

Matthew 7:7-8 Commentary

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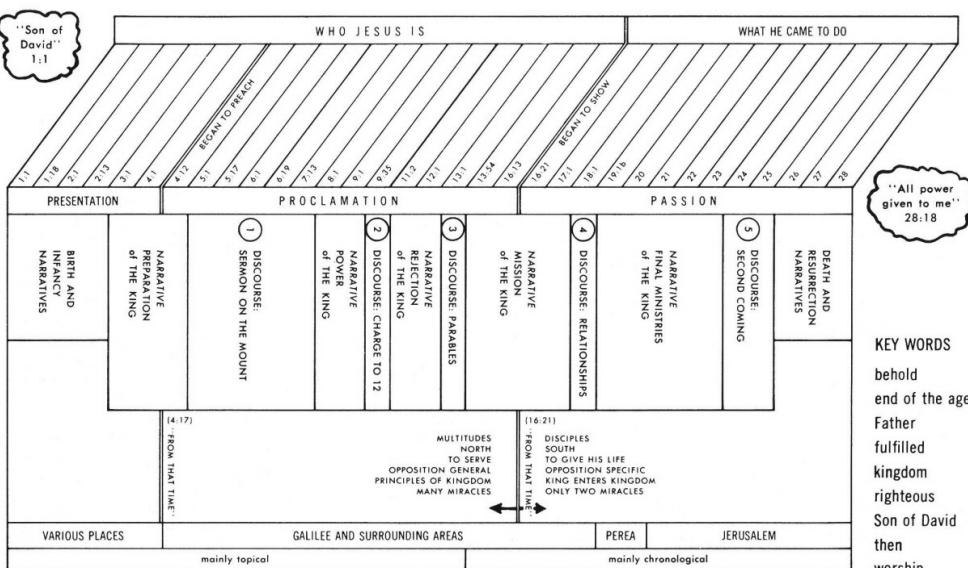
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Sermon on the Mount

MATTHEW CONTAINS KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." 2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."



Greek: [Aiteite](#), (2PPAM) [kai dothesetai](#) (3SFPI) [humin](#); [zeteite](#), (2PPAM) [kai euresete](#); (2PFAI) [krouete](#), (2PPAM) [kai anoigesetai](#) (3SFPI) [humin](#).

Amplified: Amplified: Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking [reverently] and [the door] will be opened to you. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

NLT: "Keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: "Ask and it will be given to you. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you. The one who asks will always receive; the one who is searching will always find, and the door is opened to the man who knocks." ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

Wuest: Keep on asking for something to be given and it shall be given you. Keep on seeking, and you shall find. Keep on reverently knocking, and it shall be opened to you.

Young's: 'Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you;

- **Ask** - Mt 7:11; 21:22; 1Ki 3:5; Ps 10:17; 50:15; 86:5; 145:18,19; Isa 55:6,7; Jer 29:12,13; 33:3; Mk 11:24; Lk 11:9,10,13; 18:1; John 4:10; John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23,24; James 1:5,6; 5:15; 1John 3:22; 5:14,15; Revelation 3:17,18
- **Seek** - Mt 6:33; Ps 10:4; 27:8; 69:32; 70:4; 105:3,4; 119:12; Proverbs 8:17; Song 3:2; Amos 5:4; Romans 2:7; 3:11; Hebrews 11:6)
- **Knock** - Luke 13:25
- [Matthew 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 11:9-10+ "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

Luke 11:13+ "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Luke 18:1+ Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

Matthew 6:33+ "But **seek** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

ASK, SEEK AND KNOCK

Ask ([aiteo](#)) , and it will be given to you; **seek** ([zeteo](#)), and you will find ([heurisko](#)); **knock** ([krouo](#)), and it will be opened ([anoigo](#)) to you - Jesus gives 3 commands, all in the [present imperative](#) which call for us [to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#). Jesus invites His disciples into a living, personal relationship with His Father by using three progressive pictures of prayer. To **ask** is the simple cry of dependence, like the child recognizing that every good gift comes from God and humbly requesting what is needed. To **seek** goes further; it describes a heart that does not merely speak words but pursues God Himself, longing for His will, His wisdom, and His presence. To **knock** suggests persevering faith that stands at the door until it opens, refusing to grow weary or cynical. The [present tense](#) verbs call for continual action, to keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking, because prayer is not a single moment but a lifestyle of trust that God hears and God responds. Jesus is not promising that God will grant every desire shaped by self-interest, but rather, He assures us that a loving Father responds to sincere, God-centered petitions that are in His will. What He gives may be different from what we ask, yet it will always be good, wise, and ultimately better than our request. This verse reveals both the generosity of God and the responsibility of believers: we must come expectantly, persistently, and personally. As so often in Scripture we see our part and God's part, the so-called "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)" The door

of heaven is not locked against God's children; it waits for the hand of faith to knock.

Spurgeon wrote that "Faith **asks**, hope **seeks**, and love **knocks**. Here is a three-fold encouragement to us to pray. When we cannot use one style of prayer, let us use another, for each shall be successful at the right time. O child of God, let nothing keep thee from prayer! It has been well said that a Christian may be hedged in, but he cannot be roofed in; there is always a passage way upwards to the throne of the great Father; and asking, knocking, seeking, he shall be sure to be successful with his suit. To men you may not always speak of heavenly things, but to God you may. "**Ask, seek, knock**"; let your prayer be adapted to the case; let it increase in intensity, let it advance in the largeness of its object. To receive a gift is simple, to find a treasure is more enriching, to enter into a palace is best of all. Each form of prayer is prescribed, accepted, and rewarded in a manner suitable to its character. The promise is universal to all who obey the precept. The commands are in opposition to the methods of carking care which have been denounced in the former chapter; and they are encouragements to the precepts of giving and non-recessional set forth previously, since he that can have of God for the asking may well give to men who ask, and even yield to those who unjustly demand. With such boundless stores at command, we should not be either niggardly or litigious. Lord, help me to have done with fretting, and to abound in asking, seeking, knocking; so shall I soon overflow with thanksgiving. ([Matthew 7 Commentary](#))

Kent Hughes gives an important **caveat** regarding this well known verse warning that "The instruction in this text should not be lifted from its **context** (Ed note" see importance of **context** in accurate interpretation and valid application) in the Sermon and abused. All of us have heard this done. "The Bible says, 'Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' Therefore, all we have to do is ask for it with faith and persistence, and we will get it. 'You do not have because you do not ask' (James 4:2). So go for it! Name it and claim it!" This view sees God as a celestial slot machine. Pull the handle enough times in prayer, be persistent, and you will get what you want! Such thinking is entirely wrong! A text without a **context** is a pretext. Isolating this text from its setting in the Sermon on the Mount is deadly. The **broad context** of the Sermon sets down the surpassing righteousness, humility, sincerity, purity, and love expected of those who are members of the kingdom of God. These virtues are beyond human attainment apart from God's grace. The **broad context** underscores our need. In the **immediately preceding context** (vv. 1-6) Jesus has shown us the danger of condemning other people as if we were judges. He also has told us to get the plank out of our own eye before we attempt to remove a speck from someone else's. His warning is, "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (v. 2). This standard is terrifying. Who is adequate for such things? How can we live up to such a high standard? We need to be cleansed. We need help and grace, but from where? Jesus answers, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (v. 7). This famous text is not carte blanche for our material desires. Rather, it tells us how to pray for the character of the kingdom in our lives. (See [The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom](#)) (Bolding added)

Ray Pritchard feels that "There are at least **three things that hinder us from going deeper in prayer**:

1. The **first** is the sneaking suspicion that prayer doesn't matter. It's easy to fall into a kind of fatalism that says '*God's gonna do what God's gonna do.*' So we stop praying because we think nothing will change.
2. **Then** there is the fear that we won't pray in the "*right*" way, that we won't use the correct words or we won't use the right formula and that God therefore won't even bother to hear what we say.
3. **Finally** *most* of us struggle with the little voice inside that tells us we've got *more important things to do!* Prayer is good but we need to get on with the "*real business*" of the day. So we don't pray as we ought or as we would like. ([Matthew 7:7-11 Three Levels of Prayer](#) - his sermons at [keepbelieving.com](#) are always pithy and practical - highly recommended!)

Ask (154) ([aiteo](#)) means to ask for with urgency, even to the point of demanding. **Aiteo** more frequently suggests attitude of a suppliant (one who supplicates [supplicate is from Latin *supplex* = bowed] means to makes a humble, earnest plea or entreaty), the petitioning of one who is lesser in position than he to whom the petition is made. To ask means to to call on for an answer, which indicates that we believe there is someone (our Father) listening. It also implies that we expect Him to answer or otherwise why ask? The self-righteous person does not ask but tells God how good he is (see parable Luke 18:10, 11, 12, 13).

Ask is **present imperative** = Keep on asking. Make this the pattern of your life, a continual act of devotion. Jesus calls us to be "**Coram Deo**" before the face of God. In His presence in His throne room continually.

Aiteo - 70x in 67v - **NAS** = ask(36), asked(16), asking(7), asks(7), beg(1), called(1), making a request(1), requesting(1). Matt 5:42; 6:8; 7:7ff; 14:7; 18:19; 20:20, 22; 21:22; 27:20, 58; Mark 6:22ff; 10:35, 38; 11:24; 15:8, 43; Luke 1:63; 6:30; 11:9ff; 12:48; 23:23, 25, 52; John 4:9f; 11:22; 14:13f; 15:7, 16; 16:23f, 26; Acts 3:2, 14; 7:46; 9:2; 12:20; 13:21, 28; 16:29; 25:3, 15; 1 Cor 1:22; Eph 3:13, 20; Col 1:9; Jas 1:5f; 4:2f; 1 Pet 3:15; 1 John 3:22; 5:14, 15, 16.

Spurgeon in his book **Power in Prayer** notes that "It may be a revealing exercise for some of you to find out how often in Scripture you are told to pray. You will be surprised to find how many times such words as these are given: "Call upon Me in the day of

trouble, and I will deliver thee" (Psalm 50:15-note). "Ye people, pour out your heart before Him" (Psalm 62:8-note). "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6). "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Mt 7:7-note). "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38). "Pray without ceasing" (1The 5:12-note). "Come boldly unto the throne of grace" (He 4:16-note). "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8-note). "Continue in prayer" (Col 4:2-note). I need not multiply what I could not possibly exhaust. I pick two or three out of this great bag of pearls.

Asking is what beggars do and that is exactly what those who are "poor in spirit" (Mt 5:3-note) are! In poor countries beggars unashamedly stand by the road with their hands held out, asking alms for the poor. Sometimes they can be quite bold about it and even irritating to passers by. In those moments it helps to remember that you would be bold too if you were in their position. And in a spiritual sense we are in their position for we have brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out. We are totally dependent on God the Father of lights from Whom every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift comes (cf James 1:17). But unlike beggars on the streets, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven have access through Jesus to our Father Who art in heaven!

Jesus has already explained that in His omniscience, our "Father knows what you need, before you ask Him." (Mt 6:8+)

By **asking** we nurture our relationship with our Father. He delights to hear and to answer His children as Jesus explains in the following verses.

We need to be more like apostle James of whom Eusebius wrote that his "knees grew hard like a camel's because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking forgiveness for the people."

Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, the third thing necessary to minister.

Pray, therefore, my dear brother, pray, pray, pray.

