



# WHEN PARENTS PRAY

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# When Parents Pray

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Matthew 7:7-11

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2225

Nothing will bring you to your knees in prayer like having children; it also gives us a clearer picture of how God the Father provides for His children, if only they would ask.

In Matthew 7, Jesus shows us not only how to pray, but what happens when parents pray. “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).

## **First, when we ask, we are expressing our desire.**

There is no substitute for prayer; unoffered prayer is not only a tragedy but also a sin. Our Lord has not merely invited us to ask and pray, He has commanded us to ask and pray. Prayer initiates fellowship with God; our faith develops as we wait for Him to answer. If God gave us what we needed without our asking, we would cease to be dependent upon Him.

## **Second, when we seek, we explore our direction.**

When we go to God, we are seeking His purposes, His presence, or His power. Adrian Rogers says, “Prayer is not bending God’s will to fit our will; prayer is finding the will of God and getting in on it.”

## **Third, when we knock, we are exerting determination.**

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him” (Matthew 7:11)!

Sometimes, prayers are very direct: we ask, and God gives it to us. Other times, we ask, and God gives us something better than what we’ve requested. Other times, the request is denied; if we are not asking according to God’s will, He will say no. God will not give us something that will harm us or hinder our walk with Him. But sometimes, the answer isn’t denied, just delayed. This is the time we should continue knocking—keep bringing the request to God in Jesus’ name.

We must remember that God is good, wise, and able to do exceedingly more than we could ever ask Him to do. (Read Ephesians 3:20.)

## **Life Application**

Adrian Rogers says, “Learn to pray. Ask. Seek. Knock. When you ask, that’s desire. When you seek, that’s direction. When you knock, that is determination.”



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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Children are a great incentive to prayer.
- b) Nothing will put you on your knees in prayer like having children.
- c) Our Lord taught about prayer in Matthew 7:7-11.
- d) Three key words in the passage: ask, seek, and knock. (all in verse seven)
  - i) Matthew 7:7
  - ii) These are three little words, but a big door can swing on little hinges and open up into a vast room where there are multiplied treasures.
  - iii) This is Jesus speaking, and this is a rock-ribbed, iron-clad promise from the Word of God that is true.
  - iv) And these three things will teach us about how to get our prayers answered.

## 2) WHEN WE ASK, DESIRE IS EXPRESSED

- a) When we're asking, there're things that we want, we desire.
- b) The greatest problem we face is not unanswered prayer; it is unoffered prayer.
  - i) James 4:1-2
  - ii) The reason we can't get along with one another is we just can't get along with ourselves.
  - iii) We have not because we ask not.
  - iv) God alone knows how many blessings we could have had, had we only asked.
- c) Unoffered prayer is not only a tragedy, it is a sin.
  - i) Our Lord has commanded us to ask, to pray.
    - (1) Luke 18:1
    - (2) Mark 14:38
    - (3) Philippians 4:6
- d) There are some things you can get a substitute for, but there is no substitute for prayer: not enthusiasm, not intellect, not energy, not ingenuity.
- e) Prayerlessness is the reason for the spiritual poverty and powerlessness of some Christians.
- f) Why does God want us to ask when He already knows what things we have need of?
  - i) Matthew 6:7-8
    - (1) We do not pray in order to impress God.
    - (2) We do not pray in order to inform God. God already knows what we need.
    - (3) We pray to invite God. God wants us to ask Him.
- g) Three reasons we need to learn to ask God:
  - i) The fellowship factor
    - (1) Prayer is a way of having fellowship with God. It is working with God.
      - (a) 2 Corinthians 6: 1
      - (b) God could do it without me, but He loves me too much to leave me out.



