

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, February 3, 2021 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



## PRINCIPLES OF A.S.K. FOR IMPACTING THE WORLD Matthew 7:7-12

*“<sup>7</sup> Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup> Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup> 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! <sup>12</sup> Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”-Matthew 7:7-12 (NKJV)*

***“Before you can impact the life of another for Christ, you must have been impacted by Christ in a personal and life-changing way”*** You can’t be a world changer if your world hasn’t been changed by Him to start with. Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” actually teaches us how we may impact our world and the lives of those around us for Christ. We have been adding these important keys to impacting your world from Jesus’s sermon. Let’s review where we’ve been and add another one in our study as we proceed through Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount.” We are now up to 14 important keys to impacting your world...

### **14 Important Keys to Impacting Your World: (From the Sermon on the Mount)**

1. To impact your world for Christ you must **KNOW CHRIST PERSONALLY** = *Matthew 5:1-12, “The Beatitudes”*
2. To impact your world for Christ you must **REFLECT CHRIST** to the **WORLD** (others) = *Matthew 5:13-16, “Salt and Light”*
3. To impact your world for Christ you must **LEARN** to **LIVE** by the **WORD** of God daily = *Matthew 5:17-21, “Fulfilling and Living by the Word”*
4. To impact your world for Christ you must **RIGHTLY RELATE** to **OTHERS** = *Matthew 5:22ff*
5. To impact your world for Christ you must **GUARD YOUR HEART** = *Matthew 5:27-30*
6. To impact your world for Christ you must **BUILD STRONG CHRIST- CENTERED MARRIAGES** and **HOMES** = *Matthew 5:31-32*

7. To impact your world for Christ you must **LIVE A LIFE OF INTEGRITY** = *Matthew 5:33-48*
8. To impact your world for Christ you must **PRACTICE RADICAL GENEROSITY** = *Matthew 6:1-4*
9. To impact your world for Christ you must **BECOME A MAN OR WOMAN OF DEEP AND FERVENT PRAYER** = *Matthew 6:5:15*
10. To impact your world for Christ you must **GIVE YOURSELF AT TIMES TO THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF FASTING** = *Matthew 6:16-18*
11. To impact your world for Christ you must **NOT LET THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD HAVE TOO GREAT AN IMPACT ON US**
12. To impact your world for Christ you must **GIVE TESTIMONY OF A FAITH BASED, WORRY FREE LIFE**
13. To impact your world for Christ you must **AVOID A JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT TOWARD OTHERS**
- ➡ 14. To impact your world for Christ you must **ASK, SEEK AND KNOCK FOR THE POWER AND ABILITY THROUGH CHRIST TO IMPACT YOUR WORLD**

How can we effectively impact the lives of others around us in this fallen world? It's overwhelming. The short of it is we can't... at least not on our own, not in the flesh, not without the Lord. As we have seen in previous weeks, what Jesus is calling us to is beyond us, outside of us and our ability. But through Him we can. And in Matthew 7:7-12 tell us how...

*Though this (Matthew 7:7-12) is not the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, it is Christ's conclusion on teaching about the righteousness of the kingdom...I'd say Jesus is beginning the conclusion of here sermon here in verses 7-12.* In the rest of Matthew 7, he discusses how difficult it is to get into Christ's kingdom—it is a narrow road, there are false prophets along the way, and many are prone to self-deception about their faith.

In Matthew 7:7-12, as Jesus begins to close out the greatest sermon ever preached, we get to see what Jesus says about how we (you and I) may gain what is needed to impact our world for Christ and His kingdom.

➡ Look at it with me in Matthew 7:7-12 (**READ: Matthew 7:7-12**)

***Question 1:*** *What principles can we learn from Matthew 7:7-12 about you and I as believers gaining all that we need to do/practice what Jesus is calling us to in previous verses (that is so beyond us), and thereby truly being able to impact our world and those around us for Christ?*

***Question 2:*** *"What did Jesus mean when He told us to ask, seek, and knock?"*

Again, Matthew 7 is part of what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. It's a description of the truly righteous life, an outlining of "the law of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21, ESV). When Jesus says, **"Ask and it will be given to you,"** continual prayer is in view (Matthew 7:7a). Prayer is how we communicate our needs and desires to God. Of course, God, being omniscient, knows what Christians need whether they ask or not, but prayer is the means God has chosen to bring about those answers.

