



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

SERIES: FACING THE FUTURE

TITLE: FACING THE FUTURE WITH DEPENDENCE

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 7:7-11

DATE: JANUARY 18, 2026

INTRODUCTION

These are exciting days at Immanuel! We are excited about welcoming Pastor Kyler as our new senior pastor. It is a new day here.

Pastor Kyler is preaching a series on Sunday mornings entitled "Facing the Future." Last week, we focused on facing the future with conviction and with God's Word. Surely, as a church we must face the future by living according to God's Word. Without a doubt, Immanuel has always strived to prioritize God's Word and we must continue that legacy.

As we move along in our series, we turn our attention to dependence upon God in prayer. Many people sense that God is on the move among us. And for this we are so thankful! Admittedly, we want to see Him move even more among us! This lesson today is about acknowledging our dependence on God. We acknowledge that we are not able to succeed in our own strength. We recognize

that we are desperately dependent. And perhaps the chief way we express that dependence is by seeking the Lord in prayer.

Text

Matthew 7:7-11

⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are 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!

Explanation

Context

Jesus’ words on prayer come out of what is famously called the “Sermon on the Mount.” And our text today is not the first time Jesus has mentioned prayer in His sermon.

Earlier in Matthew 6:5-17 Jesus teaches us to pray with humility and simplicity. We should avoid praying with the intent of simply being seen by others. Instead, we should be willing to pray in secret, which can be a tangible demonstration of humility. We also do not have to heap up phrases to impress God with our elaborate prayers. Instead, we can pray to Him knowing that He already knows what we need before we ask. This allows us the freedom to pray simply.

Jesus gave His audience an example of how to pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. (Mt. 6:9-13)

Such a prayer is simple. Jesus' model prayer recognizes that God is a Father to us. We can ask Him to make His name great, to advance His Kingdom, to have our needs met, to have our sins forgiven, and to help us live holy lives.

In addition to Jesus' teaching on prayer, it is helpful for us to also recognize Jesus' words about worry in Matthew 6:25-34. Here, again, is another famous passage of Scripture. Jesus teaches that we do not need to worry or be anxious over seemingly key essentials like clothing, shelter, and food. We can trust God to provide for us as we seek first His kingdom. Significant for our lesson today are verses 32-33 which read, "For the Gentiles seek after these things, and your heavenly Father know that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Ask, Seek, Knock

Jesus instructs that people should ask, seek, and knock. This truly is incredible! God is not one who is frustrated in hearing our prayers. Neither is God one who needs a break from hearing from us. He wants us to ask and to seek and to knock. He commands it even.

With each command, Jesus provides a response. Those who ask, will receive. Those who seek, will find. Those who knock, the door will open. The text follows a general principle that a person is more likely to receive, find, and be granted access if they ask, seek, and knock.

Jesus has a way of expounding great spiritual truth through some of the simplest comparisons. It can seem humorously simple to give examples of how these comparisons work. Simply put, a child is more likely to receive food if the child asks for a snack. A person is more likely to win a scavenger hunt when he seeks after clues rather than waiting around. A guest to a dinner party is more likely to be welcomed in the home if they knock on the door, rather than waiting silently for the host to assume their arrival.

With each of the above scenarios, the action of asking, seeking, and knocking are so simple than it is hard to believe a person would not do those things. In those scenarios above, people would hardly think twice about asking, seeking, and knocking. So too, I imagine that Jesus would want us to have the same

perspective towards prayer. Since we have access to God the Father, we should simply ask of Him, seek from Him, and knock toward Him. In many ways, it is perhaps embarrassing how little we ask, seek, and knock when we have the access we do.

Scripture confirms elsewhere the importance of asking. James 4:2b tells us, “You have not, because you do not ask.” In God’s sovereign agenda, we often do not receive simply because we do not ask. How sad is it to think that we could receive something from God—perhaps a blessing, healing, provision, or whatever—and the only reason we don’t receive is because we didn’t ask.