- ii) The development factor
  - (1) We grow when we pray.
  - (2) God wants me to grow, and prayer helps me to grow.
    - (a) John 15:7
    - (b) God wants me to abide in and receive strength from Him to help me grow.
  - (3) The original Greek form of these words is in the present tense, which means: "Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking," because that's when we grow, when we keep on doing these things.
  - (4) When we ask for something and God doesn't give it right away, we examine our hearts a little more, wondering why God did not answer.
- iii) The dependency factor
  - (1) Prayer is also God's way of causing us to be dependent upon Him.
    - (a) If God just gave us what we needed without our asking, we would cease to be dependent upon Him.
    - (b) It's a way of binding us to Him.
- h) Asking God for what we need should be just as natural as breathing.
  - i) A good test of whether you have any right to want anything is this: can you ask God for it?
    - (1) If you cannot ask God for it then you have no right to want it.
    - (2) Don't get the idea you just ask God for the spiritual things, and you take care of the secular things.
    - (3) Jesus did not separate His life into the secular and the sacred.
      - (a) Everything is important to God.
    - (4) Nothing is beyond God or too small for God to deal with.
    - (5) You can pray about everything.
      - (a) You can even pray about it if you desire something you know He would not want for you: Tell Him, "God, I want something You don't want. Fix my want-er."
      - (b) Philippians 4:6
  - i) The devil cannot keep God from answering, so what he will endeavor to do is to keep you from asking.
  - j) If you have asked and have not received, He's not finished yet. Read the whole verse.

### 3) WHEN WE SEEK, DIRECTION IS EXPLORED

- a) Sometimes we don't know what to ask for.
- b) Sometimes we're asking for the wrong things.
  - i) We must seek direction in our prayers.
  - ii) Asking is always linked with seeking.
- c) The idea of seeking is that there's something that's lost and we need to find it, or there's something unknown and we need to understand it.
- d) What is it that we seek when we pray?
  - i) We may be seeking the purpose of God.



- (1) James. 4:2-3
  - (a) God is not going to give you the wrong thing, no matter how many times you ask Him.
  - (b) We can ask for personal needs, but we cannot ask for selfish needs.
    - (i) God's not just some glorified bellhop meant to do our bidding. Our asking is linked to seeking to find the will of God about a matter.
- ii) We may be seeking the presence of God.
  - (1) James 4:8-9
- iii) We may be seeking the power of God.
  - (1) James 5:16
- e) Prayer is not bending God's will to fit our will; prayer is finding the will of God and getting in on it. That is why we must seek God's purpose, His presence and His power in prayer.

#### 4) WHEN WE KNOCK, DETERMINATION IS EXERTED

- a) More than just saying, "Lord, here's what I want," or "Lord, show me Your way." This is imploring for God to open a door.
  - i) This is in the present tense; it is knocking and keeping on knocking.
  - ii) There may be closed doors and barriers, but you keep knocking.
  - iii) Prayer is a battle, and we are up against the devil and all the minions of Hell, so we must keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.
- b) There are different ways in which prayers are answered.
  - i) Sometimes answers are direct. You just ask God for something and He gives it to you immediately, and it is unmistakably the hand of God.
  - ii) Sometimes the answer is different. He doesn't give us what we ask; He gives us something better than we've asked.
    - (1) Ask in the right spirit, in His will.
      - (a) Romans 8:26
  - iii) Sometimes the answer is denied. He just says "No," because what you're asking for is wrong.
    - (1) James 4:3
    - (2) God is not going to give you something that will harm you or hurt you.
  - iv) Sometimes the answer is delayed. That's the reason the Bible says for us to keep on knocking, keep on knocking, keep on knocking: Don't quit praying.
    - (1) The Bible teaches that we are to continue in prayer.
      - (a) Luke 11: 5-8
      - (b) Luke 18:1-8
    - (2) Delays are not denials. Ask, seek, knock; keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.
    - (3) I Kings 18:41-46



- c) When should you stop asking, seeking, knocking in a particular matter?
  - i) When you have what you asked for.
  - ii) When, though you don't have the answer in your hand, you have it in your heart.
  - iii) When God says, "No."
    - (1) 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
- d) Why do we have the assurance of answered prayer?
  - i) Matthew 7:9-11
  - ii) Because God is good.
    - (1) As people, we are not good; we make mistakes. Yet we love our children, imperfect as we are. God is good all the time.
    - (2) Matthew 7:11
  - iii) Because God is wise.
    - (1) God knows what we need.
    - (2) Psalm 84:11
    - (3) He is too wise to make a mistake and too good to be cruel.
  - iv) Because God is able.
    - (1) Matthew 6:9-10, 13(b)
    - (2) When we pray, we have a Father who will hear us and a King who can answer us.
    - (3) When we pray, we have the sympathy of a Father, and the sovereignty of a King.
      - (a) Matthew 7:11(b)

