

# God, My Father

## Life Paths--part 2

Matthew 7:7-11     September 14, 2014

### **DAY 1: What is God's attitude toward you?**

1. Matthew 7 deals with four big topics. Each one is like a path of life. Taking the right path on all four of these is critical. This week's path has to do with:

How we see God, and how He sees us!

*Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."*

2. Underline the three verbs at the beginning of each clause.

3. Jesus tells us to ask, seek, and knock. Each of these verbs were spoken in the present imperative tense. They are **commands** that are to be done **repeatedly!** We should read it, "Ask, and keep on asking; seek, and keep on seeing; knock, and keep on knocking." What does this tell you about God's attitude toward you?

4. If your boss at work told you this, we'd call this an "open door policy." Is this how you see God's relationship with you? If not, how would you describe it?

*Matthew 7:8 "For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

5. You might believe that God has this attitude toward others, but not toward you.

6. Re-read Matt. 7:8 again. This time underline the three pronouns, the *people* Jesus tells to ask, seek, and knock.

7. Those pronouns encompass you! You fit into "everyone." And this is personal! You are "he" and "him."

8. How does that strike you? How much do you believe that God has an "open door policy" with you?

9. Does it seem like God would ever be "tired" of hearing from you?

## **DAY 2: God as *OUR FATHER*!!**

1. To drive home the point that God wants us to ask, seek, and knock, He gives us an illustration.

*Matthew 7:9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?"*

2. Did you ever ask your father for something to eat? What was his response?

*Matthew 7:10 "Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?"*

3. Did you ever ask your father for something edible, and instead, gave you either a "stone" (something, which at first glance *looked like* something to eat but wasn't), or something dangerous, (like a snake)?

4. Jesus moves toward His point.

*Matthew 7:11 "If 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!"*

5. When Jesus tells us we are "evil," He is saying we are, at heart, self-centered. Being self-centered is evil.

6. Yet, He says that even "evil" (self-centered) fathers can give good gifts!!!

7. The argument is from the lesser to the greater. It is, "If even *you, who are self-centered* can pull this off--giving good gifts to your own children, HOW MUCH MORE can God give good gifts to His children?"

8. What comes to your mind as you think about this large contrast between an "evil" father and our Heavenly Father?

9. In the ancient Jewish literature, **no one** thought of God as their "Father!" You will not find this concept in *any ancient* document.

10. Jesus introduces the sovereign, eternal, omnipotent God as *our Father*.

11. End today's devotional talking to God as *your Father!*

### DAY 3: Why pray? - part 1

1. Instead of taking Jesus' word at face value, human nature starts asking all-too "human" questions. Check any of the following you currently have?

\_\_\_ "Why do we have to tell God what we need, especially since He already knows?"

\_\_\_ "Why do we have to *keep on* asking, seeking, and knocking?"

\_\_\_ "Is what He gives us really dependent on our *asking*?"

\_\_\_ "Does God really want to know the littlest things?"

2. A simple study of scripture would answer several of these questions:

a. God is not dependent on our prayers for knowledge about what we need.

b. God is not reluctant to answer prayer, as long as it advances His purposes in our lives.

c. God does not need to be *persuaded*.

3. If none of those are impediments to answered prayer, why pray?!

4. God knows that when we SEEK Him, we will find real life. But there is a problem...

*Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;*

<sup>11</sup> *there is no one who understands, **no one who seeks God.***

<sup>12</sup> ***All have turned away,** they have together **become worthless;** there is no one who does good, not even one."*

5. What can God do to get us to seek Him? This should be an easy question. Think about your life. What has God used in order for you to seek Him? Place a check next to any you have used.

\_\_\_ In need of finances

\_\_\_ Relational pain

\_\_\_ Personal failure

\_\_\_ In need of forgiveness

\_\_\_ In need of healing

\_\_\_ Suffering

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. God uses our human failures and maladies to drive us to Himself. In other words, from our point of view, prayer is primarily about human need. But from God's point of view, prayer is primarily to deepen our relationship to Him. He wants us to discover the wonder of grace, His delight in His children, and that we can walk in joy and peace.

7. What's your biggest take away from today's devotional?

## DAY 4: Why pray? - part 2

1. Another question about prayer arises. "Why pray when God already gives everyone so much, whether or not they are Christians? Does prayer make any difference?"

2. These people see:

- Healthy people exercising
- Bills paid because of a paycheck
- Crops growing
- Most planes landing safely

3. We should remember these words from a devotional a few weeks ago...

*Matthew 5:45 ... that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

4. What Jesus is talking about in Matt. 5 are called "creation-gifts." Everyone receives creation-gifts, because God is a good creator. All of the gifts mention in question #2, and a WHOLE LOT more are given to people whether or not they are grateful or even acknowledge them as gifts from God! (Think about that!)

5. What Jesus is talking about in our Matt. 7 verses on prayer can be thought of as "redemptive-gifts." These are gifts given to His children, to those who gladly submit to Him as Lord.

*Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

6. Below is a partial list of "redemptive-gifts," given to *you* if you are one of His sons or daughters:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness for every sin you've committed | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal joy                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness for every sin you will commit  | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal peace                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning how to love                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hope regarding your life           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithfulness                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Power over temptation              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building in a desire to know and love God  | <input type="checkbox"/> The power to reconcile with people |

7. All of these redemptive-gifts and many others come to us through our **relationship** with God. As we **relate** to God, and deepen our delight in Him, He delights to give His children gifts.

8. Put a check next to the redemptive-gifts in question #6 that you appreciate most.

9. What is something you have realized about prayer, this week?

## DAY 5: Prayer's promises

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

1. Jesus *encourages* us to initiate **prayer**: (a) always, (b) boldly. (c) persistently, (d) about anything, (e) to God our Father, and (f) expectantly.
2. One of the mysteries of prayer is what seems like "unanswered" prayer. "I prayed for health and got worse. I prayed for a job and lost my house. Why wouldn't God grant those prayers?"
4. Matt. 7:7-8 are not "magic wand" verses. It's easy to read these verses as having a credit card. You see something you want? Pull out your credit card! Done!!! It's yours. That is not what Jesus is teaching here. His scope is more narrow, as in the items in question #1.
5. Have you ever prayed a prayer(s) that God didn't answer and NOW you're glad He didn't?
6. These verses illustrate an important principle in interpreting scripture:  
Scripture interprets scripture.
7. Here are some other verses on prayer that need to **dovetail** with Matt. 7:7-8.  
*1 John 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.*
6. How are the two verses in 1 John 5 similar to Matt. 7:7-8?
7. How are the verses in 1 John 5 different than Matt. 7:7-8?
8. John's verses look something like this:  
Confidence→approach God→asking anything→according to His will→He hears us→we have...
9. **Dovetail** Matt. 7:7-8 WITH 1 John 5:14-15. Write all the points into a few sentences.
10. Let's finish with a quote from Dr. John Stott. "Being **good**, our heavenly Father gives only good gifts to His children; being **wise**, as well, He knows which gifts are good and which are not.... If we ask for things which are not good (either not good in themselves, or not good for us or for others, directly or **indirectly**, immediately or **ultimately**) He denies them; and **only He knows the difference**."