--Edward Payson

Seek (2212) ([zeteo](#)) means to attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching, to desire to have or experience something or to try to obtain something from someone. Seeking is asking plus acting, implying earnest petitioning coupled with an active endeavoring to fulfill needs. When you seek something, you rearrange your priorities so that you can search for what you desire until you find it. Do you prioritize prayer?

Zeteo - 117x in 114v - **NAS** = deliberating(1), demanding(1), inquire(1), looking(11), made efforts(1), search(4), searched(1), seek(36), seek after(1), seeking(35), seeks(9), sought(4), striving(1), tried(1), trying(6), kept trying to obtain(2). Matt 2:13, 20; 6:33; 7:7f; 12:43, 46f; 13:45; 18:12; 21:46; 26:16, 59; 28:5; Mark 1:37; 3:32; 8:11f; 11:18; 12:12; 14:1, 11, 55; 16:6; Luke 2:48f; 5:18; 6:19; 9:9; 11:9f, 16, 24, 29; 12:29, 31, 48; 13:6f, 24; 15:8; 17:33; 19:3, 10, 47; 20:19; 22:2, 6; 24:5; John 1:38; 4:23, 27; 5:18, 30, 44; 6:24, 26; 7:1, 4, 11, 18ff, 25, 30, 34, 36; 8:21, 37, 40, 50; 10:39; 11:8, 56; 13:33; 16:19; 18:4, 7f; 19:12; 20:15; Acts 9:11; 10:19, 21; 13:8, 11; 16:10; 17:5, 27; 21:31; 27:30; Rom 2:7; 10:3, 20; 11:3; 1 Cor 1:22; 4:2; 7:27; 10:24, 33; 13:5; 14:12; 2 Cor 12:14; 13:3; Gal 1:10; 2:17; Phil 2:21; Col 3:1; 1 Thess 2:6; 2 Tim 1:17; Heb 8:7; 1 Pet 3:11; 5:8; Rev 9:6.

Seeking implies a desire for something of great value. A good illustration of this is Jesus' analogy that...

the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant **seeking** fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Mt 13:45-46+)

Or think about Jesus' story of the woman searching for a lost coin...

"Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and **search** carefully until she finds it?" (Luke 15:8+)

Or the shepherd with 100 sheep who, having lost one, left the 99 and went searching for the one sheep that had gone astray. It is like a man seeking a pearl of great price, who having found it, gives all that he has in order to purchase it.

*If we don't receive by asking, then let us seek;
if we don't receive by seeking, then let us knock.*

-- Puritan Thomas Manton

Spurgeon writes that **asks** "is the simplest form of prayer. Follow up your prayer by the effort. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Add force to your petitions and to your prayers. If the door blocks the way, knock until it is opened...Prayer knocks till the door opens. Open it will, for so runs the promise of our faithful God, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened." "If the angel opened the door of the prison to let Peter out, it was prayer that opened the door of heaven to let the angel out."

Knock (2925) (**krouo**) means to rap at a door for entrance and thus implies an even greater and more repetitive intensity than either asking or seeking. The English word "knock" comes from German word meaning to press! "Knock" means to stand at a door and repeatedly rap it with your knuckles. You knock and wait, then you knock again, then you say, "I know you're in there," then you knock again and say, "I can hear your voice. Come on, open the door." Then you knock again. If you're on the other side, you know how annoying it can be to listen as someone knocks and knocks and keeps on knocking. But that's precisely the picture behind Jesus' command to keep on knocking! The idea might imply praying in the face of difficulty and even resistance. If you knock like this, your desire for entrance must be very great indeed.

Note the ascending degree of intensity from **asking** then to **seeking** and finally to overtly **knocking!** **Each of these verbs** is in the **present imperative**, which is a command to do each of these activities continually (See "Spiritual Caveat" below!). Jesus is calling for persistence in prayer. Prayer is as necessary to us as oxygen to our life. Prayer is the lifeline for citizens of the Kingdom of heaven who are still on earth and as such it expresses our continued dependence on Him as we beseech Him for the grace and power to live the supernatural life of surpassing righteousness that Jesus has described in this Sermon. In order to live out the righteousness we must ask and keep asking, seek and keep seeking and knock and keep knocking.

SPIRITUAL CAVEAT: As with all the over 1500 commands in the NT, there is simply no way you can obey this command in your natural strength. You need supernatural strength found ONLY in the enabling power (Eph 3:16, Acts 1:8, even Jesus was dependent on His power! He gave us the example of a Perfect Man which we are called to imitate - Acts 10:38, 1 Cor 11:1, 1 John 2:6, 1 Peter 2:21) of the indwelling Spirit (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19). [See also another explanation](#) of our need to daily be dependent on the Spirit's empowerment. If you TRY to keep the commands in your natural strength, you will fall into the subtle snare of legalism. Beware. Cry out like Peter did when he was sinking "Lord, Help!"

Krouo - 9x in 9v - Matt 7:7f; Luke 11:9f; 12:36; 13:25; Acts 12:13, 16; Rev 3:20.

A great **Illustration** of continuing to ask, seek and knock is seen in the Church in Jerusalem when Herod had imprisoned Peter with plans to murder him after the 8 day Passover feast! (Acts 12:5+) The church prayed with persistence (possibly "24/7" for days and even had the answer to their prayer disrupt their prayer meeting when the "door was opened"! See Acts 12:16, 13-15+).

Will be opened (455) (**anoigo** from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see (Acts 26:18). To open one's mouth that they might begin to speak (Mt 5:2). Figuratively, to open a "door" meaning to make possible (Col 4:3). Luke records the parallel passages (Lk 11:9, 10). Of heavens open = have the heavens opened or divided so that celestial things become manifest - Mt 3:16; Lu 3:21; Jn 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 19:11; ([Lxx](#) of the following passages) Isa 64:1; Ezek 1:1; Ps 78:23. In 2 Cor 6:11 the idea is to pour out one's mind, open one's heart, to speak fully and frankly. Anoigo is used in NT and Lxx of Jesus not opening His mouth - Not to open one's mouth = not to utter complaints (Acts 8:32; Isa 53:7 cp Ps 38:14; 39:9)

NT uses of Anoigo - Anoigo describes the wise men "**opening** their treasures" before the One Who was God's precious gift to mankind (Mt 2:11). After Jesus' baptism the "heavens were **opened**" and the Spirit descended as a dove upon Jesus (Mt 3:16, Lk 3:21). Of Jesus when He "opened His mouth" and began to teach the glorious Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:2) and later He **opened** His "mouth in parables" (Mt 13:35, cp Philip Acts 8:35, Acts 18:14, cp Lxx use in Da 10:16). Of Jesus' **opening** the eyes of the blind (Mt 9:30, Jn 9:10, 14, 17, 21, 26, 30, 32, 10:21, 11:37), including 2 blind men in (Mt 20:33). Here in Mt 7:7, 8 figuratively of **opening** a door by prayer. Of **opening** a literal door in the parable of the virgins (Mt 25:11). Of the graves being **opened** after Jesus death (Mt 27:51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, 52 and the tombs were **opened** [[sepulchers](#) were closed by large stones]; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many). Of Jesus **opening** the ears of a deaf man (the only use by Mark - Mk 7:35, context Mk 7:31-34) Literally of Jesus **opening** the book (scroll) to read from Isaiah (Lk 4:17). Describes the attitude of those waiting for Jesus' return, who will "immediately **open** to Him when he comes and knocks" (Lk 12:36) and the judgment of those who reject Him when the door will not be **opened** (Lk 13:25). Of the angel who "**opened** the gates of the prison" to set the apostles free (Acts 5:19, 23) to "speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life." (Acts 5:20). As Stephen was being stoned to death he saw "the heavens **opened** up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56) Of Saul with eyes open but unable to see (Acts 9:8). Of Tabitha when Peter prayed and "she **opened** her eyes" returning to life (Acts 9:40). Of Peter seeing the sky opened up when God told him all things were clean to eat (Acts 10:11 for ""What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." Acts 10:15). Of Peter set free (Acts 12:10, 14, 16). For the third time in Acts, anoigo is used of prison doors being

opened, on this occasion setting Paul and Silas free (Acts 16:26, 27). My favorite use of anoigo is figurative in the charge of Jesus to Paul to go to the Gentiles "to **open** their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:18) Figuratively to describe the throat of unregenerate men as an "open grave" (Ro 3:13. cp Lxx use of anoigo in Ps 5:9). Figuratively, of Paul exalting in the fact that a "wide door of effective service" had opened for him (1 Cor 16:9, which is exactly what happened in 2Cor 2:12). Figuratively of prayer to God to "**open** up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ." (Col 4:3 - A GREAT PRAYER for us to pray for ourselves daily and for our fellow believers! We have not because we ask not! cp Eph 3:20!) **Most of the uses of anoigo in the NT are in the book of the Revelation which are so exciting and profound that they are worthy you taking about half an hour to meditate upon** - Read Rev 3:7, 8, 20; 4:1; 5:2, 3, 4, 5, 9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1; 9:2; 10:2, 8; 11:19; 12:16; 13:6; 15:5; 19:11; 20:12 - After you have done your own observation, interpretation and application of each of these great uses in the Revelation you can go to Tony Garland's well-done verse by verse comments - [click here](#))

Consider the literal sense of **anoigo** which means "**to open again**" - Ponder the fact that our spiritual eyes of our heart need to be opened again like our the first Adam's eyes were opened to behold the Lord walking in the Garden of Eden! Sin blinded Adam and it blinded our eyes. It placed us in darkness so that we did not know where we were going even though we thought we knew. Why? Because sin is DECEPTIVE and Satan is a liar, the father of lies, who did not just lie to Adam in the beginning but he and his minions are like serpents who continually and subtly deceive the minds of the unbelieving. Praise God for our Lord Jesus Christ appearing to Paul and saving him and giving him this great charge...

'But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18-20) Indeed because the Spirit opened my eyes, His inspired psalm, Psalm 119:131 became the cry of my life "I **opened** (Lxx = anoigo) my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for Thy commandments." Feed me Lord!

Comment: I am a Gentile who was gloriously saved by this great grace through faith at age 39 when my eyes were opened to the truth of God's holy Word. Thank you Father, Son and Holy Spirit and I encourage you dear believing reader to pause and ponder that glorious moment when your soul was "delivered...from the domain of darkness, and transferred...to the kingdom of His beloved Son." (Col 1:13) Hallelujah! Thank You Lord. Amen - [My Testimony of God's Grace](#).

Anoigo is used of those who thought they had defeated Jesus at the cross "They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion." (Ps 22:12) **Henry Morris** writes "The picture is of an assembly of wicked spirits of darkness, gleefully prancing about the cross--Satan, the roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8), mighty bulls, dogs and unicorns (Psalm 22:12,16,21). These references could mean demon-controlled men. Nevertheless, "having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" there at "his cross" (Colossians 2:14,15)."

Anoigo is used in the Lxx in Numbers in the famous dialogue between Balaam and his donkey for "LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"" (Nu 22:28)

Anoigo is used of opening the earth where of earth to open her mouth, means to open or form a chasm, especially in the OT uses (Lxx) (Rev 12:16; Nu 16:30; 26:10; Dt 11:6; Ps 106:17)

Anoigo - 77x in 75v - [See all verses below](#). - **NAS** = break(1), broke(7), open(22), opened(41), opening(2), opens(4), spoken freely(1). Matt 2:11; 3:16; 5:2; 7:7f; 9:30; 13:35; 17:27; 20:33; 25:11; 27:52; Mark 7:35; Luke 1:64; 3:21; 11:9f; 12:36; 13:25; John 1:51; 9:10, 14, 17, 21, 26, 30, 32; 10:3, 21; 11:37; Acts 5:19, 23; 8:32, 35; 9:8, 40; 10:11, 34; 12:10, 14, 16; 14:27; 16:26f; 18:14; 26:18; Rom 3:13; 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; 6:11; Col 4:3; Rev 3:7f, 20; 4:1; 5:2ff, 9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1; 9:2; 10:2, 8; 11:19; 12:16; 13:6; 15:5; 19:11; 20:12.