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) No one should ever try to be a mother or father who doesn't know how to pray.
- b) When we ask, that is desire.
- c) When we seek, that is direction.
- d) When we knock, that is determination.
- e) God will hear your prayer if you'll learn how to pray as Jesus teaches us to pray. And if He doesn't give you what you ask, He'll give you something better than you asked.
- f) But all prayer must be in the name of Jesus to have Heaven's authority. And you cannot pray in the name of Jesus without having Christ in your heart as your Lord and your Savior.
- g) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- h) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16



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Would you find please Matthew chapter 7, and in a moment we're going to commence our reading in verse 7. But let me talk to you a little bit before we read the Scripture. We're going to be talking about when mothers pray. But we're not going to exclude dads, and maybe we could just call this message, "When Parents Pray." Children are a great incentive to prayer. Nothing will put you on your knees like having children. Somebody asked, "How far apart should children be spaced?" The answer is about a mile and a half. But they're wonderful. Thank God for them. But to be a parent means that you're going to go to your knees in prayer.

Let's see what our Lord has to say about it. Matthew chapter 7 verse 7 through 11. Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?"

Now, there're three key words in the passage that I read before you. They are: ask, seek, and knock; ask, seek, and knock. They're all found in Matthew 7 verse 7. Look at it, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Now these are three little words, but I want to tell you a big door can swing on little hinges and open up into a vast room where there are multiplied treasures. So I want us to think about these three key words in getting prayer answered. Now remember, this is not some theoretician speaking; this is Jesus, and this is a rock-ribbed, iron-clad promise from the Word of God. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open unto you." Now I submit to you, that's either true or it's not true. It is true. And, therefore, we need to learn about prayer today, and especially if we're parents, but not only if we're parents.

Now three things I want to lay on your heart today. Number one, **when we ask, desire is expressed;** when we're asking, there're things that we want, we desire. Now may I tell you that the greatest problem that we face is not unanswered prayer; it is unoffered prayer. Jesus said that we are to ask. Now there's an, there's an ancillary Scripture that you might jot in your margin. Let me share it with you. It's from James chapter 4. James was very practical, and he picked up on what Jesus said here, and James asks this question in James chapter 4 verses 1 and 2, "From where come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members?" The reason why we can't get along with one another is we just can't get along with ourselves. That's what He's saying. "Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain;" and then, here is the plain statement, "ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." God alone knows how many blessings we could have had, had we only asked. I suppose that unoffered prayer is not only a tragedy, it is a sin. Our Lord has commanded us to ask. Our Lord has commanded us to pray.

I've just listed a few Scriptures where God not only has invited us to pray but has commanded us to pray. Luke 18:1 says, "And He spake a parable unto them to this end, 'That men ought always to pray,



and not to faint.” That is, not to give up, not to quit praying. And Jesus commanded in Mark chapter 14 and verse 38, “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.” Now Jesus commanded to watch or pray or He said, “You’re going to go down.” And again the apostle Paul, writing from prison, in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 6 says, “Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”

Look up here and let me tell you something; there is no substitute for prayer. Now you can get a substitute for some things. If you lose a limb, maybe you can get an artificial limb. If you don’t want to use a telephone, you can use a fax machine. If you don’t want to use a fax machine, you can use email. What I’m trying to say is, there’re some things you can get a substitute for, but there is no substitute for prayer, not enthusiasm, not intellect, not energy, not ingenuity. There is no substitute for prayer. Why the spiritual poverty of some people? Why the powerlessness of some Christians? You can put it down in one word. It is prayerlessness.

Have you ever thought about why God wants us to ask? He says, “Ask, and it shall be given to you.” Why is that? He already knows what things we have need of. You’re in Matthew chapter 7. Just go back to Matthew chapter 6 and look if you will in verses 7 and 8. He says here, “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not, therefore, like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things you have need of, before ye ask Him.” Before you ever say a word, He already knows what you have need of. And yet He says over here in Matthew 7:7, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” Now He knows what you need, but you have to ask.

