

THE POWER OF PRAYER

I. The Scripture: Ask, Seek, Receive

7"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

9"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! 12In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 7:7-12

II. Looking at the Scripture

1. Discovering the Nature of Prayer - Matthew 7:7,8

What kind of invitation do we receive in verses 7 and 8?

What do you think keeps most believers from asking, seeking and knocking more often?

Read the parable in Luke 11:5-10. What characteristic of the friend at the door caused the man in the house to open up the door?

It is important to note that the words ask, knock and seek are all written in the future present tense, which is best translated, keep on asking, keep on knocking and keep on seeking. How does this knowledge help your understanding of verses 7 and 8?

2. The Good Gifts of the Father - Matthew 7:9-12

Why do you think Jesus compared the gifts of an earthly father with the response of our Heavenly Father?

Prayer was instrumental in the rise of Israel in Old Testament times. God chose to use the prayer of Hannah, a humble woman, to help bring about Israel's greatness. Read Hannah's prayer [see 1 Samuel 1:10,11]. What are some of the features of her prayer?

What gift did Hannah receive from the Lord? [See 1 Samuel 1:20.]

Samuel grew to be a great prophet and leader of Israel. It was Samuel who anointed David when God chose David to be king of Israel.

How do the following verses influence your attitude about prayer?

Matthew 21:22

Hebrews 11:1

1John 5:14,15

3. The Golden Rule – Matthew 7:12

What makes Matthew 7:12 such an important statement about how we should treat others?

What do you think Jesus meant when He said "For this sums up the Law and the Prophets"?

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How can you practically apply this message to your life? (Be as specific as possible.)

III. The Scripture and You

1. Removing the Roadblocks to Prayer

Finish this sentence: The biggest roadblock(s) in my prayer life is (are) . . .

Which of these ingredients would best help your prayer life? (Circle the most appropriate response.)

1. Praying, on a regular basis
2. Believing God will answer
3. Praying with others
4. Seeing more results from my prayers
5. Getting over the embarrassment of praying with others
6. Keeping track of my prayers in a journal
7. Creative ideas for prayer
8. Studying the Bible and other books about prayer
9. Scheduling time in my day to pray
10. Using Scripture to help my prayers

2. Experiencing the Joy of Prayer

In this section of Scripture, Jesus enlarges our prayer life by discussing the true nature of God's care as compared to an earthly father. An important ingredient for prayer is the realization that God is infinite - not subject to any limitations in space, time, knowledge or power.

Complete the following sentence with several different words describing God.
(Examples: alive, caring, powerful, responsive)

The God to whom I pray is . . .

We experience the joy of prayer when we have proper understanding of what prayer is and what prayer is not

Take a few moments to complete the following statements with several examples.

Prayer is not . . .

Prayer is . . .

Where is the best place for you to pray?

When is the best time for you to pray?

What is the best method for your prayer time?

Here is what Mother Theresa Of Calcutta, India said about prayer:

"Love to pray. Feel often during the day the need for prayer, and take trouble to pray. Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of Himself. Ask and seek, and your heart will grow big enough to receive Him and keep Him as your own."¹

1. From Mother Theresa, *A Gift for God*, quoted by Reuben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck in *A Guide to Prayer* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1983), pp. 233,234.

How do you feel about prayer after reading these words from Mother Theresa?

Now read Matthew 7:7-12 again with Mother Theresa's powerful words on your mind. Then write out a 'prayer request list for your concerned Heavenly Father to see and hear.

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