



October 4, 2020  
"The Golden Principles"  
Matthew 7:7-12  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

We are familiar with the Golden Rule that Jesus taught about treating others the way we would like to be treated, but there are also some other 'Golden' principles that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus taught about prayer and how God rewards those who diligently seek him. Prayer is a vital part of our walk with the Lord. In this teaching Pastor Gary will help us understand more about Jesus' instruction for Believers to ask, seek, and knock.

### The Golden Request

1. **Matthew 7:7-8** - *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."*
2. Pastor Gary said, "[When we read about asking, seeking, and knocking, we need to remember that this is] about the privilege we have to make our requests known to God through prayer. ... Prayer is the golden request. It is communing and connecting with the heart of God. ... Prayer is a funny thing. ... I can tell you as a pastor and as an individual and as a Christian; I've noticed that you can't really get people to pray more just by talking about it more. Most people will pray more and are motivated to pray more when the waters rise. When a trial comes into your life [or] some difficulty comes into your life, that's usually when [you] step up your prayers. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we wanted to pray because we wanted to be near the heart of God and not because there was a trial in our life? This is the kind of prayer life that Jesus wants us to have."
3. Progressive Prayer
  - a. Pastor Gary said, "To ask is not as intense as to seek. To seek is not as intense

as to knock. ... There is a progressive nature to prayer that [Jesus] calls us to.”

- b. The Bible teaches us that the Lord knows what we need before we ask.
  - i. **Matthew 6:31-32** - *“Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”*
- c. Pastor Gary said, “[If the Bible teaches us that God, who is omniscient, already knows what we need before we ask, why does he tell us to ask?] The answer is because asking is a humble admission of need, and that’s the posture that all of us need to have with the Lord.”
- d. **James 4:2-3** - *“You want something but don’t get it. ... You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”*(NIV 1984)
- e. Pastor Gary said, “[We need] to ask with the right reasons not with wrong motives. ... By the way, when you [ask for something in prayer], that doesn’t mean that you receive whatever [it is] that you want. ... [We need to] rest in God’s best and not your request. ... It’s not about what [we] want. It’s about what’s God’s best for [us]. ... [We can always trust God to give us his best even though [our request is oftentimes made without understanding how the request isn’t beneficial.] God always knows what is best. ... [Each of us, if we are old enough, can look back on our life and see that God’s ‘No’ was his mercy in our life!]”
- f. **1 John 5:14** - *“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”*
- g. Pastor Gary said, “[The next thing on the progressive prayer after ask is seek.] We [need] to seek God and we [need] to search Scripture and to seek out his will for our lives. [It may be that God] wants to teach you something in the seeking that otherwise [you] would have missed if he simply answered, ‘the ask.’ When we ask and we get, and it happens to align with what we wanted... it might be [a] quick answer to something that we may not have learned something through. The seeking really requires us to draw near to the Lord... and in the seeking that’s often when we learn things that we wouldn’t otherwise understand if God had simply delivered on ‘the ask.’
  - i. The Greek word for seek is zeteo, which means to search for something hidden.<sup>1</sup>
- h. **Psalms 105:4** - *“Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face evermore!”*
- i. **Matthew 6:33** - *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
  - i. Pastor Gary said, “The kingdom of God is the rule and reign of the Lord*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G2212&t=NKJV>

over our lives, minds, and hearts. And so, when we are seeking the kingdom of God, we are submitting to the rule of Christ in our lives, and we are trusting him as King to accomplish his good purposes. We need to be seekers, those who search the heart of God and his Word for answers to prayer.”

- j. Pastor Gary said, “[To knock implies a closed door.] In fact, Jesus said if we knock, it will be open to us, so it’s not just an implication; it’s a fact that sometimes our prayers will feel like they are hitting a closed door. Jesus invites us to knock not because the closed door is intended to discourage us, to turn us away, but the closed door is an invitation to his presence that if we knock, it will be opened to us. We are not to be turned away by the closed door; we are invited to knock that we might enter into God’s holy presence through prayer. ... When Jesus [spoke] about knocking, it’s the idea about petitioning the throne of heaven and not giving up until there’s an answer. It’s a pleading with God.”