Why do we pray? Well, we certainly don’t pray to impress God. He says, “Don’t use vain repetition as the heathen do.” Ha, ha. God is not impressed with your rhetoric. And certainly, we don’t pray to impress God, and we don’t pray to inform God. God already knows what we have need of. Well, if we don’t pray to impress God or inform God, what do we pray for? We pray to invite God. That is so very important. God wants us to ask Him. Now why? Well let me give you three reasons why we need to learn to ask God.

First of all, the **the fellowship factor**. You see, prayer is a way of having fellowship with God. It is working with God. A good Scripture that would back that up would be Second Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 1. It says, “We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” We are workers together with Him. And so when I am praying, I’m having fellowship with God. I am working with God. And so, God could do it without me, but He loves me too much to leave me out.

But not only is there the fellowship factor when we ask, there is **the development factor**. I grow when I pray. God wants me to grow, and prayer helps me to grow. John 15 verse 7. Jesus said, “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, then ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” So God wants me to abide in Him and to receive strength from Him to help me to grow. You see, this word ask, this word seek, and this word knock is in the Greek language in the present tense, and what it literally means is, “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking,” because that’s when we grow when we kept on doing these things.



Why do we have to keep asking? Sometimes we ask God for something and He doesn't give it to us right away. Well, the Greek actually says, "Just keep on asking, keep on asking." A boy wants a girl to go out with him. He says, "Julia, will you go out with me on a date?" She looks him up and down; she says, "Well, you know, I've been very busy lately," and she gives him some excuse. Later on he says, "I wonder why she wouldn't go with me? Was it she really didn't like me or is there some other reason?" So again he calls up and says, "Julia, do you think we could do thus and such?" She says, "Well, I'm busy, thank you." And then he asks again. He gets to thinking, "I wonder what it is? I wonder if I've been using the right manners. I wonder if my fingernails are dirty. I wonder if I have body odor. I wonder, I wonder. I wonder. I wonder if I have shown her proper respect." And so he begins to work on himself, and one day, he's kind of transformed, and he says, "Julia, would you do thus and such?" She looks him up and down, says, "Yeah, I believe I will." Well, in asking, just asking her and being refused or having to wait, causes him to examine his life and to grow? Prayer is very much the same way. We have fellowship with God when we pray, when we ask. God is growing us when we ask. And if God doesn't give us what we ask, we wonder, "Why did God not answer my prayer?" And we examine our hearts a little bit more.

Prayer is also God's way of causing us to be **dependent upon Him**. You know, if God just gave us what we needed without our asking, we would cease to be dependent upon Him. It's a way of binding us to Him. And so we are to ask. And asking God for what we need ought to be just as natural as breathing. Well, you say, "Pastor, what can I ask God for?" Well, a good test of whether you have any right to want anything is this: can you ask God for it? Now, if you can't ask God for it then you have no right to want it. Don't get the idea you just ask God for the spiritual things, and you take care of the secular things. Can you imagine Jesus dividing His life into the secular and the sacred? Everything is important to God. You say, "Well, this is beyond God," or "This is too small for God to deal with." No! Can you think of anything too big for God or too small for God to notice? Ask Him for any desire of your heart. If you cannot pray and ask God for it you have no business wanting it. You say, "Well, Pastor, what if I want something that I can't pray about?" No, you can pray about it. Tell Him, "God, I want something You don't want. Fix my want-er." You pray about everything. "In everything, by prayer and supplication." Just come to God and ask Him. And I'm telling you, there will be that fellowship factor. There will be that growth factor. There will be that dependency factor. Just simply ask God.

Now I want to say again, Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you." That is so true. I want to tell you again, the great tragedy in life, mothers and dads, is not unanswered prayer; it is unoffered prayer. Now, let me tell you something. Listen very carefully. The devil cannot keep God from answering, so what he will endeavor to do is to keep you from asking, to keep you from asking. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Well, you say, "I've asked and I haven't received." Well, He's not finished yet. Read the whole verse. First of all, when we ask, a desire is expressed.

