

**Union Baptist Church**  
31 Manhattan Avenue  
White Plains, New York 10607  
*Pastor Verlin D. Williams, D. Min.*

## **LESSON 1: The Promise of an Answered Prayer**

**Scripture: Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)**

**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 he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."**

### **Biblical Context:**

**Matthew 7:7-8 is found within Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, one of the most significant and comprehensive teachings of Jesus recorded in the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount spans Matthew chapters 5 through 7 and was delivered by Jesus to His disciples and a large crowd on a hillside in Galilee. In this sermon, Jesus addressed how His followers should live, think, pray, and relate to God and others.**

**Specifically, Matthew 7:7-8 appears near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, in a section where Jesus is teaching His disciples about the nature of prayer and their relationship with God the Father. Just prior to these verses, Jesus had been teaching about judging others (Matthew 7:1-6), and immediately after, He continues with the illustration of a father giving good gifts to his children (Matthew 7:9-11), which directly supports the promise made in verses 7-8.**

**The cultural and religious backdrop is also important. The Jewish audience of Jesus' day was familiar with prayer, but many had come to see God as distant or transactional. Jesus, in these verses, was radically repositioning God as a loving, accessible, and responsive Father who desires to engage with His children personally and intimately. He was inviting His followers into a dynamic, ongoing, and persistent relationship of communication with God.**

**The three commands: ask, seek, knock are written in the present continuous tense in the original Greek, meaning the better translation would be: "Keep asking... keep seeking... keep knocking." This reveals that Jesus was encouraging a lifestyle of persistent, faith-filled prayer.**

### **Explanation of verses:**

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

**Jesus presents three distinct but related actions in this verse, each progressively more intense in its demonstration of desire and persistence:**

#### **1. ASK - "Ask and it will be given to you"**

**The word "ask" implies making a humble request. It is the language of a child coming to a parent, of a dependent coming to the one who provides. To "ask" requires humility; an acknowledgment that we do not have what we need on our own and that we must rely on God.**

**The promise attached to "ask" is that it will be given. This is a divine guarantee rooted in God's generosity and faithfulness.**

**2. SEEK - "Seek and you will find"**

**"Seek" goes beyond passive asking. It implies active pursuit; a deliberate effort to locate something of great value. In a spiritual sense, seeking involves pursuing God Himself, His will, His kingdom, and His righteousness (see Matthew 6:33). The promise is that those who genuinely seek will find. This means that God rewards those who come to Him with earnest hearts (Hebrews 11:6).**

**3. KNOCK - "Knock and the door will be opened to you"**

**"Knock" paints the image of someone standing at a closed door and persistently knocking, unwilling to walk away. It conveys bold, persevering faith. The image of a door suggests opportunity, access, and breakthrough. Jesus promises that for the one who keeps knocking, the door will be opened. This speaks to God's ultimate willingness to open doors of blessing, healing, provision, direction, and opportunity for those who persistently seek Him.**

**Verse 8 - "For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."**

**Verse 8 serves as the divine confirmation of the promises made in verse 7. The repetition is intentional. Jesus reinforces the certainty of God's response. Notice the word "everyone." This promise is open to everyone, every believer, every child of God, regardless of background, status, or past failures.**

**The three-part confirmation also emphasizes universality and reliability:**

- **"Everyone who asks, receives." God responds to requests.**
- **"The one who seeks, finds." God rewards those who pursue Him.**
- **"To the one who knocks, the door will be opened." God opens what was once closed.**

**These are unconditional promises tied to action. The condition is not perfection; the condition is engagement. God is not a reluctant Father who must be coerced. He is a loving Father who wants to give good things to His children (Matthew 7:11; James 1:17).**

**It is also important to understand these promises in the fuller context of Scripture. Answered prayer is not a blank check for selfish desires. James 4:3 reminds us, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives." Praying in alignment with God's will (1 John 5:14), with a heart of faith (James 1:6), and in the name of Jesus (John 14:13-14) positions us to receive the fullness of what God has promised.**

**Contemporary Scenario:**

**In our fast-paced world, we are conditioned to expect instant results. When things don't come quickly, we give up. We stop asking. We stop seeking. We stop knocking. Yet Jesus, in Matthew 7:7-8, calls us to a different standard one of persistent, faithful, expectant prayer.**

**The promise of answered prayer is as relevant today as it was when Jesus first spoke these words on that Galilean hillside. Whether you are facing financial hardship, broken relationships, health challenges, confusion about your future, or spiritual dryness, God's invitation remains: Come to Me. Ask. Seek. Knock.**

***This lesson reminds us that:***

- God is not indifferent to our needs, He is attentive.***
- God is not withholding good things, He is generous.***
- God is not closed off from us, He is accessible.***

