER give you something harmful!

So, here is the question for you this morning. When you pray...Do you pray that way? Are you praying with confidence and assurance that your heavenly Father hears your need...and is already at work to meet your need...even when you don't see it!

CONCL: As I thought about how to close our message time this morning I thought...what is it that everyone is praying for? What do we SHARE as it relates to going to God and asking for something we need and desire.

Reminded: The sheet from last week. The marvelous message Pastor Orin shared: I got to read it ahead of time

Key: What was the Older Brothers first mistake? NOT GOING OUT TO SEEK HIS LOST YOUNGER BROTHER
He gave you this: (Form) Hopefully many of you filled it out...and are thinking, praying, determining HOW to reach out

Or, another thing we share is the opportunity we all have to invite someone to Easter services. (Card on seat)

Here is what I want to challenge you with this morning.

- Pray: ASKING....SEEKING....KNOCKING on God's door for those "younger brothers" in your life (Come altar)
- Pray: ASKING....SEEKING....KNOCKING for those in your life YOU need to invite.

Pray specifically...ASK GOD FOR WHAT you desire

Pray and LOOK for opportunities to invite, encourage, share Jesus

Pray and KEEP on praying...be persistent as you lift them up before God asking Him to move in their life.

"We do not live in a praying age. WE live in an age of hustle and bustle, of man's efforts and man's determination, of man's confidence in himself and in his own power to achieve things, an age of human organization, and human machinery, and human push, and human scheming, and human achievement; which in the things of God means no real achievement at all...What we need is not so much some new organization, so new wheel, but 'the Spirit of (God) in wheels we already possess!"

R. A. Torrey 1955