But now, secondly, **when we seek**, when we seek, **direction is explored**. Now sometimes we don't know what to ask for. And sometimes we ask for the wrong thing. And so we have to find direction in our prayers. We have to seek. And asking is always linked with seeking. Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." The idea of seeking is that there's something that's lost and we need to find it, or there's something unknown and we need to understand it.



And so, what is it that we seek when we pray? Well, first of all, we may be **seeking the purpose of God**. We may be seeking the will of God. Go back to the passage in James. Remember what James says in James 4:3? “Ye have not because ye ask not?” And then he also said, “And ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you might consume it upon your lusts.” You might be asking God for the wrong thing. Now God is not going to give you the wrong thing, no matter how many times you ask Him. “You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss,” you ask wrongly, “that you might consume it upon your lusts.” Now, we can ask for personal needs, but we cannot ask for selfish needs. And so, it may be that when we seek, we’re trying to find the will of God about a matter. God’s not just some glorified bellhop that I say, “Now God, do this, or do that.” No, no. No, I can ask and it’ll be given me, but that asking is linked to seeking, that I may find. It might be the purpose of God that I’m trying to seek for.

It might be **the presence of God** that I’m seeking when I pray. James, in this same fourth chapter, goes on. He’s talking about prayer, and he says in James 4 verses 8 through 11, “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He’ll lift you up.” It just might be that God’s very presence is what you need to seek. You know, the gift without the giver is bare.

Or, it might be that it’s **the power of God** that you need to seek. And James goes on to say in James 5 verse 16, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” So, when I pray, I ask. I say, “Here God, here’s what I need, here’s what I want.” The answer doesn’t come. Then I begin to seek. “Lord, what is Your purpose? Lord, where is Your presence? Lord, what about Your power?” And I begin to seek these things with all of my heart.

Now, first of all, I ask. That’s a desire expressed. And then I seek. That is direction explored. I’m trying to find the will of God. Prayer is not bending God’s will to fit our will; prayer is finding the will of God and getting in on it. And so that’s the reason we must seek God in prayer.

But then, thirdly. Look, first of all, asking is desire expressed. Seeking is direction explored. But then, thirdly, when we knock, **determination is exerted**. What is the idea now? It’s not just saying, “Lord, here’s what I want, or Lord, show me Your way.” It’s saying, ‘O God, I need this door opened.’ And remember, it’s present tense. It is knocking and keeping on knocking. There may be closed doors. There may be barriers. Prayer is a battle. There, the devil, we’re up against all the minions of Hell, and indeed we sometimes have to knock. It is present tense. Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.

And let me tell you something about how prayers are answered. Sometimes prayers are **direct**, and the answer to prayer, you just ask God for something, and He gives it to you. Have you ever done that? How many of you have just simply said, “God, I want thus and such, or let me do thus and such, or do thus and such,” and just ipso facto immediately, God has answered your prayer? Have you ever had a prayer answered like that? Just say, you ask and you receive. Sometimes the prayer is so direct, it is unmistakably the hand of God. That’s one way God answers prayer.



But another way God answers prayer is, not only is the answer direct, it is **different**. He doesn't give us what we ask; He gives us something better than we've asked. And, you know, if He doesn't give you what you ask, He'll give you something better if you're asking in the will of God. Ask in the right spirit. Romans 8:26, "We know not what we should ask as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us." So, sometimes the answer is direct and sometimes the answer's different.

Sometimes the answer is **denied**. He just says no. Why? Because what you're asking for is wrong. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." God's not going to give you something that will harm you or hurt you. If you're shaving in the morning, and your little two-year-old wants to play with your razor, you'll say no. Not because you don't love him. You may give him something else, but you just simply say, "No. This is not good for you."

And so, sometimes the answer's direct, sometimes different, sometimes denied, but sometimes **delayed**, sometimes delayed. And that's the reason the Bible says, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And again I remind you, it is present tense. Keep on knocking, keep on knocking, keep on knocking, keep on knocking. Don't quit praying. Over and over again, the Bible teaches that we are to continue in prayer.