Anoigo - 121 verses in the Septuagint (Lxx) - [see all verses below](#).

Spurgeon wrote that "There was a nailhead for the knocker to drop on, and people used to smite it so heavily that some remarked that such blows on the head were killing. Hence arose the mirthful proverb, "as dead as a doornail." It betokens a hearty kind of knocking, which I would have you imitate in prayer. Knock at heaven's gate as earnestly as people knocked at doors in the olden time."

Hughes observes that "**Ask** implies asking for a conscious need. The word also suggests humility in asking, for it is commonly used

of one asking a superior. The next step, **seek**, involves asking but adds action. The idea is not merely to express one's need, but to get up and look around for help. It involves effort. **Knock** includes asking plus acting plus persevering - like someone who keeps pounding on a closed door! The stacking of these words is extremely forceful, but the fact that they are present imperatives gives them even more punch... Jesus is driving his point home, and the point is this: **We are to passionately persist in prayer.** We naturally persevere in our prayers when someone close to us is sick. If one of our children becomes ill, we pray without ceasing. Likewise, if we are in financial trouble or if we are hoping for a promotion or if we have a frightening or dangerous task ahead of us, we generally find it easy to pray. But do we persist in our prayers for spiritual growth for ourselves and others? Do we "ask . . . seek . . . knock" for a pure mind? Do we keep on knocking for a forgiving spirit or for the removal of an angry or critical spirit? (Hughes, R. K. [Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom. Crossway Books](#)) (Bolding added)

Keep in mind that this charge to a lifestyle of prayer is situated at the end of the description of a kingdom citizen that began in Matthew 5:20 (note) and immediately precedes Jesus' call to enter the narrow gate, the gate of divine righteousness (ultimately the righteousness of Christ Himself, cp 1 Cor 1:30) that surpasses that of the man-made righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Supernatural righteousness is not reckoned on the basis of works but only on the basis of faith in the finished work of the Messiah on the Cross. But to continue to live this righteousness in our daily walk necessitates faith and continued dependence upon God's grace and His Spirit. In this context Jesus inserts this powerful command to persistent prayer that is to be part of the righteous lifestyle of Kingdom citizens and is fact critical for us to be enabled to continually walk worthy of the gospel to which we were called. Jesus is not saying prayer is an after thought but in fact is to be our first thought and our continual thought.

William MacDonald agrees with this analysis writing that "If we think that we can live out the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount by our own strength, we have failed to realize the supernatural character of the life to which the Savior calls us. The wisdom or power for such a life must be given to us from above. So here we have an invitation to **ask** and keep on asking; to **seek** and keep on seeking; to **knock** and keep on knocking. Wisdom and power for the Christian life will be given to all who earnestly and persistently pray for it. **Taken out of context** (Ed note: see critical role of **context** in accurate interpretation), **verses 7 and 8 might seem like a blank check for believers, i.e., we can get anything we ask for.** But this is simply not true. The verses must be understood in their immediate context and in light of the whole Bible's teaching on prayer. Therefore, what seems like unqualified promises here are actually restricted by other passages. For example, from Psalm 66:18 we learn that the person praying must have no unconfessed sin in his life. The Christian must pray in faith (Ja. 1:6-8) and in conformity with the will of God (1Jn. 5:14). Prayer must be offered persistently (Luke 18:1-8) and sincerely (Heb 10:22a) ([BORROW Believer's Bible Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

Phil Newton explains it this way...

How often have we heard the command of verse 7 to be *acarte blanche* confirmation to ask God for anything we desire? It seems that this is most often the application of the well-known **asking, seeking, knocking** command of prayer. But I would insist that this is an improper use of this prayer. In this Sermon we do not have a string of random thoughts and sayings of Jesus collated by Matthew into a single literary format – which would legitimize *carte blanche* use of this command. Instead we have a consistent picture of the character and demands upon kingdom citizens. **The command to pray in verse 7 has everything to do with fulfilling kingdom demands....**

(Jesus) is calling for a lifestyle of persistent prayer. That stands in sharp contrast to the flash-in-the-pan style of Christianity so popular in our day that calls for nothing but a profession (and maybe baptism) and lacks perseverance. **Kingdom citizens persist in desiring that the character, ambitions, attitudes, and behavior that Jesus called for be shown consistently in our lives.** Yet we realize how impossible this is given our weaknesses, our propensity for sin, and our lack of power to obey (we have not forgotten the first Beatitude – "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"). So our Lord tells us to call upon the God of the impossible! In other words, what Jesus has commanded in attitude, ambition, behavior, and deed cannot be done apart from persistent, ongoing, regular, faithful prayer. You can attend dozens of seminars on Christian living, participate in discipleship groups, and read all the good books on the subject including the Puritans. But if you are not regular in praying about your own spiritual needs and development, and persistently looking to the Lord for grace to follow Christ, then you will be sorely lacking in the practice of kingdom citizenship.

Persistent prayer does at least three things in our lives.

First, it reminds us of our weakness apart from God's grace If we ever get away from this we are destined for a great fall.

"Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall" (1 Cor 10:12 – and that stated in the context of temptation).

We are reminded of our inadequacies in the face of Christ's demands. We think upon the desperate condition of our hearts, and our helplessness to stand against the "schemes of the devil" that are daily aimed our way (see note Ephesians 6:11). As we are honest before the Lord we come face to face with our sinfulness, and desperate need for the gospel to be daily applied to our lives.

Second, it reminds us to look to God as our Father. Perhaps nothing is more lacking in our lives than this very thing. We know the confessions, creeds, and hymns that affirm that God is our Father. But do we look to Him persistently as our Father that loves and cherishes us? Martyn Lloyd-Jones commented,

"If you should ask me to state in one phrase what I regard as the greatest defect in most Christian lives I would say that it is our failure to know God as our Father as we should know Him" [The Sermon on the Mount, II, 202].

And I would add, the most prominent reason for this defect is our neglect and inconsistency in prayer. In effect, by neglecting prayer, we treat God as a casual friend and not as "Our Father who is in heaven" (6:9). Yet the Father promises to "give what is good to those who ask Him!"

Third, it disciplines and humbles us to receive the Father's gracious provisions so that we might live as kingdom citizens. We are affected by dispositions of heart and the influences around us. So often we think that we have the "stuff" to do whatever God commands if we make our mind up to do it. And so we get a bit cocky and arrogant, while growing in self-centeredness as the natural course of human existence. We are also influenced by what we see and hear in the world to be selfish. But prayer brings us back to reality: we are inadequate in ourselves to live the Christian life apart from God's grace. So we ask and go on asking, seek and go on seeking, and knock and go on knocking so that we might receive from the Father what we need to live like kingdom citizens. And in persistent prayer the Lord develops in us a dependency and submission to Him. ([Matthew 7:7-12 Prayer and Practice](#)) (Bolding added)

The **Disciple's Study Bible** comments that...

Asking suggests dependence; **seeking** suggests yearning; **knocking** suggests persistence. Jesus wanted to encourage faith. These verses should not be applied out of the context of the Sermon on the Mount; they are intended for those asking within the "narrow gate" of Jesus' followers. Prayer is to accomplish God's purposes. ([Disciple's Study Bible](#))

The **Wycliffe Bible Commentary** offers another explanation for Jesus' introduction of prayer at this point. This explanation addresses **the more immediate context of necessary judging** (but by no means excludes need for prayer brought out by interpreting it in the larger context discussed above)...

(these) verses on prayer (cf. Lk 11:9-13) answer the believer's problems arising from the instructions on judging. The need of discerning between dogs and swine while avoiding the beam in the eye demands wisdom from above. Hence Jesus encourages his followers to ask, seek, and knock, that their deficiencies may be met from the divine supply. The three imperatives are in climactic order, and their durative forms suggest not only perseverance but frequent prayer for any and all needs. ([The Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) ONLINE)

Arthur Pink has a well reasoned explanation of why Jesus mentions prayer at this point and note that his analysis also relies heavily on the **context**...

What has been suggested above concerning the scope of our present passage will be the more apparent by viewing it in relation to its **whole context**. From Mt 5:20, onwards, Christ had presented a standard of moral excellence which is utterly unattainable by mere flesh and blood. He had inculcated one requirement after another, which it lies not in the power of fallen human nature to meet. He had forbidden an opprobrious word, a malignant wish, an impure desire, a revengeful thought. He had enjoined the most unsparing mortification of our dearest members (Mt 5:29, 5:30). He had commanded the loving of our enemies, the blessing of those who curse us, the doing good unto those who hate us, and the praying for those who despitefully use and persecute us (Mt 5:44). In view of which the Christian may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Such demands of holiness are beyond my feeble strength: yet the Lord has made them—what then am I to do?

Coming nearer still to our passage we find that in the opening verses of chapter 7 Christ gave two apparently contradictory commands. First, He says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged:" abstain from forming harsh estimates and passing censorious censures on your fellows. Second, "Give not that which is holy unto the

dogs;" discriminate sharply between the clean and the unclean, that you may not be guilty of obliterating the line which God has drawn between the righteous and the wicked. But to steer safely between such rocks as these requires not only spiritual strength but **spiritual wisdom**, such wisdom as the natural man possesses not. What then is the poor believer to do? The Lord here anticipates this difficulty and meets this perplexity. He is well aware that, in our own wisdom and strength, we are incapable of keeping His commands, but He at once reminds us that the things which are ordinarily impossible to men can be made possible to them by God.

(Ed note: But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:5-6)

Divine assistance is imperative if we are to meet the Divine requirements The Divine assistance is to be sought prayerfully, believably, diligently and persistently, and if it be thus sought it will not be sought in vain. It was then for the obtaining of supplies of Divine grace and heavenly strength that our Lord now exhorted and encouraged His disciples. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Mt 7:7).

In the foregoing chapter Christ had touched upon the subject of prayer in a way of warning, but here He refers to it as the appointed channel for obtaining supplies of grace to obey those precepts which are so contrary to flesh and blood. First He had given instructions concerning the duty of prayer, but now He supplies gracious encouragements for the exercise of it. Nevertheless, it is clear from the general tenor of scripture that every other legitimate means must be employed if we are to obtain the strength and help we so much need. ([Matthew 7:7-8: Seeking Grace, Seeking Grace Continued](#))

Spurgeon in his sermon **Knock** writes...

I Have no doubt that, taken very strictly, the three exhortations of this verse-which, indeed, are but one-were first of all intended for God's believing people. It was to his disciples that the Lord said, "Cast not your pearls before swine;" and perhaps certain of them who were poor in spirit might turn round and say, "Lord, we have few pearls; we are too poor to have the treasures of thy grace so plentifully. Thou hast bidden us not to give that which is holy unto dogs; but holiness is rather a thing we seek after than possess." "Well," saith the Lord, "you have only to ask and have; ye have not because ye ask not; you have only to seek and you will be sure to find, for holy things, like rare pearls, are to be discovered if you look for them you have only to knock and spiritual secrets shall open to you, even the innermost truth of God." In each exhortation our Lord bids us pray. Beloved, let us abound in supplication. depend upon it that failure in prayer will undermine the foundation of our peace and sap the strength of our confidence; but if we abound in pleading with God we shall grow strong in the Lord, and we shall be happy in his love, we shall become a blessing to those around us. Need I commend the mercy-seat to you who wait before it? Surely prayer must have become such a joy to you, such a necessity of your being, such an element of your life, that I hardly need press it upon you as a duty, or invite you to it as a privilege. Yet still I do so, because the Master does it by a triple exhortation. A threefold cord is not easily broken-let not my text be neglected by you. Let me urge you to repeated, varied, ever intensifying prayer: ask! seek! knock! Cease not to ask till you receive; cease nor to seek till you find; cease not to knock till the door is opened unto you.

