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What Does It Mean to “Ask, Seek, and Knock”?

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What Does It Mean to “Ask, Seek, and Knock”?

Is there something specific that you need God to do on your behalf? Are you wondering what He is doing in your life? Are you trying to discover a specific direction to take? Is there someone in your life who desperately needs God? Have you tried to talk with God about this, but it seems that you can't seem to get an answer from Him? There is a key verse in Matthew 7 that gives us a great framework for our conversations with God:

“For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” —Matthew 7:8

Verses 9 through 11 go on to say: “Is there anyone among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, although 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!”

In another version of the Bible, The Message, these verses are translated:

“Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This isn't a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in. If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So don't you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better?”

God will answer our prayers!

It is very common for Christians to *know about* prayer, *study* prayer, *memorize* prayers, *read books about* prayer, and *still not believe that prayer makes any difference*. We prove we don't really believe what God says about prayer when we don't actually pray. God has told us in His Word to ask and seek and knock ... He *will* answer!

Let's take a look at those key action words in Matthew 7:7-8 ... ask, seek, and knock!

Step 1: “Ask” God

Prayer changes things in the physical and spiritual realm when you ask according to God’s guidelines. But it may take time before a change becomes noticeable. Are you watching for God’s answer? You can demonstrate your faith and anticipation while you are waiting by “seeking” and “knocking.”

But first, you must ask. James 4:2-3 says,

“You desire and you do not have; you murder and envy and you cannot obtain; you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask; you ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly, so you can spend it on your passions.”

Q. Are the things you are wanting within God’s will for you or for your own passions?

Q. Are you taking the time to ask God for what you want? What is it?

John 14:13-14 says:

“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

Q. According to these verses in John, what is required for your asking?

John 16:23-24 puts it this way:

“Whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive it, so that your joy may be complete.”

Q. According to this verse in John 16, what will be the outcome of our asking if we ask in the right way?

Step 2: “Seek” God’s Answer

Seeking God’s answer means that we are looking for possible ways through which God may answer our prayer. With an attitude of expectation and a mindset of anticipation, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Stay alert, fully open to

God's direction. If you believe God will answer your prayer, you will be looking for His answer. As the Holy Spirit makes you aware of possibilities, be faithful to pursue them until you have checked them out.

Prayer changes things in the physical and spiritual realm when you ask according to God's guidelines. Seeking God's answer means that we are looking for possible ways through which God may answer our prayer.

Part of seeking God's answer is actually looking for Him. Think about that for a minute. It fits in perfectly with the verses related to "asking" according to God's will. In the Old Testament, nearly all of the scriptures using the word "seek" refer to seeking after God. Here are just four verses that represent many!

"But if you seek the LORD your God from there, you will find him, if, indeed, you seek him with all your heart and soul." —Deuteronomy 4:29

"The people of Judah assembled to ask for the LORD's help; they came from all the cities of Judah to ask for the LORD's help." —2 Chronicles 20:4

"Seek the LORD and the strength he gives! Seek his presence continually!" —Psalm 105:4

"When you seek me in prayer and worship, you will find me available to you. If you seek me with all your heart." —Jeremiah 29:13

Q. As you are seeking your answer, in what ways are you seeking God as well?

Q. In what ways are you currently seeking God?

Step 3: "Knock" on Possible Doors

When is the last time you knocked on someone's door? You usually knock and then wait for that person to answer, right? So, have you knocked on God's door, and are you waiting for an answer? As the Holy Spirit makes you aware of possibilities, be faithful to pursue them until you have checked them out. Knock on the door of a possibility and then wait to see if it will open wide or stay securely closed. God's answers will present themselves clearly to you!

Q. Consider for a moment and write down the ways you are currently knocking on doors.

Q. Do you sense that God is telling you to wait, or should you be knocking on another door?

An Example

Here is an example of how the “Ask, Seek, and Knock” could play out in your life.

Let us assume you need a job. If you go job hunting without praying and asking God first for His direction and blessing, you will be at the mercy of the world system. In addition, if you ask God for a job but don't bother to seek out possibilities, then you are not doing your part. Instead, you need to pray until you have the faith to believe God is going to grant your request. Then step out by faith, and seek options, trusting God to guide your steps. When you become aware of a possibility, knock and check it out. As you walk by faith continue to thank God that His answer is on the way. Although you do not know when it will arrive, the answer to your prayer will be right on schedule according to God's timetable.

We must believe that God will answer. In 1 John 5:14-15 Jesus said, “And this is the confidence that we have before him: that whenever we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, then we know that we have the requests that we have asked from him.”

Q. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much confidence do you currently have that God hears you and that He will answer you?

“Ask” God for greater confidence!

Application

Q. Is there something in your life that you specifically want God to show you?

Ask God for something that you know is in line with his will for you.

Seek out God's answer by staying alert to ways that He is working in your life.

Knock on the door of a possibility and then wait to see if it will open wide or stay securely closed.

Although you do not know when it will arrive, the answer to your prayer will be right on schedule according to God's timetable.

Take time to “Ask, Seek, and Knock” and remember to thank God when He answers.