I want you to notice what James, the half-brother of Jesus, said about prayer in James 4:2-3... notice it with me. James said, <sup>2</sup> *You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.* <sup>3</sup> *You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.* **What is James telling us about prayer? (NOTE: this is/maybe important in the context of what Jesus is and isn't saying in our passage in Matthew 7)**

#### **WHAT MATTHEW 7:7-12 ISN'T SAYING & SHOULDN'T BE TAKEN TO MEAN**

Notice again Jesus words in our page in Matthew 7:7-8... he says, *"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."* This is perhaps another of those most abused and misinterpreted passages/verses in scripture. ***How might this verse be misinterpreted?***

#### **4 Things Jesus is Not Saying in Matthew 7:7-12: What asking, seeking, knocking doesn't mean?**

**(1) It's not a blank check** - Generally, when this promise is heard, people often think that it is a blank check turned to the bearer and that we can ask according to our human carnality and not according to the will of God. This is the point where most people get frustrated (James 4:3). This is a very serious error, because they think that the more they pray for vain things, they can twist the arm of God to grant their carnal desires. Because of this, God teaches us in his word that vain prayer will have no answer. Because that is how pagans pray (Mt 6:7). But God, who knows all the things we need before we ask them, urges us to seek Him first and He promises us that all our needs will be met.

**(2) It's not a blanket request** - Jesus said, "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" in John 16:24. Similar statements are found in Matthew 7:7; 21:22; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9; and John 15:7. Is this a blanket promise with no conditions? If we ask for three hundred pounds of chocolate delivered to our door, is God obligated to give it to us? Or are Jesus' words to be understood in light of other revelation?

**(3) Doesn't mean God is a "cosmic genie"** - If we assume that "ask and you will receive" means "ask for anything you want and I'll give it to you," then we have turned the Lord into a cosmic genie who serves our every whim. This is the problem of prosperity gospel and word of faith teachings.

**(4) Doesn't mean God will give us bad or injurious things** - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that whoever asks receives, whoever seeks finds, and whoever knocks will find an open door (Matthew 7:7-8). But with this and all other verses we must examine the context. Jesus goes on to say that God will not fail to give His children good things (verse 11). So, this is one condition to the promise of "ask and receive": what we ask for must be good in God's estimation. God will give advantageous gifts to His children; He will not give us bad or injurious things, no matter how much we clamor for them. The best example of a good gift is the Holy Spirit, according to Luke 11:13. We begin to see a two-fold purpose of prayer—to increase our understanding of what God calls "good" and to cultivate a desire in us for what is good.

#### **WHAT MATTHEW 7:7-12 IS SAYING & WHAT IT SHOULD BE TAKEN TO MEAN**

So Jesus is *not* saying that believers always get what they ask for—wrong motives, for example, will hinder answers to prayer (James 4:3). So what is Jesus telling us about prayer and finding

the power and source available to us for impacting our world and our own lives with Christ Jesus.

### **3 Things Jesus Is Telling Us in Matthew 7:7-12:**

- (1) **He is telling us that the more time we spend in communion with God, the more we will know what to ask for in accordance with God's will** - Let me say it again, the more time a Christian spends in communion with God, the more he or she will know what to ask for in accordance with God's will. Prayer, in and of itself, does not produce sanctification (an increasing holiness in a believer's life), but it does show a dependence on God for needs that can be met no other way. God is always pleased with such displays of faith. It is only faith in what God can do, and what Christ has done, that brings about true sanctification, not an artificial self-righteousness (Hebrews 11:6).
- (2) **He is telling us that the more time we spend in communion with God, the more we will want God for God and not just for His stuff** - This is one of my favorite quotes from Matt Chandler. I find it so powerful and convicting and self-examining (at least for me). **Matt Chandler** said, *"The universe shudders in horror that we have this infinitely valuable, infinitely deep, infinitely rich, infinitely wise, infinitely loving God, and instead of pursuing him with steadfast passion and enthralled fury — instead of loving him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; instead of attributing to him glory and honor and praise and power and wisdom and strength — we just try to take his toys and run. It is still idolatry to want God for his benefits but not for himself."* So, Jesus goes on to say in our passage, *"Seek, and you will find"* (Matthew 7:7b).

What is it believers ought to be seeking? It is God Himself! This is the consistent and clear message of God's Word/the Bible.

### **4 Old Testament Examples of God's Call to Seek After Him: What is each telling us/teaching us about seeking after God?**

1. **Psalm 27:8** - *"You have said, 'Seek my face.' My heart says to you, 'Your face, Lord, do I seek'"* (Psalm 27:8).
2. **Psalm 34:10** - *"The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing"* (Psalm 34:10).
3. **Psalm 105:4** - *"Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!"* (Psalm 105:4).
4. **Psalm 119:2** - *"Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart"* (Psalm 119:2).

