

Ask, Seek, Knock; Matthew 7:7-11

1. Settled, practiced, lifestyle.
 - a. Muscle memory.
 - i. I worked with the 75th Rangers for two weeks while deployed to Royal Air Force Station Fairford.
 1. One of the rangers was our point of contact, and we had several conversations.
 2. He told me about their weekly sleep and food deprivation marches.
 3. These marches might seem harsh, but they have a good reason behind them.
 4. They are designed to enable you to do your job no matter how you feel.
 - ii. Practice makes perfect.
 - iii. My neighbor, Brent, went to Egypt recently.
 1. He wanted to pick up some oils to help him with some of his ailments.
 2. He found this gentleman who was a 5th or 6th-generation Aromatherapist.
 3. Brent told him his complaints, and this aromatherapist would reach behind him and grab a bottle while saying, "I know just the oil that will help for that," without looking where he was reaching.
 4. He had been doing this for so long and had been trained for it all his life that he knew what oils helped each condition and where they were in the shop.
 - iv. Some muscle memory works against you.
 1. I was stationed in Japan for five years.
 2. We could tell who the new arrivals were, the ones whose windshield wipers were going when it wasn't raining.
 - b. Habit.
 - i. The Greek words are present imperatives, which brings across the meaning of habitual lifestyle commands.
 - ii. Asking, seeking, and knocking are not one-time actions that we complete and then are finished.
 - iii. These are things we do multiple times each day.
 - iv. We create a habit of asking, seeking, and knocking.
2. Ask.
 - a. The religious elite regularly engaged in prayer (in Matthew 6, Jesus starts by saying, "When you pray").
 - b. Prayer is taught.
 - i. Luke 11:1-2a: "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' And he said to them, 'When you pray, say:'"
 - ii. Matthew 6:5-9: "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "And when you pray, do

not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

- iii. We see the religious elite had a different understanding of prayer.
 - 1. They prayed to be seen by others.
 - 2. They prayed to be heard by others.
- c. Prayer is simple.
 - i. Matthew 6:9–13: "Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
 - ii. This is not a formula that we memorize to access God.
 - iii. The religious elite liked elaborate ceremonies in prayer, a particular stance, and flowery words so they would be seen as pious.
 - iv. Jesus' model has no pomp or ceremony.
 - 1. Address the Father.
 - 2. Praise Him.
 - 3. A simple request for physical needs.
 - 4. A simple request for spiritual needs.
 - v. God already knows and understands our prayers
- d. Pray in confidence.
 - i. God wants to hear our requests.
 - ii. God wants to answer our requests.
 - iii. Matthew 7:9–11: "Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"
 - iv. James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."
 - v. Hebrews 10:19–23: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."
 - vi. There is no more separation between God and man; the curtain is torn in two, and the LORD (YHWH, El Shaddai) is available to all who ask, seek, and knock.
 - 1. We ask for what we need.
 - 2. We seek what we earnestly desire.

3. We knock when our desire becomes persistent.
- e. Prayer is a relationship.
 - i. Jesus' illustration is about a father giving good gifts to his son.
 - ii. God gives believers good things.
 - iii. One of the worst things our Father could do is answer our inappropriate, selfish prayers (our earthly fathers would not, either).
 - iv. The father-son relationship.
 1. The father is concerned about the welfare of his children.
 2. The father does not mistreat or deceive his children.
 3. Our Father (God) knows what is in our best interest, and His ability to give us what we need is far superior to our earthly fathers.
 - v. Matthew 6:26: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"
 - vi. Jesus is about to heal a man with a withered hand and is questioned about working on the Sabbath by the religious elite.
 - vii. Matthew 12:11–14 "He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him."
 - viii. 1 Peter 5:6 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,"
3. Settled, Practiced lifestyle of prayer.
 - a. Ask (pray), seek (pray), knock (pray).
 - b. Christians should spend a lot of time in prayer; it should be a lifestyle.
 - i. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 "pray without ceasing,"
 - ii. Ephesians 6:18: "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,"
 - c. Habitual prayer is constantly asking, seeking, and knocking.