Now, let me give you an illustration of this. We're in the Gospel of Matthew. Just turn over to Luke. Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And take a look at Luke, or as Sidlow Baxter would say, "Take a luke at Luke." Luke 11 verse 5 through verse 9. Jesus is speaking, "And He said unto them, 'Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine is come in his journey, or a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?' And he, from within, shall answer, and say, 'Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.' I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity,'" that is, his persistence, "he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and he that knocketh, it shall be opened unto you." I'm so glad that Jesus gave this parable, because it so illustrates what I'm talking about, keeping on knocking.

Now you have to understand the background here. In Bible times there were no motels and hotels, and there were no convenience stores and all of this. And one of the greatest sins that a person could commit would be to fail to show hospitality to a friend, to a stranger, much less a friend. So here's a man, and it's late at night. Here's a friend on his journey, his other friend. He comes, it's about midnight, and says, "Can we spend the night here tonight?" The man says, "Oh, you're so welcome in our home. Come on in. Sit down. Get comfortable. We'll give you a little something to eat before you go to sleep. I know you've been journeying all day." He says to his wife, he says, "Fix something for our friends." She said, "There's nothing in the house. There's no food." He says, "Just a minute. We'll have something for you. Just sit down there." She says, "Go ask the neighbors."

Now, it's midnight. He goes over to the neighbor's house. "Who's that?" "Who is it? Be quiet. You're going to wake up the kids. Who is it?" "It's your neighbor. It's John. I've got to have some bread. You got any bread, man?" "Look, man, go back. You're going to start the dogs barking. If you wake up these



babies, I'm telling you." You see, the houses were small. They kept the animals under the house many times and up top is where the people slept. The rooms were very small. Sometimes they'd all be in one bed, the babies, and everything there. The locks were very complicated. Not just a key like we have. To get a door open was very difficult. He says, "Look, go away." The man says, "I said go away." He says, "What do you want?" He says, "Look, man, I have got to have some bread. I've got a friend here. I've got to feed him." He says, "All right. If you'll just stop that knocking, if you'll just stop, just be quiet, I'll get up and get some bread for you." That's the parable that Jesus is telling. He said, "Look, my babies are in bed with me. It's night," so forth, but the man won't quit. He just keeps on.

Now that's the illustration Jesus gave to illustrate this text. Read Luke 11:9, "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Is He saying that God is like that man in bed, doesn't want to be bothered with us? No, that's not what He's saying. What He is saying is that asking is very much like knocking on that door. That is what He's saying.

Over and over in the Bible, God gives us illustrations of people who just persisted in prayer. Let me give you another one. You're in Luke 11. Just fast-forward to Luke 18 verses 1 through 7, "And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint," that is, not to quit praying, "saying, 'There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, 'Avenge me of mine adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" And the Lord said," Jesus said, "'Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?'"

Now, again, God is not saying that I'm like an unjust judge. What God is saying is, get the idea; this woman won't stop asking this judge. And so he finally says, "I'm going to get her out of my hair. Whatever it is she wants, I'm going to get rid of her. I'm tired of her. I'm weary with her." Now, notice in Luke 18 verse 7, "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." Now, you can find this over and over in the Bible. I can't explain it, but I'm telling you that delays are not denials. Ask, seek, knock, keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.

And Elijah was praying for rain. You can read about it in First Kings 18 verses 41 to 44, I believe. And he's praying for rain. There's been a drought in the land, three and a half years. And he goes, he sits down, he puts his head between his knees and begins to pray. And he says to his servant, "Go look and see if there's any rain. See if you see a rain cloud." He went and said, "Nope, no rain cloud." Elijah prayed some more. He said, "Go look again." No rain cloud. Prays some more. Says, "Go look again." No rain cloud. He prays some more. Says, "Go look again." Seven times he sent his servant. On the seventh time, the servant said, "I see a little cloud, a little cloud about the size of a man's hand." Elijah said, "All right. Get up. I hear the sound of abundance of rain." You just keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking. Whether you understand it or not, whether you agree with it or not, there is a principle, and it is a wonderful principle that, even though it seems that God is delaying, He is not denying.



