

Study Guide



Matthew 7:7-11 – Persistent Prayer

January 14, 2018

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we look at Jesus' five discourses in Matthew, we see Matthew and the other disciples "at the feet of Jesus." These teachings are in the context of Jesus' calling and equipping the twelve apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. In our nine months of studying Jesus' five discourses of Matthew we will be sitting at the feet of Jesus learning the ins-and-outs of being disciple-makers ourselves. Our prayer is that we will be challenged to understand that we were saved in order to be disciple-makers and that we will be inspired to sit at the feet of Jesus to be equipped for our calling to be disciple-makers.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

Action Step

This week challenge yourself to spend an hour in prayer and/or pray every day with your spouse.

Calendar

January 31st— Youth Camp Registration
February 4th— Youth Super Bowl Party
February 5th— Camp in the City Registration
February 9-10th— IF Gathering
February 11th— Member's Meeting
March 4th- April 15th— Connection Group
March 16th- 18th— DNOW

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[Psalm 34 - Taste and See](#)":

I sought the Lord
and He answered me
and delivered me
from every fear

Those who look on Him
are radiant
They'll never be ashamed
They'll never be ashamed

This poor man cried
and the Lord heard me
and saved me from
my enemies

the Son of God
surrounds His saints
He will deliver them
He will deliver them

Like a fire, the Lord in me
come exalt His name together
Glorify the Lord with me
come exalt His name forever

Taste and see
that the Lord is good
Oh bless us here
who hides in Him

Oh fear the Lord
Oh all you saints
He'll give you everything
He'll give you everything

Like a fire, The Lord with me
Come exalt His name together
Glorify the Lord with me
Come exalt His name forever

Let us bless the Lord
every day and night
never-ending praise
may our incense rise
Like a fire, the Lord in me
Come exalt His name together
Glorify the Lord with me
Come exalt His name forever

Commentary: Read Matthew 7:7-11

In Matthew 7:7-11 Jesus transitions from our relationships with others to our relationship with our heavenly Father. **Jesus actively encourages us to pray by giving us some very gracious promises.** In commentary to this passage Luther states, “He knows that we are timid and shy, that we feel unworthy and unfit to present our needs to God... We think that God is so great and we are so tiny that we do not dare to pray... That is why Christ wants to lure us away from such timid thoughts, to remove our doubts, and to have us go ahead confidently and boldly.” Christ desires for his promises to be imprinted on our minds encouraging us to pray, encouraging us to go to him with our requests. Jesus uses repetition in verse seven to lure us away from our “timid thoughts” and to “remove our doubts.” He commands us to “ask”, “seek”, and “knock” (vs. 7). These commands directly reflect the persistence we should have in making our requests known to God. Jesus is commanding his disciples to ask, seek, and knock and to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking with passion and persistence.

In verse 8 we see Jesus making unconditional promises that whoever asks will receive, whoever seeks will find, and whoever knocks the door will be opened. Does this mean we will get whatever we ask for? It does seem that way, however, we must look at the whole of this passage (vs. 9-11). Jesus continues and illustrates his promises by using a parable. He talks of a child coming to his father with a request. If the child asks for bread, will he be given something that looks like a loaf of bread but is actually dangerously different (a stone) instead of the loaf of bread, or a snake instead of a fish? Will the child receive something that is harmful and not good for him from his father? Of course not! Parents, even though they are evil (sinful), still love their children and give them only good gifts (vs. 11). But this is not the focus of the parable, the focus comes at the end of verse 11. It is the comparison between God and men. “How much more” will our Heavenly Father (who is not evil but completely good) give good things to those who ask him? **The good things are the things that God deems to be truly good for us and for His glory. God is not obligated to give us everything we ask for.** As Pastor Tracy mentioned, if God gives us everything we ask for we would be spoiled and that is not good for us. Let’s praise God that he answers prayers. Let’s praise God that he sometimes denies our requests. However, we are still called to make our requests known to God.

Behind this simple task, to make our requests known to God, to ask, seek, and knock, is the knowledge that only what is “good” will be given. Knowing this will drive us toward persistent and passionate prayer. We belong to Christ, Christ is our Father, we are His children, He knows what is good for us, He will give us what is “good”, and prayer is coming to him with our requests. This may seem too simple for us, but I want to encourage you to not turn from Christ’s prayer-promises. When we turn from his prayer-promises we create prayer-problems. We turn prayer into something it is not, we say prayer is unnecessary, or we think prayer is unproductive. **Let me challenge you to be persistent in your prayers, to know what to ask for and whether it lines up with God’s Will (devour scripture), believe that God will grant it, believe that His gracious promises will come true for his children.**

Discussion - Read Matthew 7:7-11

1. What were some takeaways from the sermon? What convicted you? What stood out to you? Explain.
2. How is God presented in these verses? A judge? A policeman? A caretaker to whom we are assigned? A good Father taking excellent care of his children.
3. What three things are we commanded to do in this passage?
4. What three things does God promise in this passage to those who ask, seek, and knock?
5. What is the difference between asking, seeking, and knocking? What might be an example of asking? Of seeking? And of knocking?
6. In the examples of this passage (vs 9 and 10) and the examples of Matthew 6:31-34, what kinds of things are being asked for?
7. What kind of gifts does God promise to give to his children? Do we always ask for things that will ultimately be good for us? What would happen if the child asked for a snake?
8. Do you think that these verses indicate that when we ask, seek, or knock we will always receive (*carte blanche*) whatever we ask for. Also look at James 4:2-3 and Matthew 26:39 regarding this question.

9. Is there anything in this passage that would seek to discourage us from making certain kinds of requests in our prayers?

10. Looking at this passage as a whole, what is the message of this passage about prayer?

11. Does knowing that God may not answer your prayer exactly as it is prayed discourage you from praying at all? Should the truth that God will answer your prayer in such a way to bring good into your life discourage you from praying or encourage you to pray?

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Matthew to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased
Young life
Heart of hope
First priority
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center
Community renewal
Grief counseling
Celebrate recovery
Samaritan counseling
Last call ministries
Golden age ministries
Rescue mission
Luke's lighthouse
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

Walk Prayer & Missions

For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org or contact Jared
Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Calendar

February 22nd- March 3rd — South Sudan
March 29th- April 1st— NOLA
June— Serve Shreveport
July— Community Outreach