

The Sermon on the Mount
(Lesson 18)

Introduction:

1. In this lesson we are concentrating on the Lord's teachings in Matthew 7:7-11.
2. Earlier in His sermon Jesus presented some important instructions concerning prayer.
 - a. He taught His followers not to pray like the hypocrites (6:5-6).
 - b. He forbids praying like the heathens (6:7-8).
 - c. He gave His model prayer (6:9-13).
3. In the verses we are studying He encourages us to be persistent in prayer by assuring us that God answers prayer.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.7-8) JESUS GAVE HIS ASSURANCE THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYER
 - A. He stated that God will do His part when we fulfill our responsibilities.
 - B. (vs.7) Our responsibilities are to ask, seek, and knock.
 1. Ask: to make a request of someone greater (Philippians 4:6 -- "*in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*")
 2. Seek: to look [search] for something in order to find it (like the merchant seeking pearls -- Matthew 13:45-46)
 3. Knock: to continually and persistently knock in order to gain an entrance (like Peter knocking at Mary's gate -- Acts 12:13-16)
 - C. If we ask, seek, and knock, Jesus said that God will give us what we ask, cause us to find what we seek, and open to us [Jesus emphasized this by repeating it in vs.8].
 - D. Some may object because God does not always give what we ask.
 1. The Bible provides examples of requests that were not granted by God.
 - a. (Matthew 26:36-46) Jesus prayed 3 times for God to spare Him from dying on the cross, but His request was denied (Jesus never stopped believing in prayer).
 - b. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Paul asked God 3 times to remove his thorn in the flesh, but his request was denied (Paul never stopped believing in prayer).
 2. From the context of these verses, Jesus talked about praying for things we need and not necessarily things we might want.
 - a. (vs.9-10) The Lord's illustrations involved food.
 - b. See Luke 11:5-9
 3. We must remember that there are other conditions for acceptable prayer.
 - a. We must ask believing (Matthew 21:22).
 - b. We must ask in Jesus' name (John 16:23).
 - c. We must not pray with selfish motives (James 4:3).
 - d. We must be obedient to God (1 John 3:22).
 - e. We must ask according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15).
- II. (vs.9-11) JESUS ASKED 3 QUESTIONS TO FURTHER ASSURE US THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYER
 - A. (vs.9-10) The first 2 questions are based on the father-son relationship.
 1. (vs.9) A father who loves and cares for his son will not give him a stone if he asks for bread.
 2. (vs.10) A father who loves and cares for his son will not give him a snake if he asks for a fish.
 - B. (vs.11) Jesus used this reasoning to show that God will give that which is good to His children who make requests of Him (James 1:17).

Conclusion:

1. In His sermon, Jesus taught His followers:
 - a. how to pray (ch.6)
 - b. to be persistent in prayer by assuring us that God answers prayer (7:7-11).
2. Jesus also dealt with persistence in prayer in Luke 18:1-8.