

**“Ask and Keep Asking!” Matthew: The Life and Words of Jesus, Part 22 –
Matthew 7:7-11 – Mark Mitchell – October 28, 2012**

1. Introduction

- A. To grasp the meaning of this passage we need to understand its place in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus tells us the qualities that should characterize disciples. The standard seems daunting. True disciples, though, are poor in spirit and recognize their own spiritual poverty and need for God’s help (Matthew 5:3).
- B. At this point in the sermon, Jesus turns our gaze away from the demands of his kingdom to the promise of our Father.

2. Ask and Keep Asking Because God Honors Persistence

- A. We need to ask our Father for help because we lack the strength to do what he requires.
- B. Jesus not only tells us to ask, he uses a progression: ask, seek, and knock. Perhaps the Lord had in view a child seeking out his parent to ask for something. Regardless, the meaning is clear: God wants us to persist.
- C. The Lord does not tell us to persist because God needs to be informed or is reluctant. He tells us to persist because God honors persistence: ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock the door will be opened to you.

3. Ask and Keep Asking because Jesus Promises that you will Receive

- A. Jesus assures us that when we pray our requests are not made in vain. Whatever we need to live life in the kingdom will be granted when we ask. The Lord underscores this point by virtually repeating what he says in verse 7 in verse 8.
- B. Jesus engages two questions in this verse (verse 8):
 - 1. How do I *know* the Father will help? Jesus reiterates the message of verse 7 in order to communicate his sincerity to our hearts: the maker of the universe stands ready to help us! “Our God is in the heavens, he does all that he pleases.” (Psalm 115:3)
 - 2. How do I know the Father will help *me*? In verse 8 Jesus almost repeats verse 7 except with one addition: the word *everyone*. Every disciple who asks receives. This promise is not for all people; it is for all of Jesus’ disciples. Every disciple, no matter how weak, can claim this promise and confidently ask the Father for what he or she needs to live life in the kingdom of God.

Sermon Outline

4. Ask and Keep Asking because Your Father Delights in Giving Good Gifts to His Children

- A. In verses 9 – 11 Jesus gives an analogy that involves both a comparison and a contrast.
 - 1. Like earthly fathers, God is also a Father, and therefore loves giving good things to the children he loves.
 - 2. Unlike earthly fathers, God is completely holy and good. How much more can you trust him to give you what is good!
- B. Since your heavenly Father infinitely excels in goodness, graciousness, and love over and above any earthly father, ask him for what you need. And keep asking because your Father delights in giving good gifts!

5. Conclusion

- A. The Father gave everything to bring us into his family. He did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, to bear our sins on the cross so that we could be forgiven and adopted.
- B. So ask the Father for what you need. Ask with persistence. Ask with confidence. Ask knowing your Father is exceedingly more gracious and good than you imagine him to be!

6. Fellowship Starters

- A. Take some time to read Matthew 7:7-11
- B. How does this passage's place in the Sermon on the Mount help shed light on its meaning?
- C. So far in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus has been expounding the character qualities disciples should exhibit. How does he shift our attention in verses 7-11?
- D. Are you tempted to doubt that your Father would be willing to help *you*? Has your desire to pray for help ever been squelched by doubt? How does Jesus' teaching speak to your uncertainties?