***Prayer is the lifeline of relationship between a child and their heavenly Father. When we pray with humility, faith, and persistence, we align ourselves with God's heart, and we position ourselves to receive His promises.***

***The challenge for every believer today is to make prayer a lifestyle. To keep asking even when the answer is delayed. To keep seeking even when the path is unclear. To keep knocking even when the door appears shut. Because Jesus has made it plain: The Father hears. The Father responds. The Father opens doors.***

***Questions for discussion:***

- 1. What does it mean to "ask" in prayer? How is asking God for something different from making demands or simply wishing for things?***
- 2. Jesus uses three words ask, seek, and knock. How do these three actions describe different levels of prayer and pursuit of God? Can you think of a time in your life when you had to move from simply asking to actively seeking or persistently knocking?***
- 3. The promise in verse 8 says "everyone who asks receives." Have you ever felt like your prayers went unanswered? How do you reconcile that experience with this promise from Jesus?***
- 4. How does understanding God as a loving Father (rather than a distant judge) change the way you approach prayer? What does it mean to you personally that God desires to give good gifts to His children?***
- 5. In what area of your life do you need to begin or continue asking, seeking, and knocking today? How can this group pray with you and hold you accountable to persistent prayer in that area?***

***Memory verse:***

***"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you.***

***Matthew 7:7 (NKJV)***

***Write it. Memorize it. Live it***

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## **Student Worksheet**

### **Lesson 1: The Promise of Answered Prayer**

**Matthew 7:7-8**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SECTION A: MULTIPLE CHOICE**

**Circle the letter of the best answer for each question.**

**1. In Matthew 7:7, Jesus gives three commands to His disciples regarding prayer. Which of the following correctly lists all three commands?**

- A. Pray, fast, and give**
- B. Ask, seek, and knock**
- C. Believe, confess, and receive**
- D. Worship, praise, and thank**

**2. The verbs "ask," "seek," and "knock" in Matthew 7:7 are written in the present continuous tense. What does this tell us about how Jesus intended His followers to pray?**

- A. Prayer should only happen on special occasions**
- B. Prayer is a one-time event that God answers immediately**
- C. Believers should pray continuously and persistently, not give up**
- D. Prayer is only effective when done in a group setting**

**3. The word "seek" in Matthew 7:7 implies which of the following?**

- A. Sitting quietly and waiting for God to act without effort**
- B. Making a simple, one-time request to God**
- C. Actively and deliberately pursuing God and His will**
- D. Looking for answers in your own strength and wisdom**

**4. In Matthew 7:8, Jesus says "everyone who asks receives." The word "everyone" in this verse is significant because it means:**

- A. Only church leaders and pastors qualify to receive answers from God**
- B. Only people who have never sinned can receive from God**
- C. The promise of answered prayer is available to all believers, regardless of background**
- D. Only those who attend church regularly will receive answers to their prayers**

**5. According to the broader context of Matthew 7:7-11, Jesus compares God's willingness to answer prayer to:**

- A. A king granting favors to his subjects**
- B. A judge who must be convinced before making a ruling**
- C. A loving father who gives good gifts to his children**
- D. A merchant who only trades when it benefits him**

**6. Which of the following best explains why some prayers may not appear to be answered, based on the fuller teaching of Scripture alongside Matthew 7:7-8?**

- A. God only answers prayers that are spoken in a specific language**
- B. God does not listen to the prayers of ordinary people**
- C. Prayers prayed with wrong motives or outside of God's will may not be answered in the expected way**
- D. God answers all prayers immediately without any conditions**

#### **SECTION B: TRUE OR FALSE**

**Write "TRUE" or "FALSE" on the line provided.**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Matthew 7:7-8 is found within the Sermon on the Mount, one of Jesus' most well-known teachings.**
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ The three commands — ask, seek, and knock — form the acronym A.S.K., representing a progression from simple request to active pursuit to bold persistence.**
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus taught in Matthew 7:7-8 that prayer is only for spiritually mature Christians who have been following God for many years.**
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ "Knock and the door will be opened" suggests that God opens doors of blessing, opportunity, and breakthrough for those who persistently come to Him in prayer.**
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ According to James 4:3, asking with wrong motives can hinder a person from receiving answers to their prayers, which must be understood alongside the promises in Matthew 7:7-8.**

**SECTION C: PERSONAL REFLECTION**

**Answer the following question in 3-5 sentences.**

**Think about a situation in your life right now where you need to "ask, seek, or knock" in prayer. Without sharing more than you are comfortable with, describe what step of faith you will take this week to trust God's promise in Matthew 7:7-8.**

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