#### 4. Persistent Prayer

- a. In the Greek, the tense of the words ask, seek, and knock, is the present imperative, which means that these are to be a continual action.
- b. In other words, it would literally read, ‘ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking.’
- c. The parable of the persistent widow is found in the gospel of Luke.
  - i. **Luke 18:1-8** - *“Then [Jesus] spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: ‘There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, “Get justice for me from my adversary.” And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, “Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.” Then the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?’ ”* (Emphasis added)
  - ii. Pastor Gary said, “[By persisting it doesn’t mean that we have to overcome God’s stubborn reluctance.] ... Persistence indicates a heart of faith, that you believe the one you are petitioning, and your trust is in him. ... Ask, seek, and knock because God honors progressive, persistent prayer.”

- 5. Prayer is not bending the will of God to our will; it’s the bending of our will to the will of God.

6. "Prayer is surrender – surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boathook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God." <sup>2</sup>

### The Golden Rewarder

7. **Matthew 7:9-11** – *"Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being 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!"*
8. Pastor Gary said, "What [Jesus was saying was that] our whole motivation to ask, seek, and knock [was to be] predicated upon a proper understanding of God [who is] a loving Father who delights to bless you and care for you and provide for you. Without a proper understanding of God as the 'Golden Rewarder,' then we will not be as inclined to draw near to him. ... Even the greatest dad on earth is not worth comparing to your loving Father who wants to do exceedingly, abundantly more than any earthly dad could possibly do for his children."
9. **Hebrews 11:6** – *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that **He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**"* (Emphasis added)
10. Pastor Gary said, "Sometimes God says, 'Yes,' and sometimes 'No' and sometimes 'Not now.' And you know what? Any of those answers are appropriate because a loving [Heavenly Father] is always going to look out for our best interests. [We need to be able] to accept whatever the answer might be and rest in that."

### The Golden Rule

11. **Matthew 7:12** – *"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."*
12. Pastor Gary said, "Almost every world religion has a motto like what we call the 'Golden Rule'... The difference is this, and it's a big difference, in every other world religion either before Jesus, [spoken by philosophers], or after Jesus, in world religions. ... [In every single instance, these] were always in the negative. [For example, 'Do not do this to someone or avoid doing that to someone.' Jesus is the only one who put it in the positive, 'Do unto others what you would like them to do unto you.' Why is this an important distinction? If you are told not to do something,

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.azquotes.com/author/7566-E\\_Stanley\\_Jones/tag/prayer](https://www.azquotes.com/author/7566-E_Stanley_Jones/tag/prayer)

like the other religious mottos, then you are doing well if you do nothing. ... [The] goal in the other religious mottos that are similar to this, their goal is to do your neighbor no harm. But there is no instruction about doing [your neighbor] any good either. ... By putting this in the positive Jesus is calling us to do good to our neighbor, the same good that we hope they might do to us, but not waiting on them to do it, we initiate it first. ... [This is] not simply the absence of harm, which is what the other religious [mottos are about], ... it is the presence of good that you demonstrate to your neighbor in the name of Jesus. ... What does this have to do with prayer? ... The answer is that if you ever hope to have a chance at keeping the 'Golden Rule,' you are still going to have to practice the first part of it. In other words, you have to understand what a relationship is with Jesus through persistent prayer and diligently seeking him if you ever hope to act like Jesus."

### Discussion Questions

1. Read [Matthew 7:7-12](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about asking, seeking, and knocking. (See #2 above)
3. Read and discuss the Scriptures concerning the progressive aspects of prayer, and Pastor Gary's comments. (See #3 above)
4. Read and discuss [Luke 18:1-8](#). (See #4 above)
5. Read and discuss the proper understanding of prayer. (See #5 and #6 above)
6. Read and discuss [Hebrews 11:6](#). (See #8 and #9 above)
7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks about the different answers God gives in response to prayer. (See #10 above)
8. Allow the people in your group to share experiences about the ways they are learning to accept God's answer to their prayer concerns.
9. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about the 'Golden Rule.' (See #12 above)
10. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)