**THE POWER OF PERSISTENT PRAYER**

**Matthew 7:7-12**

**THE BIG IDEA: Jesus teaches that prayer is a powerful way to communicate with God and that the persistent, sincere, and faith-filled requests will be heard and answered.**

**JESUS EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSISTANT PRAYER**

* *“Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”* (Matthew 7:7-8)
* **If you want to strengthen your prayer life then follow Jesus’ instructions to:** **Keep Asking, Keep Seeking, Keep Knocking. Be Persistent!**
* *“And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”* (Matthew 21:22)
* *“Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”* (John 14:13-14)
* **James 4:3 says**, *“You ask and don’t receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”*
* **1 John 5:14 says,** *“This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”*
* **The Bible is clear that while we must be persistent, we need to ensure that we are seeking God’s will with pure motives when we pray.**

**GOD RESPONDS TO PERSISTENT PRAYER WITH GOODNESS**

* *“Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.”* (Matthew 7:9-11)
* *“as it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one.”* (Romans 3:10)
* **God’s gracious acts express our heavenly Father’s perfect nature.**
* **Understanding God’s nature as a loving provider encourages us to approach Him with confidence, knowing He desires to bless us with what is truly good.**
* *“For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord grants favor and honor; he does not withhold the good from those who live with integrity.”* (Psalm 84:11)

**AS AN ADDED ACT OF PERSISTENCE, WE MUST OBEY THE GOLDEN RULE.**

* *“Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”* (Matthew 7:12)
* **If we want to be more like Jesus then we need to pray more like Jesus, who prayed for His enemies, even those who were mocking Him at His crucifixion.**

**Connect Group Discussion**

**ICE BREAKER: What is the funniest thing you have ever asked God for?**

**Understanding:**

* What does Matthew 7:7-12 teach us about God/Jesus?
* What does Matthew 7:7-12 teach about prayer?
* How is the “Golden Rule” connected to Jesus’ teaching on prayer in Matthew 7?

**Digging Deeper:**

* What does persistency in prayer mean? What does that look like in your life?
* How is persistency in prayer different from begging?
* What is your responsibility in prayer according to James 4:3 and 1 John 5:14?
* How does it impact you knowing God desires to give you good gifts?
* How do/can your prayers reflect the Golden Rule? (Matthew 7:12)

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?

If you are not in a Connect Group and would like to get connected to grow in your relationship with God and others, contact the church office at 225-272-3740, and we can help find a group that fits your schedule.