Everyone

Before we move to the second half of our passage, it seems worthwhile to highlight the word *everyone*. Our text says, “*Everyone* who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. It feels worth stressing that access to God in prayer with the invitation to ask, seek, and knock is given to every believer. From the person who has been a Christian for over 50 years to the newest convert. The invitation is given to children. Whether rich or poor, different race, various upbringings or pasts., every believer can come to God with the same access. Jesus makes that possible.

The Father Knows How to Give Good Gifts

Again, Jesus has a way of expounding key spiritual truths with some of the simplest comparisons. Here, we don’t have to overthink what Jesus is saying. When our children come to us and ask for bread, we don’t give them a stone. Neither do we provide them with a snake. We simply provide them with food. If we as humans, although sinful, have a grasp of how to love and provide for our children, how much more does God the Father know how to give good gifts to His children? God is perfect—He is the best gift giver. James 1:17 confirms, “Every good and ever perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

Wrapped up in this simple comparison is an emphasis that we view God as our Father. These verses carry the likely assumption that parents love their children and parents will of course provide for their needs when they ask. So too, the passage carries the sense that children will feel freedom to ask their parent to meet those needs. When a child asks his parents for help, they

naturally come without hesitation and with faith that their parents will hear them. So too, Jesus invites us to pray to the Father with a similar mindset. We should come with faith. Jesus confirms this elsewhere. Matthew 21:22 says, “Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.” James 1:6–8 reads, “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Praying to God as Father also recognizes that He is the One entrusted with answering the prayer. A child does not make demands of a father as if the father takes orders. The parent is the authority and the one with the resources and wisdom to meet the needs of the child. So too in prayer, we recognize that God knows best and is able to answer in His power and wisdom.

Discussion Questions

- Does anything stand out to you about Jesus’ choice of words relating to *ask, seek, knock*?
- For those of you who are parents, what are your reactions when your children make requests of you? What about the moments when your children request things that you know are not good for them? What about the moments when they are disrespectful in their asking?
- How can the context of Jesus’ other teachings on prayer and worry in the Sermon of the Mount shape how we interpret our passage today?
- Is there anything that you are seeking the Lord in prayer about?
- Is there anything that you’d like to share about how you have seen the Lord answer prayer?
- How do you react when it seems like God does not answer a prayer?
- Can you describe the relationship between dependence and prayer?
- Have you ever been grateful that you did not receive what you prayed for?

Conclusions or Application

KEEP ASKING

Persevering in prayer can be difficult. When one does not receive from their asking, seeking, and knocking, they may wonder several things.

- Perhaps I am not asking in faith?
- Maybe God is telling me “No”?
- Maybe I’m asking for something not according to God’s will?
- Does prayer work at all?

Most certainly, God knows that we can wrestle with these questions. And yet one of God’s clear responses to our perception that prayers are not being answered is to *keep asking*. He wants us to ask, seek, and knock.

The Bible does give us some reasons why our prayers may not be answered. And while answering all the reasons why we experience seemingly unanswered prayer is a much bigger topic than space will allow here, we would like to touch on the topic briefly. Sometimes our effectiveness in prayer is hindered due to:

- Wanting to be seen by others (Mt. 6:5-8)
- Self-righteousness (Luke 18:9-14)
- Doubt (James 1:6-7)
- Desire to spend outcomes on selfish passions (James 4:3)
- An angry and quarrelsome demeanor (1 Timothy 2:8)
- Husbands who lack understanding toward wives (1 Peter 3:7-8)
- Lack of self-control or sober-mindedness (1 Peter 4:7)
- Not persevering in prayer (Luke 18:1-8)

When we experience unanswered prayer, it can be helpful to do a quick evaluation of ourselves to confirm if we are doing our part to pray effectively. Yet, after making any necessary adjustments, please feel encouraged to keep asking.

Prayer can often feel mysterious. In one sense we pray in faith and believe that we will receive what we ask. In other sense we pray recognizing that God has a sovereign plan. We pray boldly and can whole heartedly believe that God will act accordingly. At the same time, we trust that God’s timing may different than ours or that He his answer could be “No.” In all this, keep asking! God does not expect us to know all that He knows. He does expect us, however, to keep asking.