Well, that brings a real question; when should you stop asking, when should you stop seeking? When should you stop knocking in a particular matter? Three times. Number one, you stop asking when you have what you asked for. When God gives it to you, you don't have to keep on asking. Number two, you stop asking when, though you don't have the answer in your hand, you have the answer in your heart. I had a very big prayer that God gave me in my heart one time. And God said, "Now Adrian, you're asking Me to do something I'm not going to do, but what you really need is this, and I've heard your prayer." I didn't have it in my hand, but I had it. And time has shown me that I did have it. Now that is, you just stop asking. You say, "Thank You, Lord. That's it. Thank You." Now, when you already have it in your hand, or else when you have it in your heart, or thirdly, you stop asking when God says no. He just may say no. Paul was asking God take away a thorn in the flesh. And in Second Corinthians chapter 12 verses 7 through 10, he said, "Three times I asked Him." And God says, "I'm not going to do it, Paul. My grace is sufficient for you." And so, sometimes God just simply says no.

Now, parents, mothers, we need to pray for our children. What is the assurance that God will hear our prayers? Notice how Jesus concludes this. Look if you will now in Matthew 7 verse 9 to 11, "Or what man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?"

Why do we have the assurance of answered prayer? Well, in these couple of verses, three reasons. First of all, because **God is good**. You know, we're not good; we're imperfect, but we love our children, don't we? We love, imperfect as we are. Matthew 7 verse 11, "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?" God is good all the time.

And number two; not only is God good; God is wise. God knows what we need. Now if we ask a bread, He's not going to give us stone. If we ask a fish, He's not going to give us a serpent. God is not capricious. But I'm going to tell you something else. God is so wise, if you ask a stone, He'll not give you a stone. And if you ask a serpent, He'll not give you a serpent. "The Lord thy God is a sun and a shield. The Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11. He is too wise to make a mistake and too good to be cruel. So God is good, God is kind and wise.

And last of all, we know that our prayers are going to be answered not only because God is good and God is wise, but **God is able**. Look, he speaks of your, "Father which is in Heaven." Now in the sixth chapter of Matthew, Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew chapter 6 verses 9 through 13, "Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name." And then He concludes that prayer by saying, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." Our Father is in Heaven. Now think about it. Your Father is a King. "Thine is the kingdom." I can say to my heavenly Father, "Lord, Yours is the kingdom." You see, when I pray, I have a Father who will hear me, and I have a King who can answer me. Isn't that great? A Father who will hear me and a King who will answer me. Do you know what I have together when I pray? I have the sympathy of a Father and the sovereignty of a King. "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." That's what Jesus is saying. "How much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?"



No one should ever try to be a mother or father who doesn't know how to pray. Learn to pray. Ask. Seek. Knock. When you ask, that's desire. When you seek, that's direction. When you knock, that is determination. Just like that man saying, "Look, get up and open this door. I need some bread." I'm telling you, God will hear your prayer if you'll learn how to pray as Jesus teaches us to pray. And if He doesn't give you what you ask, He'll give you something better than you asked. But now, all prayer must be in the name of Jesus to have Heaven's authority. And you cannot pray in the name of Jesus without having Christ in your heart as your Lord and your Savior.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? And if you're not absolutely certain that you're saved, I want to lead you in a prayer. And in this prayer you can receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. And when you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, three things will be true. First of all, every sin will be forgiven and God will give you the gift of righteousness, something you could never earn by your own good works. God will count you righteous. God will put your name in His book. And at the moment you receive Jesus Christ, you will become His child forever and ever and ever. Secondly, God will send His Holy Spirit into your life to give you peace and power and joy and purpose and guidance. You'll not be floundering around. Thirdly, He will give you a place, a home in Heaven. When you die, or when Jesus comes, He'll take you directly home to be with Him in Heaven when you pray and ask Christ into your heart.

Now, salvation is a gift. Jesus purchased it for you with His own blood on the cross, but you must receive that gift. Are you ready to do it? Pray this prayer, "Dear God. I'm a sinner and I need to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You." Tell Him that from your heart. "I do trust You, Jesus. Right now this moment, in this seat today, I trust You to save me. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Make me Your child. Come into my heart. Give me strength. And help me never to be ashamed of You. Thank You for saving me. Begin now to make me the person you want me to be. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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