In these three exhortations there would appear to be a gradation: it is the same thought put into another shape, and made more forcible.

Ask-that is, in the quiet of your spirit, speak with God concerning your need, and humbly beg him to grant your desires: this is a good and acceptable form of prayer.

If, however, asking should not appear to succeed, the Lord would arouse you to a more concentrated and active longing; therefore let your desires call in the aid of knowledge, thought, consideration, meditation, and practical action, and learn to seek for the blessings you desire as men **seek** for hid treasures. These good things are laid up in store, and they are accessible to fervent minds. See how you can reach them. Add to asking the study of the promises of God, a diligent hearing of his word, a devout meditation upon the way of salvation, and all such means of grace as may bring you the blessing. Advance from asking into **seeking**.

And if after all it should still seem that you have not obtained your desire, then**knock** and so come to closer and more agonizing work; use not alone the voice, but the whole soul; exercise yourself unto godliness to obtain the boon; use every effort to win that which you seek after; for remember that doing is praying; living to God is a high form of seeking, and the bent of the entire mind is knocking. God often giveth to his people when

they keep his commandments that which he denies to them if they walk carelessly.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Holiness is essential to power in prayer: the life must knock while the lips ask and the heart seeks.

I will change my line of exposition and say:**ask as a beggar** petitions for alms. They say that begging is a poor trade, but when you ply it well with God no other trade is so profitable. Men get more by asking than by working without prayer. Though I do not discommend working, yet I most highly commend praying. Nothing under heaven pays like prevailing prayer. He that has power in prayer has all things at his call. Ask as a poor mendicant who is hungry and pleads for bread. Then seek as a merchant who hunts for goodly pearls, looking up and down, anxious to give all that he has that he may win a matchless treasure.

Seek as a servant carefully looking after his master's interests and laboring to promote them. Seek with all diligence, adding to the earnestness of the beggar the careful watchfulness of the jeweler who is seeking for a gem.

Conclude all by **knocking at mercy's door as a lost traveler** caught out on a cold night in a blinding sleet knocks for shelter that he may not perish in the storm. When you have reached the gate of salvation ask to be admitted by the great love of God, then look well to see the way of entering, seeking to enter in; and if still the door seem shut against you, knock right heavily, and continue knocking till you are safely lodged within the home of love.

Once again, ask for what you want, seek for what you have lost, knock for that from which you are excluded.

Perhaps this last arrangement best indicates the shades of meaning, and brings out the distinctions.

Ask for everything you need, whatever it may be: if it be a right and good thing, it is promised to the sincere asker.

Seek for what you have lost; for what Adam lost you by the Fall, for what you have lost yourself by your neglect, by your backsliding, by your want of prayer: seek till you find the grace you need.

Then **knock**. If you seem shut out from comfort, from knowledge, from hope, from God, from heaven, then knock, for the Lord will open unto you. Here you need the Lord's own interference: you can ask and receive, you can seek and find; but you cannot knock and open, -the Lord must himself open the door, or you are shut out for ever.

God is ready to open the door. Remember, there is no cherub with fiery sword to guard this gate, but, on the contrary, the Lord Jesus himself openeth, and no man shutteth. (Read the full sermon [Matthew 7:7 Knock!](#))

D A Carson comments on why **prayer** is mentioned at this point in the Sermon explaining that...

the Sermon on the Mount lays down the righteousness, sincerity, humility, purity, and love expected of Jesus' followers; and now it assures them such gifts are theirs if sought through prayer.

The sermon has begun with acknowledgment of personal bankruptcy (notes Matthew 5:3) and has already provided a model prayer (notes Mt 6:9-10, 6:11-12, 6:13). Now (Mt 7:7) in three imperatives (ask, seek, knock) symmetrically repeated (Mt 7:8) and in the present tense to stress the persistence and sincerity required (cf. Jer 29:13 God to Judah "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."), **Jesus assures His followers that, far from demanding the impossible, He is providing the means for the otherwise impossible.**

"One may be a truly industrious man, and yet poor in temporal things; but one cannot be a truly praying man, and yet poor in spiritual things" (Broadus).

Far too often Christians do not have the marks of richly textured discipleship because they do not ask, or they ask with selfish motives (James 4:2-3). But the best gifts, those advocated by the Sermon on the Mount, are available to "everyone" (Mt 7:8) who persistently asks, seeks, and knocks.

Jesus' disciples will pray ("ask") with earnest sincerity ("seek") and active, diligent pursuit of God's way ("knock"). Like a human father, the heavenly Father uses these means to teach his children courtesy, persistence, and diligence. If the child prevails with a thoughtful father, it is because the father has molded the child to his way. If Jacob prevails with God, it is Jacob who is wounded (Gen 32:22-32). (See [Matthew](#) or

borrow [Expositor's Bible Commentary page 35](#))

Dwight Pentecost has a slightly different thought on Jesus' insertion of prayer at this time explaining that...

The Lord taught that **righteousness** manifests itself in prayer. Prayer is perhaps the greatest manifestation of faith a child of God can demonstrate. In praying we address words to a God we cannot see but we believe exists. We are one among multitudes who are praying, yet we believe God singles out our petition and hears it specifically. We believe God is not alienated from His creation and is able to move in answer to our prayers. The very act of praying is based upon faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6).

When a man approaches God in prayer, he must approach with a settled conviction that he believes God actually lives. It would be foolish to address prayer to God if God is so removed from His creatures that He cannot move in their lives. A man must believe that God rewards them that seek Him. It would be utter foolishness to address prayer to God if we were convinced He could not hear...A man who prays even once manifests faith; but the man who patiently endures in his praying gives evidence to God and man of the genuineness of his faith. Our Lord said this persistent prayer is a **demonstration of righteousness**...

Every delay in prayer is a test of a man's righteousness. Will he give up? Will he become discouraged? Or will he persist in prayer? Prayer that ceases before the need is met is not prayer offered in faith. The evidence of the genuineness of faith is that it persists...

Few have difficulty turning to God in prayer in life's big emergencies....The **proof of righteousness** is that a man calls on God in the little things. The son in the Lord's illustration asked his father for a noon meal. The child of God can transform his life by making Jesus Christ a partner in the little things of the day. Pray over the humdrum, the routine, and make Him a partner. When you go to the office and do what you have done a thousand times over, you can escape boredom by making Jesus Christ a partner. This will transform the mundane into something satisfying. When our Lord said, "Keep on asking," He was not only talking about the crises of life, He was also talking about the little things in life... No matter what you are doing, take it to the Lord in prayer. When we pray, we intercede for the crisis. How little praying there is about the ordinary matters! Do you want to be righteous? Do you want to realize and demonstrate the righteousness acceptable to God? Then listen to what our Lord said: "Keep on praying." Make Christ a partner in every detail of life.

(BORROW [The Sermon on the mount : contemporary insights for a Christian lifestyle](#))

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- [Global Prayer Digest](#)
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- Prayer for Deeper Understanding - Wayne Barber:
- Prayer for Fullness - Wayne Barber
- Notes on the "Disciple's Prayer" Matthew 6:9ff
- Notes on praying for hope, joy, peace Romans 15:13
- Notes on praying for enlightenment, etc Ephesians 1:18, 19, 20
- Notes on praying for inner strength Ephesians 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18
- Notes on Paul's "complete" prayer Colossians 1:9, 10, 11, 12ff
- Notes on praying when anxious Philippians 4:6, Philippians 4:7
- Notes on prayer for loving discernment Philippians 1:9, 10, 11, 12
- Notes on praying without ceasing 1Thessalonians 5:17

There Is an Eye that Never Sleeps

by James Cowden Wallace

There is an eye that never sleeps

Beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts,
When sink the beams of light

There is an arm that never tires,
When human strength gives way.

There is a love that never fails,
When earthly loves decay.

But there's a pow'r which man can wield,
When mortal aid is vain,
That eye, that arm, that love to reach
That list'ning ear to gain.

That pow'r is prayer, which soars on high,
Through Jesus, to the throne;
And moves the hand that moves the sky,
A blessing to bring down.

In **Morning and Evening Spurgeon** wrote...

We know of a place in England still existing, where a dole of bread is served to every passerby who chooses to ask for it. Whoever the traveller may be, he has but to knock at the door of St. Cross Hospital, and there is the dole of bread for him. Jesus Christ so loveth sinners that he has built a St. Cross Hospital, so that whenever a sinner is hungry, he has but to knock and have his wants supplied. Nay, he has done better; he has attached to this Hospital of the Cross a bath; and whenever a soul is black and filthy, it has but to go there and be washed. The fountain is always full, always efficacious. No sinner ever went into it and found that it could not wash away his stains. Sins which were scarlet and crimson have all disappeared, and the sinner has been whiter than snow. As if this were not enough, there is attached to this Hospital of the Cross a wardrobe, and a sinner making application simply as a sinner, may be clothed from head to foot; and if he wishes to be a soldier, he may not merely have a garment for ordinary wear, but armour which shall cover him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. If he asks for a sword, he shall have that given to him, and a shield too. Nothing that is good for him shall be denied him. He shall have spending-money so long as he lives, and he shall have an eternal heritage of glorious treasure when he enters into the joy of his Lord.

If all these things are to be had by merely knocking at mercy's door, O my soul, knock hard this morning, and ask large things of thy generous Lord. Leave not the throne of grace till all thy wants have been spread before the Lord, and until by faith thou hast a comfortable prospect that they shall be all supplied. No bashfulness need retard when Jesus invites. No unbelief should hinder when Jesus promises. No cold-heartedness should restrain when such blessings are to be obtained.

Thomas Kelley described how we can continually be asking, seeking, knocking...

There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than one level at once. On one level we can be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, meeting all the demands of external affairs. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship, and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings. (Thomas Kelly, *Testament of Devotion* New York: Harper, 1941)

In his famous book **Pilgrim's Progress** **John Bunyan** described prayer this way...

About the midst of this valley I perceived the mouth of hell to be, and it stood also hard by the wayside. Now thought Christian, what shall I do? And ever and anon the flame and smoke would come out in such abundance, with sparks and hideous noises (things that cared not for Christian's sword, as did Apollyon before), that he was forced to put up his sword, and betake himself to another weapon, called "**All-Prayer**."

In the classic **The Practice of the Presence of God**, **Brother Lawrence** explained "**all-prayer**" this way...

The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were on my knees. (Would it be we would all be in such constant, clear communion with the

throne of grace!)

John Wesley was described as one whose...

heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, God is in all his thoughts; he walks with God continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon Him, and everywhere "seeing Him that is invisible." (Ed: like Moses - see note Hebrews 11:27) (John Wesley, Works. Zondervan, 1959)

A Praying Father - A minister concluded his sermon one Sunday by saying, "If there's someone here who wants help in getting to know God, and you would like me to pray for you, please raise your hand." A young man stood up and said, "Please pray for me, sir. The burden of my sin is too heavy to bear."