God is not hiding from His children. His heart's desire is for us to persistently and passionately look for Him all around us, and when we do, He promises He will be found. As the writer of Proverbs says it in **Proverbs 8:17**, *"I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me."*

Seeking is a matter of paying attention with an engaged mind and acute awareness. Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to *"seek first his kingdom and his righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33). Seeking God's kingdom means putting God's plan before our own; seeking

God's righteousness means setting a priority on personal holiness and desiring to be sanctified.

- (3) He is telling us that the more time we spend in communion with God, the more we will desire to take the necessary action to move toward God's desire for us - Jesus then said, *"Knock and the door will be opened to you"* (Matthew 7:7c). Here, the Lord uses a metaphor for the action a desire produces. If a person needs something from someone behind a door, the most natural thing to do is knock—and keep knocking until the door is opened and the desire is met. In the same way, a believer should pray in faith for God's provision and be persistent in prayer (see Luke 18:1).

Ask, seek, knock. Notice the three different senses being considered here.

### **3 Different Senses in Asking, Seeking and Knocking:**

- (1) **Asking is verbal** - Asking is verbal; Christians are to use their mouths and petition God for their needs and desires.
- (2) **Seeking is mental/emotional** – Seeking is mental... with the mind in a sense. Believers are to seek with their minds—this is more than asking; it is a setting of priorities and a focusing of the heart.
- (3) **Knocking is physical** – Knocking is a physical act. To knock involves physical movement, one in which the Christian takes action. Although asking and seeking are of great importance, they would be incomplete without knocking. The apostle John said Christians ought not to love in word alone but with actions also (1 John 3:18). In the same way, it's good to pray and seek God, but if one does not also act in ways that are pleasing to God, all is for naught. It's no accident that Jesus said believers should love God with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27).

The commands are followed by promises: *"Everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened"* (Matthew 7:8). God delights in the prayer of faith, and He promises to give us what we need.

### **WHAT MATTHEW 7:7-12 IS TEACHING US ABOUT IMITATING/REFLECTING GOD'S LOVING NATURE**

Notice Jesus words in verse 12 of our passage... for some this may seem like an out of place spot for these words, but consider Jesus's words and why he may have included them here. Jesus said in verse 12, *"<sup>12</sup> Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."* In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you, for this fulfills the law and the prophets.

Jesus gives us here what has often been called the **"Golden Rule."** We must treat others as we would want them to treat us. Often it is thought that the Golden Rule originated with Christ; however, this truth has been taught in many religions and ancient societies.

- Confucius said, *"Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself."*
- Rabbi Hillel, when summarizing the law, said, *"What is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else. This is the whole law; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it."*

Therefore, this seems to be a form of natural law that God has written on the hearts of people since the beginning of time (Rom 2:15); no doubt, it is a remnant of being made in the image of God.

However, it has been noted that ancient versions of the Golden Rule are always given in the negative, while Christ gave it in the positive. Christ's version of the Golden Rule is much harder and demanding. ***In what ways is Christ version of the Golden Rule much harder?***

- It is one thing to not steal.
- It is another to generously give to others.
- It is one thing to not slander someone; it is another to always edify them with our words.

The negative version calls us to not sin, but the positive version calls us to love.

As Christ said, to love summarizes God's commands in the law, and ultimately the Sermon on the Mount.

***Interpretation Question: Why does Christ give this in the midst of teaching believers to seek after him and his kingdom in impacting our world?***

The **ESV** translates the verse, **"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them."** "So," or it can be translated "therefore," connects to Christ's teaching of how God graciously provides for his children when they ask him. Consequently, Christ is teaching that we grow in kingdom character by imitating our Father's loving and generous nature. We must love others just like our Father loves us. Consider the following verses:

**READ: Ephesians 4:25-5:2**

Are you imitating the Father by treating others with love?

***Application Question:*** What makes the Golden Rule so challenging? In what ways is God challenging you to treat others like you want them to treat you and how may this impact others/our world for Christ and his kingdom?

## CONCLUSION

The standards of God's kingdom are impossible to achieve through human power, as are our abilities to impact our world for Christ in a truly life-changing way for all eternity. Simply stated, we can't apart from him. Therefore, the natural question that arises when seriously contemplating Christ's Sermon on the Mount is, "How may we?" And Jesus give us these 4 principles for

**4 Principles For Impacting Our World for Christ: (based on Matthew 7:7-12)**

1. To truly impact our world for Christ, we must **pray** for it (vv.7-8)
2. To truly impact our world for Christ, we must **pray persistently** (vv.7-8)
3. To truly impact our world for Christ, we must **pray in faith** (vv.9-11)
4. To truly impact our world for Christ, we must **imitate** God's **loving nature** (v.12)