

Bible Study Matthew 7:7-12

1. What are some things that make you different as a Christian compared to a non-Christian?

Most has to do with what God has done for us – that we now understand, have received, give thanks for etc. This study will focus on 2 things that we do that are uniquely Christian.

2. **Read Matt 7:7-11.** Summarise what these verses are about.

Prayer:

3. What things in these verses show that Jesus does not mean that God is like a genie who will give us *anything*?

*The illustration of vv9-11 is about **needs** not selfish desires. A good father, however generous he might be, will not merely indulge the selfishness of his children – “good gifts” are the things that will help them, not ‘spoil’ them.*

4. NB The words “Ask...seek ... knock” are all given us ‘imperative verbs’ in the original language. That means they are commands. This is not a suggestion of how Christians could make their lives better. *This is a divine order!* And each is in a ‘continuous’ sense, that is, it’s to characterise our lives, not just be one-off requests. So we are to ‘**go on asking, keep on seeking, and not give up knocking**’.

5. In this section Jesus begins to conclude his “Sermon on the Mount”. How does this context help us to understand what kinds of things we are to be asking for, seeking and knocking about?

Look back over the last several chapters – this is God’s good desire for us – how to live as his children. He knows we can’t do it alone (so should we! – 5:3). Persistent prayer is what he expects, and even commands.

6. **Read Matt 7:12.** A famous Jewish Rabbi named Hillel taught, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow creatures. That is the whole law. All else is explanation.” How does this compare with Jesus’ summary of the Law?

Hillel’s summary is a negative (“Don’t do”) and it is in the passive, ie there is nothing you actually have to do. Jesus gives a positive command. Hillel’s rule might be seen as a shrewd way to avoid retaliation. Jesus’ command directs us to act regardless of whether we benefit or not. In fact, 5:10 suggests that sometimes, obedience to his command might cost us dearly!

7. Is Jesus just setting up his followers to be taken advantage of or treated as doormats? Can you think of situations where you could be treated this way if you follow his command? Is it reasonable to think we could do this?

Jesus is our ultimate example and role model (cf Phil 2:5-8). God our Father also behaves like this (Matt 5:45; see also John 3:16 and Rom 5:8) – he doesn’t consider what we deserve or might do in response before he acts for our good. And as those who have been given his Kingdom (Matt 5:3) and who now call God “Father”, we can trust him to take care of the details if we obey Jesus. If we think we need help, so does Jesus! That’s why this command comes straight after vv7-11!!

8. Look back over Matt 5-7. What is one thing you have found challenging? One thing that you would like to see different in your life? Commit yourself now to pray for that thing *regularly*. How will you do it? (A list? Ask a friend to pray with you?) Pray now for this.