After the service, the minister talked with the man and led him to faith in Jesus. The young man had been wandering around the country for 8 years without contacting his parents, so he decided to write to them and tell them about the change in his life.

Several days later, a reply came from his mother: "My dear son, you must have accepted Jesus Christ at the same hour your father went home to heaven. He had been sick for a long time, and that day he was very restless. He tossed from side to side on his bed, crying out, 'Lord, please save my poor, wandering boy!' I'm sure that one of the reasons you became a Christian was Dad's unceasing intercession."

A praying father will "ask," "seek," and "knock" in behalf of his children, persistently trusting his wise heavenly Father to do what is best (Matthew 7:7-11).

Let's thank God today for faithful fathers who never stop praying for their children. —Henry G. Bosch [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We thank You, Lord, for fathers true
Who always spoke to us of You;
Their great concern and tender care
Assured us of their constant prayer. —Bosch

A praying father reflects the love of our heavenly Father.

Prayer Malfunction - In a box of my father's old tools I found a hand drill that was at least 60 years old. I could barely get the wheel to turn. The gears were clogged with dirt, and the pieces that hold the drill bit in place were missing. But I wanted to see if I could get it to work.

I began by wiping the accumulated dirt and sawdust off the gears. Then I oiled them. At first they turned hard and slow, but I kept working them. Soon the gears were turning smoothly. Then I saw a cap at the top of the handle. Unscrewing it, I discovered the missing parts that would hold the bit in place. I placed them in the drill, inserted a bit, and easily bored a neat hole in a piece of wood.

Working with that old drill taught me something about prayer. Jesus said we will receive from God what we ask of Him (Matthew 7:7-8). But there are conditions. For example, John said we must obey God and do what pleases Him (1 John 3:22). This includes believing in His Son and loving one another (1 John 3:23). If we don't meet God's conditions, our prayers will be ineffective—just like that old drill.

If your prayer-life is malfunctioning, make sure you're meeting the conditions. When you do, you can be confident that your prayers will be effective. —David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Forgive us, Lord, our selfish asking,
All that's petty in Your sight;
Oh, help us pray with godly motives
And to seek what's good and right! —D. De Haan

Faith and love are vital to effective prayer.

J R Miller ([Who Is He?](#)) has the following devotional...

Ask, and it shall be given you. - Matthew 7:7

Jesus was never troubled with the question, "How can God answer prayer?"

He lived with God all the days and talked with Him as freely as a child ever talked with its parents. He assures us that God is willing to give us whatever we need. We have only to ask for it. Of course our asking must be sincere and must be earnest. If the thing we ask for does not come, we are to seek for it. If we cannot find it, we are to knock.

We need never be afraid that God will mock us by giving us something else in place of what we ask. If we need bread, He will not give us a stone instead. That is the way this world answers many of our desires. Earthly fathers are kind to their children; will God be less kind?

Our lives must be judged by their fruits, by the way we live, by our character and disposition. Christ does not care for our words of praise if we are not proving our love for Him by doing His will.

Matthew 7:8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: pas gar o aiton (PAPMSN) lambanei (3SPAI) kai o zeton (PAPMSN) euriskei (3SPAI) kai to krouonti (PAPMSD) anoigesetai. (3SFPI)

Amplified: For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and he who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, [the door] will be opened. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

NLT: For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: The one who asks will always receive; the one who is searching will always find, and the door is opened to the man who knocks." ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

Wuest: For everyone who keeps on asking for something to be given, keeps on receiving. And he who keeps on seeking, keeps on finding. And to him who keeps on reverently knocking, it shall be opened.

Young's: for every one who is asking doth receive, and he who is seeking doth find, and to him who is knocking it shall be opened.

- Mt 15:22-28; 2 Ch 33:1,2,19; Ps 81:10,16; John 2:2; 3:8-10; Luke 23:42,43; Acts 9:11

GOD HONORS THE ASKING HEART

For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened - EVERYONE!!! = Don't miss this gracious, mercy filled pronoun! No exceptions regarding one's sex, ethnicity, social status, etc. **EVERYONE**. The caveat is that we must come to the Father through the Son! **EVERYONE** has sinned (Ro 3:23) and **EVERYONE** needs a Savior (John 14:6, Acts 4:12) and **EVERYONE** who comes to God MUST BELIEVE (Heb 11:6, Acts 16:31). There is no other Great High Priest through which **EVERYONE** can boldly approach the throne of grace (Heb 4:16, Heb 10:19-23).

Jesus attaches this motivating promise to persistent (powerful) prevailing prayer. The ancient preacher **Chrysostom** (his name means "golden-mouthed") described the power of prevailing prayer this way...

The potency of prayer has subdued the strength of fire, it has bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the fates of heaven, assuaged diseases, dispelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt. There is (in it) an all-sufficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings! (**Ed:** Beloved do I really believe this? Better yet do I really believe what Jesus promises to those who ask, seek and knock? My (and your) answer to this question will

not be evidenced by a simple "yes" or "no" but by the "calluses (or lack of) on our knees" so to speak!)

It is important to reiterate that all the "**prayer verbs**" are in the **present tense** which pictures our prayer life as just that -- a lifestyle of prayer. Lord, teach us and enable us by Thy Spirit to pray as our lifestyle, a lifestyle that exhibits continual dependence on and communication with the Living God of the universe. Amen.

Asks...seeks...knocks - Regarding this section **Spurgeon** draws an interesting conclusion in his book **Power in Prayer...**

Until God had said that word or a word to that effect **(Asks...seeks...knocks...receives...finds...opened)**, it was at His own option to hear prayer or not, but it is not so now. For now, if it is true prayer offered through Jesus Christ, His truth binds Him to hear it. A man may be perfectly free, but the moment he makes a promise, he is not free to break it; and the everlasting God does not want to break His promise. He delights to fulfill it. He has declared that all His promises are "yea" and "amen" (2 Cor. 1:20) in Christ Jesus. For our consolation, when we survey God under the high and awesome aspect of His sovereignty, we have this to reflect on: He is under covenant bonds of promise to be faithful to the souls that seek Him. His throne must be a throne of grace to His people.

Once more, and the sweetest thought of all, every covenant promise has been endorsed and sealed with blood, and far be it from the everlasting God to pour scorn upon the blood of His dear Son. When a king has given a charter to a city, he may have been absolute before, and there may have been nothing to check his prerogatives; however, when the city has its charter, then it pleads its rights before the king.

Even thus, God has given to His people a charter of untold blessings, bestowing upon them the sure mercies of David. Very much of the validity of a charter depends on the signature and the seal, and, my friends, how sure is the charter of covenant grace! The signature is the handwriting of God Himself, and the seal is the blood of the Only Begotten. The covenant is ratified with blood, the blood of His own dear Son. It is not possible that we can plead in vain with God when we plead the blood-sealed covenant, ordered in all things and sure. "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matt. 24:35), but the power of the blood of Jesus can never fail with God. It speaks when we are silent, and it prevails when we are defeated. "Better things than that of Abel" (see note Hebrews 12:24) does it ask for, and its cry is heard. Let us come boldly, for we bear the promise in our hearts. When we feel alarmed because of the sovereignty of God, let us cheerfully sing:

**The gospel bears my spirit up,
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood.**

May God the Holy Spirit help us to use rightly from this time forward "the throne of grace." Amen. (from Power in Prayer)

Spurgeon writes regarding **receives...finds...opened...**

This is the rule of God's kingdom invariably, whenever the request is a right one, and is presented in a right manner.

Ask the people of God whether it is not so. Go among them, and question them upon this matter. They know the power of prayer, so let them tell you whether they have been deceived or not. Well, then, as it has been so with them, let this encourage you to expect that it shall be the same with you also.

One way or another you will get the blessing if you are but persevering, and blessed is the man who is a master of the art of asking, but does not forget the labor of seeking an entrance through the opportunity of knocking.

Claim What is Yours - For more than 40 years, Ace Pawn Shop had been a fixture on West Main Street in my hometown. Now it was closing. Fred and Lydia Fischer had run the shop as a 'mom and pop' operation, and when Fred died, Lydia found that she couldn't go on alone. Rather than sell the business, she decided to close shop and move south. As a final gesture of appreciation to the customers who had made life so good for them, Lydia sent a card to everyone who had an item in pawn and offered it back free of charge. The sign in the window told the story: 'Pawn Shop Closing: Claim What Is Yours' (David Grubbs, *Claim What Is Yours*).

God has invited all believers in Christ to claim what is ours, and the Sermon on the Mount lists a number of these wonderful gifts: the kingdom of heaven (salvation), comfort in mourning, the prospect of inheriting the earth, spiritual fulfillment, mercy, fellowship with God, adoption into God's family, and an eternal home in heaven. When we begin to feel spiritually poor, it's time to ask, seek, and knock. Before another day passes, we can, by faith, "claim what is ours." —D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries](#),

He possesses all who knows the Creator of all.

HAVE YOU PRAYED IT THROUGH?

by William Poole

Have you prayed all night, till the break of day,
And the morning light drove the dark away?
Did you linger there, till the morning dew,
In prevailing prayer, did you pray it through?

Refrain

*Did you pray till the answer came,
Did you plead in the Savior's Name?
Have you prayed all night till the morning light,
Did you pray till the answer came?*

Did you pray it through, till the answer came?
There's a promise true for your faith to claim,
At the place of prayer, Jesus waits for you,
Did you meet Him there, did you pray it through?

Refrain

As the Master prayed in the garden lone,
Let your prayer be made to the Father's throne,
If you seek His will, He will answer you,
Are you trusting still, have you prayed it through?

Refrain

Searching and Finding - Jeremiah 29:13 - God will make Himself known to anyone who sincerely desires to know the truth.

Edith Schaeffer tells of a man in China who longed to know, worship, and serve the true God. The Lord honored that desire by leading him to find a torn page from a catechism that had been prepared by a missionary. On it was the question, "Are there more gods than one?" with the answer, "No, there is only one God." Another question was, "Should we worship idols?" There was only the word "No," and the rest was torn off. But on the basis of those words he went home and destroyed his demon altars.

Then his daughter became ill. "You've angered the demons," chided his neighbors. Hoping to get nearer to God, the man climbed to a 14,000-foot mountain peak and asked God to heal his daughter. Returning home, he learned that her fever had left at the exact time he had prayed. Later in a marketplace he found a copy of Mark's gospel. After reading it and learning about Jesus, he became a Christian.

Do you really want to know God? Search for Him "with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). Look in His Word and be quick to do what He says. Put your trust in His Son. Then you'll truly know God. —Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Man gropes his way through life's dark maze,
To gods unknown he lifts his praise;
But when he seeks to know God's Son,
He finds in Him the Living One. --DJD

F B Meyer has a chapter entitled **THE ROYALTY OF OUR LIFE** (Matt. 7:7-12.)

IT is inevitable, as the Lord has clearly implied in the preceding words, that, so long as we are in the world, we must come in contact with its evil. There will be inconsistencies that we shall be tempted to judge, motes and beams that we shall have to extract, and swine or dogs with whom we must reckon. It cannot be child's play for any of us. And if we are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and unsubdued by the inward power of sin, we must have resort to the weapon of All-Prayer. Therefore it is that our Lord

turns from the exhortations of the preceding paragraph to these injunctions concerning prayer. It was as though He said: "You will never succeed in being or doing what I say unless your lives are full of persistent and prevailing prayer."

