

# Asking, Seeking & Knocking (Matt. 7:7-12)

## A Small Group Outline



### 1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
  - Sing a few songs of praise to God

### 2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

### 3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

### 4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

### 5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

#### • **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (MB)*, pp. 130-137
- Vs 7: **"Ask."** The asking, makes it manifest that you realize your necessity; and if you ask in faith you will receive. The Lord has pledged His word, and it cannot fail. If you come with true contrition you need not feel that you are presumptuous in asking for what the Lord has promised. When you ask for the blessings you need, that you may perfect a character after Christ's likeness, the Lord assures you that you are asking according to a promise that will be verified. That you feel and know you are a sinner is sufficient ground for asking for His mercy and compassion. The condition upon which you may come to God is not that you shall be holy, but that you desire Him to cleanse you from all sin and purify you from all iniquity. The argument that we may plead now and ever is our great need, our utterly helpless state, that makes Him and His redeeming power a necessity" (MB 130).
- The asking of vs 7 is not a blank cheque for anything: God will give us everything we need for well-rounded Christian development. In fact, the asking, seeking and knocking are parallel to a continuous hungering and thirsting after righteousness *(George Knight, Walking with Jesus on the Mount of Blessing)*
- There are times, even when we ask, that God in His wisdom says No. Paul prayed for God to remove the thorn in his flesh (which Ellen White and many commentators link to his bad eyesight – see Gal. 4:14, 15), but God instead promised His grace through the trial (see 2 Cor. 12:8, 9). Jesus too prayed for His cup to be removed (Matt. 26:36-46), but yet He was still crucified.
- Vs 7: **"Seek."** Desire not merely His blessing, but Himself. "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." Job 22:21. Seek, and you shall find. God is seeking you, and the very desire you feel to come to Him is but the drawing of His Spirit. Yield to that drawing. Christ is pleading the cause of the tempted, the erring, and the faithless. He is

seeking to lift them into companionship with Himself. 'If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee.' 1 Chronicles 28:9" (MB 131).

- Vs 7: **“Knock.**’ We come to God by special invitation, and He waits to welcome us to His audience chamber. The first disciples who followed Jesus were not satisfied with a hurried conversation with Him by the way; they said, ‘Rabbi, ... where dwellest Thou? ... They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.’ John 1:38, 39. So we may be admitted into closest intimacy and communion with God. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalm 91:1. Let those who desire the blessing of God knock and wait at the door of mercy with firm assurance, saying, For Thou, O Lord, hast said, ‘Everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.’” (MB 131).
- Prayers that God will always answer (*George Knight*):
  - A request for forgiveness
  - For the Holy Spirit to more perfectly reflect the character of Jesus
  - Peace in our hearts and minds
- Vs 9: “No man with a father's heart would turn from his son who is hungry and is asking for bread. Would they think him capable of trifling with his child, of tantalizing him by raising his expectations only to disappoint him? Would he promise to give him good and nourishing food, and then give him a stone? And should anyone dishonor God by imagining that He would not respond to the appeals of His children?” (MB 131)
- “Every promise in the word of God furnishes us with subject matter for prayer, presenting the pledged word of Jehovah as our assurance. Whatever spiritual blessing we need, it is our privilege to claim through Jesus. We may tell the Lord, with the simplicity of a child, exactly what we need. We may state to Him our temporal matters, asking Him for bread and raiment as well as for the bread of life and the robe of Christ's righteousness” (MB 133).
- “It was to those whom He had bidden to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness that Jesus gave the promise, ‘Ask, and ye shall receive.’ Jn 16:24” (MB 133)
- “The gifts of Him who has all power in heaven and earth are in store for the children of God. Gifts so precious that they come to us through the costly sacrifice of the Redeemer's blood; gifts that will satisfy the deepest craving of the heart, gifts lasting as eternity, will be received and enjoyed by all who will come to God as little children. Take God's promises as your own, plead them before Him as His own words, and you will receive fullness of joy” (MB 133)
- Vs 12: Because Christ loves us, we should love one another. Love is determined by giving, not receiving. The standard of our giving, is found is what we believe others should be giving to us.
- The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus. MB 135.1
- Great thinkers had come up with something similar to the Golden Rule, but they have phrased it in negative terms. For example, the Stoics said: ‘What you do not wish to be done to you , do not do to anyone else.’ But in this form it can be obeyed by remaining inactive, by doing nothing. However Jesus phrased the Golden Rule positively, expecting Christians to go out of their way to help other people and be kind to them, as they themselves would wished to be treated. (*George Knight*)
- Practical way of practising the Golden Rule (*George Knight*)
  - List all the things you would like others to do
  - Take that list and begin to do those things for other people
  - Next make a list of all those things you don't like
  - Avoid those actions in your relationship with others

- “But there is a yet deeper significance to the golden rule. Everyone who has been made a steward of the manifold grace of God is called upon to impart to souls in ignorance and darkness, even as, were he in their place, he would desire them to impart to him.... By all that you have known of the love of God, by all that you have received of the rich gifts of His grace above the most benighted and degraded soul upon the earth are you in debt to that soul to impart these gifts unto him. So also with the gifts and blessings of this life: whatever you may possess above your fellows places you in debt, to that degree, to all who are less favored. Have we wealth, or even the comforts of life, then we are under the most solemn obligation to care for the suffering sick, the widow, and the fatherless exactly as we would desire them to care for us were our condition and theirs to be reversed” (MB 136)
- Vs 12: Law and Prophets: A phrase that means, ‘the entire Old Testament’
- *Read Matt. 7:7-12. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
  - What do you think the meaning of ‘ask’, ‘seek’ and ‘knock’ is?
  - Does Matt. 7:8 mean that God will give us everything we ask for? Elaborate.
  - Give an example from your own experience in which you, with hindsight, are thankful that God said No to your prayer?
  - Do you agree or disagree with this statement: “Jesus’ promise, ‘Ask and you will receive,’ is only given to those who ‘seek first the kingdom of God’”? Why or why not?
  - If God invites us to ask, seek and knock, why do so many Christians have such poor results in their prayer life?
  - When do you think God always answers ‘Yes’ to our prayers?
  - Most religions and philosophers have come up with something similar to the Golden Rule (vs 12), but it is written in negative terms (don’t do to others what you don’t want them to do to you). Why do you think Jesus stated the rule positively instead?
  - How would the world be different if all lived by the Golden Rule?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
  - Relate an experience of prayer, in which you ‘asked’, ‘sought’ or ‘knocked’, and God answered your prayer?
  - Do you feel your prayer life needs improvement? Why or why not?
  - What is the greatest thing you need from God at this moment? What would it mean to you if He answered Yes to your request? What if He answered No? (*ask these questions one at a time*)
  - When is it hardest for you to treat others with kindness and respect?
  - To what relationship do you most need to apply the Golden Rule this week?
  - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group’s secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. “By God’s grace, I will try to cheerfully assist my family members with things they need help with, since that is how I would like them to respond to me when I need their help.”

## 6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today’s lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

## 7. Closing prayer