It may be that there is an even wider range of thought. As we review this matchless conception of a holy life, so far removed above anything which the mind of man has conceived; as we recall the beatitudes of the opening sentences, the searching fulfilment of the older law, the warnings against an impaired intention of the soul, against ostentation, covetousness, and care, our hearts might well faint within us at the immensity of the task before us. And as we think of His demand, that we should be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, that we should be filled with a Divine love, and that we should always treat others as we wish that they should treat us, we might again cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" To answer this double attitude, which is indeed one, the Lord says:

"Pray! What is impossible with man is possible with God. Pray!"

We have here two words which prove that the entire paragraph is closely jointed together, " If ye then being evil "; "All things, therefore, whatsoever." The exhortation to prayer is followed by an analogy, and this by an injunction.

THE EXHORTATION TO PRAYER.

(1) "Ask."

Our Master knew well how much it would mean to us that His own lips should utter that word, but He did not hesitate to speak it. As Son of God, He knew all that asking would do for us; and, as Son of Man, He had often proved the value of the practice He inculcated. Ask, He said. It was as though He loved to dwell on the word. See! He repeats it, not once or twice, but four times over. "Everyone that asketh receiveth"; "if his son shall ask for a loaf "; "if he shall ask for a fish "; "good things to them that ask." It seems as though our Lord would do away with the formality and stateliness that attach to too many of our prayers, and teach us that praying is just asking, and asking as a child would ask. Men shrink from asking for a favour from their fellows, but a little child has no reserve with its father. In the Simplest and most artless manner it asks for what it wants, and with no doubt at all that the father will gladly hasten to respond. "Thus," says our Lord, "ask God for what you want, as long ago you asked your parents; and do it without vehemence or self-consciousness."

"Everyone that asketh receiveth."

Emerson tells us that he preached his first sermon from these words, having obtained his divisions from the blunt saying of a field labourer, who said that men are always praying, and always being heard. His divisions, therefore, were as follows:

- (1) Men are always praying;
- (2) All their prayers are granted;
- (3) We must beware, then, what we ask.

The second is the doubtful one. Is it true that all our prayers are granted? Not surely in the way that we ask, as we shall see; but in some way. There is no prayer that we utter which is based on a real need, nothing that we sincerely ask for which is not answered somehow, somewhere.

With too many of us, alas! there is a failure in the art of receptiveness. We ask, but we fail to take. We send out our letter in the outgoing mail, but never go near the office to ask if there is a reply addressed to us. We send an ocean cablegram asking for a consignment of heavenly treasure, but never go down to the wharf to ascertain if it has arrived, and to claim it.

(2) Seek.

You ask for a gift; you seek for something you have lost, or for some valuable treasure.

The miner gropes along the corridors of the mine for his quest; the pearl-fisher dives in search of goodly pearls; the woman who had lost her silver piece lit a candle, and swept and searched her house diligently till she found it. Seek, says our Lord. If you have lost your peace with God, the blessed consciousness of His Presence, power in service, or any other spiritual gift, do not settle down content to live without it, but seek it diligently until you find. "Your heart shall live that seek God." If you have heard of some gift or grace which others possess, and may be equally yours as theirs, seek it. Seek it as men seek for hidden treasure or for goodly pearls, or as the philosophers were wont to seek for the substance which should turn everything into gold, as explorers seek for the secret of the North Pole, or as scientists search for the secrets which Nature holds back from all but reverent and persevering inquiry. "Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning."

"He that seeketh, findeth."

"If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid

treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." We may not always find just what we seek, but we shall come on something much better, and more satisfying. Abram and the patriarchs declared plainly that they sought a country, but they all died in tents, the shifting memorials of their pilgrimage. The philosophers of the Middle Ages, to whom we have referred, did not find the golden stone, but they laid the foundations of modern chemistry. You may not obtain that special opportunity of blessing others that you have long desired; but in your willingness to take a subordinate position, in your meekness and humility, you will certainly win a moral and spiritual influence incomparably greater. The resolute seeker finds. He starts off to raise crops of golden grain from the brown fields, and as patiently he drives his plough, the metallic chink of the share on metal makes it certain that he has come on treasure-trove.

(3) Knock.

We ask for a gift; we seek something we have lost; but we knock for admittance to the house of our friend. A door stands between us and the master of the house, which can only be opened from within. Then we knock; at first quietly, and then more vehemently and loudly, till we hear the drawing back of bolt and bar, and see the door thrown open. We need the gifts of God, and are thankful for the treasures which are to be obtained by earnest, prayerful search; but we should desire, above all, to have face-to-face friendship with Himself. Sometimes the door of fellowship stands wide open, and we can enter without let or hindrance. At other times it seems as though God had hidden His face and withdrawn Himself. Those are the occasions when we must knock. And how often it has been the experience of the saints that, as they have stood waiting and knocking, the door has been opened as by an invisible hand, and the times of greatest difficulty at the beginning have been those of greatest liberty at the close!

"To him that knocketh it shall be opened."

There is no doubt or hesitation in our Lord's assurance. In another paragraph He speaks of those who shall stand without and knock, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," and He shall say, "Depart"; but that dread parable has nothing to do with the access into the presence of God and the fellowship with God, of which the Master is here treating. Persistency, urgency, the holy violence which will not be denied, are dear to the heart of God, and are certain to win a loving and favourable response. "Though the vision tarry, wait for it: it shall come, it shall not tarry."

AN ANALOGY.

Bread and fish were the simple fare of the Galilean peasants whom our Lord addressed on the shores of their own beautiful lake, the bread as the necessary staff of life; the fish as an appetizing addition. Little children, in their simplicity, might sometimes mistake a stone for one of the small loaves of the Oriental shape and fashion, or a serpent for a fish. But, even though the heart of a human father is fallen and evil, it cannot be supposed for an instant that he would give the child what it asked. His love would at once withhold his hand. He would say: "No, little one, the stone is not food; the serpent would sting and poison you: but, see, here is what you want, bread and fish. I cannot give it you." So it often happens that in this mortal life of ours, where the shadows fall so dense and dark, and we are obliged to grope in the twilight, we are hungry with immeasurable appetite, and think that only this or the other boon will satisfy our souls. (We clamor for a stone, thinking it to be bread, or cry out for the glittering serpent, supposing it to be a dainty that will titillate our palate. But as the earthly father refused, notwithstanding his weakness and evil, much more will God refuse. "No," He says; "My child, I cannot, for love's sake, give it you; but, see, here is bread indeed, and here the fish, eat, drink, and be satisfied." Again, God sometimes gives things that appear to be stones and serpents, but they turn out to be bread and fish. The mother of St. Augustine prayed to God that He would not suffer her beloved son to go to Rome, because she dreaded the persecutions which were threatening the city. He went, notwithstanding, and it was in Italy that he found Christ. Referring to this incident in his life in after years, he says: "What was it, O my God, that she sought of Thee with many tears? Was it not that Thou wouldest not suffer me to set sail for Rome? But Thou, in Thy deep counsels, and listening to the hinge of her desire, didst disregard the thing which she asked for, that Thou mightest do in me that which she was ever asking, the conversion of my soul."

Do not be surprised if there are placed on your table viands that threaten to break your teeth and disagree with your digestion. Since God has put them there, and He is good, you will find them in the highest degree nutritious. Though they be the reverse of the Prophet's vision, bitter to the mouth, they will prove to be wholesome, and sweet to the digestion.

Or take a third case. Suppose a child in its hunger asks for bread and fish. Its father, though evil, will not tantalize it by giving it something which will defy its powers of assimilation. Though he were to suffer the extremities of starvation, he would cheerfully endure them rather than respond thus to his child's artless faith. We therefore may go with large requests to our God, asking for what we need, and asking in the certain faith that He will only give us good things. Each prayer we repeat will be answered only in giving. He will substitute the blessing we would crave if we knew as much as He does of the heart of man. What a comfort it is to know that God gives only good things. What He withholds is good; what He gives is good; what He substitutes in His answer to our petitions is good, nay, good is not strong enough. He gives always the best.

It should be remembered that our God gives not only the necessities, but the luxuries and comforts of life. The Lord prepared for

His hungry friends, exhausted by the labours of the night, not bread alone, but fish. "When they got out upon the land they see a fire of charcoal there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." It was as though in that last breakfast with Him the Master desired to teach that in all coming time He would give His faithful disciples the daily supply of their returning wants, together with the warmth of human love, which ministers to the sense of enjoyment as well as to present need.

This is a great consolation in prayer. We can ask for anything and everything we want; we may be sure that no good thing will be withheld from those who walk uprightly; but we may also be sure that God loves us too well to give anything that would hurt us.

Probably our lives are meagre and impoverished when they might become full of good things, because we fail to ask. Notice our Lord's words: "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him." Is not the Apostle James right when He says, "Ye have not because ye ask not?" That is the one reason. Or, "Because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." That is the second reason. Either not to pray, or to pray from selfish motives, shuts us out of a great amount of Divine helpfulness which otherwise would be ours. Our Lord puts into our hands the key to the vaults in God's bank. It is our fault if all grace does not abound in us, and if we are poor when we might be rich.

"AN INJUNCTION"

All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." With much reason this has been called the golden rule.

Gibbon reminds us that in a negative form it was in vogue four centuries before the Christian Era. But this is not to be wondered at, since Christ was in the world from the first. "There was the true Light, even the Light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." But for the positive form of this truth, and for the power by which it can be made operative in our selfish, evil hearts, we are entirely indebted to the teaching and inspiration of Jesus Christ.

Put into common English, this precept may be rendered: Put yourself in another's place; treat him as you would wish to be treated under similar circumstances; do not deal with him as you would not wish to be dealt with. The Lord, in effect, goes back to the words which stand at the beginning of the chapter, saying, "Judge as you would like to be judged; measure as you would like it to be measured to you."

The principle, of course, as He says, is witnessed "by the law and the prophets." We find it stated in the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is fundamental, underpinning the whole structure of human society. It is equitable, because all men are more nearly on an equality than might be inferred from a consideration of their outward circumstances. It is portable, "like the two-foot rule" which the artisan carries in his pocket for the measurement of any work which he may be called to estimate.

The Emperor Severus was so charmed by the excellence of this rule that he ordered a crier to repeat it whenever he had occasion to punish any person, and he caused it to be inscribed on the most notable parts of the palace, and on many of the public buildings. But though the maxim has attracted so much attention and admiration, it is powerless to effect any great reform apart from the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is that in the other version of this paragraph, in Luke 11:13, our Lord says: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." After all, it is only they who have stood under the open sky of Pentecost, who have received their share of that blessed endowment and infilling, which is the right of every believer, but which is too seldom claimed, who can go through the world practising always the golden rule of love. It is only they who by the Holy Spirit have been brought into living union with Christ, who receive hour by hour the full current of His life, that can go on loving men with the prodigality of affection, tempered, of course, with wisdom and discretion such as avail to fill up to the brim the full measure of the requirements of the golden rule.

Let us simply, artlessly, and earnestly, ask our Father here and now to bestow upon us in His fulness this best of all donations, -the Holy Spirit.

What a royal life this is to which our Master calls us, on the one hand, deriving all our needed resources from God; and on the other hand, able to be generous and free-handed to men. "He is able to make all grace abound towards us, that we, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Too long have we given stones where men asked bread, and serpents where they asked fish. We have pelted men with stones, we have stung them with the poison of asps; they have turned away from us and our religion with loathing. Henceforth let us go through life repeating in essence the wonderful miracle of John 6., where out of five barley loaves and two small fish, broken by the hand of the Master, and distributed by the hand of the disciples, vast crowds of hungry people were satisfied. Take your bread and fish from Christ, and then break and give, .break and give! There will always be twelve basketsful of fragments left for your personal need. (F. B. Meyer. The Directory of the Devout Life)

"Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.." Matthew 7:8

These are very positive promises, and yet they must be read intelligently, in the light of other scriptures which explain and qualify the words. It is not all asking that receives; for there is asking that is not true prayer. Some ask merely in word, with no real desire in their hearts. Some ask selfishly, that they may consume the divine gift on their lusts. Some ask rebelliously, without submission to the will of God. Some ask without faith, not expecting any answer. Some ask indolently, not ready to do their own part. Some ask ignorantly for things which would not be blessings if they were granted. It is very clear that in these cases those who ask will not receive.

So too not literally all who seek find. The seeking must be earnest. There is a remarkable word in one of the old prophets: "Ye shall seek me, and find Me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." The seeking must also be for good things. If our quest is for sinful things, or for worldly good, that would work in us spiritual harm, God will not give us what we seek. Then we must live right. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." The thing itself must be good; and we must walk in paths of obedience, or there is no promise of reward for our quest.

In like manner it is not to all knocking that God opens the door. There are timid knocks that indicate neither desire nor faith, as when mischievous children ring a doorbell and then run away, not wanting to enter. It is when we knock at the right door, and knock with expectancy and faith and importunity, that the door is graciously opened. Thus in interpreting this wonderful prayer-promise we must read into the words their true meaning. The asking, seeking, knocking, must be true prayer.

THE IMPORTANCE AND EFFICACY OF PRAYER

Mt 7:7, 8

Charles Simeon...

WE need not look for a connexion in every part of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount; because the account of it which we have in this Gospel is nothing more than an epitome, in which only the principal heads, together with some important sayings, are recorded. But, if we suppose the words of our text to arise from what has just preceded them, the connexion may easily be found. The commands, to abstain from all uncharitable judgment, and to be intent rather on searching out and removing our own imperfections, and even when the faults of our neighbour are most glaring, to exercise much prudence and caution in reproving him; these commands, I say, are difficult to be obeyed: and therefore our Lord encourages us by the consideration, that we may obtain by prayer whatever wisdom or strength we may stand in need of. The import of the text, however, will be the same, whether we take it as detached from the preceding context, or as connected with it; and it will naturally lead us to set before you the nature, the importance, and the efficacy of prayer.

I. Its nature—

Prayer is not indeed defined in the words before us; but we may collect from the different terms by which it is designated, what are its inseparable attendants and its characteristic marks;

1. Earnest desires—

[The words, "ask," "seek," "knock," must certainly imply a solicitude to obtain some specific object. Now this is the very life and essence of prayer. It is not the posture of the body, or a repeating of any words, either with or without a form, that can be called prayer; but a prostration of the soul before God, accompanied with an ardent desire of acceptance with him. We may confess our vileness in the most humiliating terms, or petition for mercy with the most suitable pleas, or render thanks to God in copious and devout acknowledgments; and yet, if our hearts have not felt what our lips have uttered, we have offered no acceptable service to God; "we have worshipped him in vain, because we have drawn nigh to him with our lips when our hearts were far from him." Desires in the soul will be accounted as prayer, though not expressed in words; but words without desires are no better than a solemn mockery.]

2. Persevering endeavours—

[A mere exclamation under an impression of terror cannot be considered as prayer; prayer imports such a desire after divine

blessings as engages us in the pursuit of them from day to day; and this also is intimated in the very terms of our text. "Asking" only is not prayer, unless we "seek" also for the things in God's appointed way; nor is "seeking" sufficient, if we do not, like persons anxious to obtain an answer, continue "knocking" at the door of mercy. We do not indeed deny but that a prayer may be offered by one who speedily turns back again from God; but it is not accepted; and it is of acceptable prayer that we speak; for nothing else deserves the name of prayer. Whatever therefore a person may do on some particular occasion, he prays not to any good purpose, unless he "set his face" determinately to seek after God, and to obtain from him those daily supplies of mercy and grace which his soul needeth. Hence the command of God is, "Pray without ceasing;" "Continue instant in prayer;" "Pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance"]

3. Humble expectation—

[Here again the terms of our text afford us a correct idea of the duty of prayer. It is evident that when a person "asks," it is with some hope of receiving; and when he "seeks," he has some prospect of finding; and if he "knock" at a door, it is with some expectation that it shall be opened to him. Now this, beyond every thing else, marks the true character of prayer. "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee," says the Psalmist, "and will look up;" that is, I will look up in expectation of receiving an answer to my prayers. It is to the prayer of faith that the promise of an answer is given: "Whatsoever ye shall ask, believing, ye shall receive." Prayer destitute of this qualification is declared to be of no avail whatever: the man that offers it "must not think of receiving any thing from the Lord." Hence the true and acceptable suppliant is distinguished as "looking unto God as a servant does to the hand of his master," and as "waiting upon God for his salvation."]

The nature of prayer being explained from the text, we proceed to notice,

II. Its importance—

[We cannot but observe throughout the whole text the inseparable connexion between the means and the end. It is thought by many that it is unnecessary to pray; because God, being omniscient, stands in no need of information from us; and being of his own nature inclined to mercy, he needs not our importunity to prevail upon him. But these objections betray an utter ignorance of the intent of prayer. Prayer is not intended to give information to God, but to impress our own minds with a sense of our dependence upon him, and to give him glory as the only fountain of all our benefits. Moreover, prayer, though often represented as prevailing with God, is not designed to dispose him to any thing to which he was before averse; but only to bring our souls to such a state as may prepare us for a worthy reception of those blessings which God has previously determined to bestow. Though, therefore, prayer does not answer, nor is intended to answer, the ends which ignorant persons are ready to suppose, it does answer the most valuable ends; which are intimately connected with the salvation of our souls.

But we will suppose that there were no connexion whatever between the means and the end; still, if God has united them, it does not become us to put them asunder; nor can we ever expect the Divine blessing, if we attempt to separate them. Moses was commanded to take his stick, or rod, and with that to work miracles in Egypt. What would he have wrought, if, in contempt of such means, he had left his rod behind him? The Israelites were commanded to march round Jericho on seven successive days, and then to blow with rams' horns. Suppose they had disregarded these means on account of their inadequacy to produce any important result, would the walls of Jericho have fallen down? Or if Naaman had persisted in preferring the waters of Abana and Pharpar to those of Jordan, would he have been healed of his leprosy? Thus then, whether prayer have any proper effect or not, we must use it as God's ordinance; and if we will not use it, we shall infallibly lose those blessings, which, in the use of the appointed means, we might otherwise attain. True, it is said of the Gentiles, that "God was found of them that sought him not;" but this refers only to their heathen state: for none ever ultimately found him, who did not walk with him in the daily exercise of faith and prayer: nor can there be found in all the sacred volume one single word that justifies a hope of obtaining any thing at God's hands in the neglect of this sacred duty.]

On the contrary, when prayer is offered aright, the whole inspired volume attests,

III. Its efficacy—

[Nothing can be more express than the declarations of our text on this subject. The repetition of them is intended to assure us that no man shall ever "seek God's face in vain." It is of importance to observe, that in the promises before us there is no limitation whatever, either as to the person asking or the blessing desired. A person may have been as wicked as Manasseh himself, yet shall he not be cast out, provided he come to God with unfeigned penitence in the name of Jesus Christ. It must be remembered, that, since the coming of Christ, it is indispensably necessary that we should offer all our petitions in his name. This, in fact, was done even under the Jewish dispensation: for every penitent was obliged to put his hand upon the head of his sacrifice; and, when the Jews were in captivity, and consequently were unable to offer sacrifices, they must look towards the temple; which was a distinguished type of Christ, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Let but our prayers be offered in an humble dependence on the sacrifice and intercession of Jesus Christ, and they shall assuredly prevail. God may not indeed answer us

immediately; and, it may be, that he may not grant the precise thing which we pray for; but he will answer in the best time, and in the best manner, granting that which eventually will be most conducive to his own glory and to our good. David and the Canaanitish woman were suffered to wait for the blessings they desired; and St. Paul, yea, and Christ himself too, were answered, not so much according to the letter, as according to the spirit, of their petitions. But if we tarry the Lord's leisure, we may be as "confident" of an answer to our prayers, as of our own existence.]

In this subject we may find abundant matter,

1. For reproof—

[How many have never gone beyond the mere forms of prayer; and remain unmoved even when their self-deceit and hypocrisy are thus plainly set before them! How astonishing is this! Methinks, if God had appointed only one hour in a man's life, wherein he should be at liberty to avail himself of the gracious promises in the text, one would suppose that the whole universe should not be able to divert his attention from this sacred duty: he would long for the appointed season to arrive; he would meditate beforehand on every thing which he could desire to obtain; and he would employ every moment of the prescribed time in most importunate supplications. So, I say, we might suppose; but experience proves, that, notwithstanding there is not an hour in our whole lives wherein we may not avail ourselves of this privilege, the generality have never found one single hour for that holy employment. But would it be thus if God were for one hour to allow this privilege to those who are shut up in hell? If the doors of hell might be opened for their escape, would they neglect to "knock?" If all the blessings of grace and glory might be obtained by them, would they neglect to "ask?" O then, let us "seek the Lord whilst he is near; let us call upon him, whilst he may be found." Think what a bitter reflection it will be in the eternal world, that we might have escaped the miseries of hell, and obtained the glory of heaven, by the exercise of humble and believing prayer, and we would not: we did not regard either the one or the other, as worth asking for. O that we may now be convinced of our folly, and not be left to bewail it to all eternity!]

2. For encouragement—

[If God had bidden us do some great thing to obtain his favour, we should have been ready to do it. The poor benighted heathen, what pains and penances do not they undergo to obtain the favour of their gods! Yet no such things are required of us: we have nothing to do, but to "ask, and seek, and knock." Surely we should rejoice in so great a privilege, and determine to "take the kingdom of heaven by the holy violence" of faith and prayer.

But some are discouraged, because they cannot pray with any fluency or enlargement of heart. Let not this however distress the minds of any. It is humility, and not fluency, that makes our prayers acceptable: and many a person who can only seek the Lord with sighs, and groans, and tears, will find acceptance with him, whilst others, who are admired by men, or filled with self-complacency, will be rejected. Never, from the foundation of the world, was there a better prayer than that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

But some are discouraged because they have prayed long without receiving any answer to their prayers. Let not, however, any despond on this account. God may have answered them, though not precisely in the way that they expected: and the very continuance of their prayers is an evidence that they have not prayed in vain. It is evident at least that God has given them his Holy Spirit, as a Spirit of grace and of supplication; and this is a pledge and earnest of other blessings which they stand in need of. Let them "tarry the Lord's leisure, and he will comfort their hearts;" "let them wait, I say, upon the Lord."]

ALL USES OF ANOIGO IN THE NT

Matthew 2:11 After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 3:16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

Matthew 5:2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

Matthew 7:7 "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.

Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!"

Matthew 13:35 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."

Matthew 17:27 "However, so that we do not offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up;

and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me."

Matthew 20:33 They said to Him, "Lord, we want our eyes to be opened."

Matthew 25:11 "Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'

Matthew 27:52 The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

Mark 7:35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly.

Luke 1:64 And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened,

Luke 11:9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

Luke 12:36 "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.

Luke 13:25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'

John 1:51 And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

John 9:10 So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?"

14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

17 So they said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."

21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself."

26 So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

30 The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes.

32 "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

John 10:3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

21 Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

John 11:37 But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?"

Acts 5:19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,

23 saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened up, we found no one inside."

Acts 8:32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH.

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

Acts 9:8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.

40 But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

Acts 10:11 and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,

34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,

Acts 12:10 When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened for them by itself; and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

14 When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate.

16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, they saw him and were amazed.

Acts 14:27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Acts 16:26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

Acts 18:14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you;

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Romans 3:13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";

1 Corinthians 16:9 for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

2 Corinthians 2:12 Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,

2 Corinthians 6:11 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.

Colossians 4:3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

8 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Revelation 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Revelation 5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

5 and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Revelation 6:1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come."

3 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come."

5 When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

7 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come."

9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

Revelation 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Revelation 9:2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

Revelation 10:2 and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;

8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land."

Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Revelation 12:16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

Revelation 15:5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

ALL USES OF ANOIGO IN THE OT (SEPTUAGINT)

Septuagint:

בָּקַע bāqa', Qal: cleave (Judges 15:19).
גָּלַח gālāh, Qal: reveal (1 Chr 17:25); niphil: be shown, be uncovered (Jb 38:17).
מִפְתַּח miptāch, Opening (Prov 8:6).
פָּעַר pā'ar, Open wide (Ps 119:131 [118:131]).
פָּתֵשׁ pātsāh, Open (Num 16:30, Dt 11:6, Jgs 11:35).
פָּקַד pāqach, Qal: open (Gen 21:19, 2 Kgs 4:35, 6:20); niphil: be opened (Isa 35:5).
פָּרַשׁ pāras, Qal: spread (Isa 37:14).
פָּתָח pāthach, Qal: open (Gen 8:6, Jos 8:17, Prov 31:8 [24:76]); niphil: opened, be let loose (Gen 7:11, Neh 7:3, Jb 12:14); piel: loosen, open (Jb 30:11, 38:31, Isa 48:8).
פְּתַח pēthach, Open (Dan 6:10, 7:10 — Aramaic).
פִּתְחָה pittāchōn, Open the mouth (Ezek 16:63, 29:21).
קָרָא qāra', Rend (Isa 64:1).
רָחַב rāchav, Be or grow wide, large; hiphil: sneer (Isa 57:4).
שִׁיחָה sîach, Complaint (Job 7:11).

Anoigo is used predominantly as the equivalent for the Hebrew verb. patah 10x for paqah, both meaning open; 6 times for pasah, unlock, open up; and in isolated passages for further Heb. verbs pasah, as a rule followed by peh = open the mouth (to swallow, Ezek. 2:8). paqah is used exclusively for opening one's eyes and ears (e.g. Ge 21:19; Isa 35:5; 37:17). With patah the object can be a container (a bag, a box, a vessel, a grave; e.g. Ex 21:33; Jdg 4:19; Ps 5:9), a window or a door (1Sa 3:15; 2Ki 13:17; Isa 22:22; 26:2), or a book (Neh 8:5). If the act of opening is related to men, it is usually God who is the subject; objects include the womb (Ge 29:31); the mouth (Ex 4:12, 15; Nu 22:28; cf. Ps 81:10); the eye (Ge 21:19; Isa 35:5; 42:7); the ear (Isa 50:5); the hand (Ps 145:16).

Genesis 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.

Genesis 8:6 Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;

Genesis 21:19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink.

Genesis 29:31 Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

Genesis 30:22 Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb.

Genesis 41:56 When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.

Genesis 43:21 and it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand.

Genesis 44:11 Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.

Exodus 2:6 When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Exodus 4:12 "Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say."

15 "You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do.

Exodus 21:33 "If a man opens a pit, or digs a pit and does not cover it over, and an ox or a donkey falls into it,

Numbers 16:30 "But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD."

32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions.

Numbers 19:15 'Every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, shall be unclean.

Numbers 22:28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

Numbers 26:10 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, so that they became a warning.

Deuteronomy 11:6 and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, among all Israel--

Deuteronomy 15:8 but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.

11 "For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'

Deuteronomy 20:11 "If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you.

Deuteronomy 28:12 "The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

Joshua 8:17 So not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who had not gone out after Israel, and they left the city unguarded and pursued Israel.

Joshua 10:22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave."

Judges 3:25 They waited until they became anxious; but behold, he did not open the doors of the roof chamber. Therefore they took the key and opened them, and behold, their master had fallen to the floor dead.

Judges 4:19 He said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a bottle of milk and gave him a drink; then she covered him.

Judges 11:35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you are among those who trouble me; for I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot take it back."

36 So she said to him, "My father, you have given your word to the LORD; do to me as you have said, since the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the sons of Ammon."

Judges 19:27 When her master arose in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, then behold, his concubine was lying at the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold.

1 Samuel 3:15 So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. But Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.

1 Kings 7:35 On the top of the stand there was a circular form half a cubit high, and on the top of the stand its stays and its borders were part of it.

1 Kings 8:29 that Your eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward the place of which You have said, 'My name shall be there,' to listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place.

52 that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and to the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You.

2 Kings 4:35 Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes.

2 Kings 6:20 When they had come into Samaria, Elisha said, "O LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." So the LORD opened their eyes and they saw; and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

2 Kings 9:3 "Then take the flask of oil and pour it on his head and say, 'Thus says the LORD, "I have anointed you king over Israel." Then open the door and flee and do not wait."

10 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her.' Then he opened the door and fled.

2 Kings 13:17 He said, "Open the window toward the east," and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot!" And he shot. And he said, "The LORD'S arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory over Aram; for you will defeat the Arameans at Aphek until you have destroyed them."

2 Kings 15:16 Then Menahem struck Tiphsah and all who were in it and its borders from Tirzah, because they did not open to him; therefore he struck it and ripped up all its women who were with child.

2 Kings 19:16 "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

1 Chronicles 9:27 They spent the night around the house of God, because the watch was committed to them; and they were in charge of opening it morning by morning.

1 Chronicles 17:25 "For You, O my God, have revealed to Your servant that You will build for him a house; therefore Your servant has found courage to pray before You.

2 Chronicles 6:20 that Your eye may be open toward this house day and night, toward the place of which You have said that You would put Your name there, to listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place.

40 "Now, O my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and Your ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.

2 Chronicles 7:15 "Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.

2 Chronicles 29:3 In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them.

Nehemiah 1:6 let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father's house have sinned.

Nehemiah 6:5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same manner a fifth time with an open letter in his hand.

Nehemiah 7:3 Then I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot, and while they are standing guard, let them shut and bolt the doors. Also appoint guards from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each at his post, and each in front of his own house."

Nehemiah 8:5 Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

Nehemiah 13:19 It came about that just as it grew dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and that they should not open them until after the sabbath. Then I stationed some of my servants at the gates so that no load would enter on the sabbath day.

Esther 4:17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

Job 3:1 Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

Job 7:11 "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 11:5 "But would that God might speak, And open His lips against you,

Job 12:14 "Behold, He tears down, and it cannot be rebuilt; He imprisons a man, and there can be no release.

Job 30:11 "Because He has loosed His bowstring and afflicted me, They have cast off the bridle before me.

Job 31:32 "The alien has not lodged outside, For I have opened my doors to the traveler.

Job 32:20 "Let me speak that I may get relief; Let me open my lips and answer.

Job 33:2 "Behold now, I open my mouth, My tongue in my mouth speaks.

Job 35:16 So Job opens his mouth emptily; He multiplies words without knowledge."

Job 38:17 "Have the gates of death been revealed to you, Or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?

31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, Or loose the cords of Orion?

Job 41:14 "Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth there is terror.

Psalm 5:9 There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

Psalm 14:3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

Psalm 22:13 They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion.

Psalm 38:13 But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; And I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth.

Psalm 39:9 "I have become mute, I do not open my mouth, Because it is You who have done it.

Psalm 49:4 I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will express my riddle on the harp.

Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.

Psalm 78:2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old,

23 Yet He commanded the clouds above And opened the doors of heaven;

Psalm 104:28 You give to them, they gather it up; You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good.

Psalm 106:17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, And engulfed the company of Abiram.

Psalm 109:2 For they have opened the wicked and deceitful mouth against me; They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

Psalm 118:19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD.

Psalm 119:131 I opened my mouth wide and panted, For I longed for Your commandments.

Psalm 145:16 You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Proverbs 31:8 Open your mouth for the mute, For the rights of all the unfortunate.

9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.

26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Song of Solomon 5:2 "I was asleep but my heart was awake. A voice! My beloved was knocking: 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, My dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, My locks with the damp of the night.'

5 "I arose to open to my beloved; And my hands dripped with myrrh, And my fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the bolt.

6 "I opened to my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me.

Isaiah 13:2 Lift up a standard on the bare hill, Raise your voice to them, Wave the hand that they may enter the doors of the nobles.

Isaiah 24:18 Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, And he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare; For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake.

Isaiah 26:2 "Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, The one that remains faithful.

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

Isaiah 37:14 Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD.

Isaiah 41:18 "I will open rivers on the bare heights And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water And the dry land fountains of water.

Isaiah 42:7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

20 You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; Your ears are open, but none hears.

Isaiah 45:1 Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:

3 "I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden wealth of secret places, So that you may know that it is I, The LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.

Isaiah 48:8 "You have not heard, you have not known. Even from long ago your ear has not been open, Because I knew that you would deal very treacherously; And you have been called a rebel from birth.

Isaiah 50:5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back.

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

Isaiah 57:4 "Against whom do you jest? Against whom do you open wide your mouth And stick out your tongue? Are you not children of rebellion, Offspring of deceit,

Isaiah 60:11 "Your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession.

Isaiah 63:19 We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, Like those who were not called by Your name.

Jeremiah 13:19 The cities of the Negev have been locked up, And there is no one to open them; All Judah has been carried into exile, Wholly carried into exile.

Jeremiah 50:25 The LORD has opened His armory And has brought forth the weapons of His indignation, For it is a work of the Lord GOD of hosts In the land of the Chaldeans.

26 Come to her from the farthest border; Open up her barns, Pile her up like heaps And utterly destroy her, Let nothing be left to her.

Ezekiel 1:1 Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

Ezekiel 3:27 "But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you will say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house.

Ezekiel 16:63 so that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done," the Lord GOD declares.

Ezekiel 29:21 "On that day I will make a horn sprout for the house of Israel, and I will open your mouth in their midst. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 33:22 Now the hand of the LORD had been upon me in the evening, before the refugees came. And He opened my mouth at the time they came to me in the morning; so my mouth was opened and I was no longer speechless.

Ezekiel 37:12 "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.

13 "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people.

Ezekiel 44:2 The LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.

Ezekiel 46:1 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "The gate of the inner court facing east shall be shut the six working days; but it shall be opened on the sabbath day and opened on the day of the new moon.

12 "When the prince provides a freewill offering, a burnt offering, or peace offerings as a freewill offering to the LORD, the gate facing east shall be opened for him. And he shall provide his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he does on the sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and the gate shall be shut after he goes out.

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

Daniel 7:10 "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

Daniel 9:18 "O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.

Daniel 10:16 And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, "O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength.

Amos 8:5 saying, "When will the new moon be over, So that we may sell grain, And the sabbath, that we may open the wheat market, To make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, And to cheat with dishonest scales,

Nahum 3:13 Behold, your people are women in your midst! The gates of your land are opened wide to your enemies; Fire consumes your gate bars.

Malachi 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.