

Luke 11:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Analysis

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. This verse reinforces the previous verse (Luke 11:9) with emphatic, universal language. The phrase "every one" (pas gar ho, πᾶς γὰρ ὁ) removes all exceptions—the promises apply to all who pray, regardless of status, worthiness, or circumstance. The conjunction "for" (gar, γάρ) introduces explanation or justification for the previous commands. Jesus explains why we should ask, seek, and knock: because these actions reliably produce results.

The present tense participles "that asketh" (ho aitōn, ὁ αἰτῶν), "that seeketh" (ho zētōn, ὁ ζητῶν), and "that knocketh" (ho krouōn, ὁ κρούων) describe habitual, ongoing action—those characterized by asking, seeking, and knocking. The corresponding verbs "receiveth" (lambanei, λαμβάνει), "findeth" (heuriskei, εὕρισκει), and "shall be opened" (anoigēsetai, ἀνοιγήσεται) are likewise present tense (except the last, which is future), indicating reliability and consistency. This is not occasional blessing but dependable pattern.

The universal scope of these promises raises questions about unanswered prayer. Several factors provide balance:

1. the context emphasizes prayer for the Holy Spirit (verse 13)—God's ultimate gift
2. James 4:3 clarifies that selfish, wrongly motivated prayers are not answered
3. God's "no" or "wait" are also answers, reflecting divine wisdom

4. asking "in Jesus' name" (John 14:13-14) means praying according to His will and character
5. the promises assume covenant relationship—praying as God's children, not demanding as consumers.

Nevertheless, Jesus' point is clear: God reliably responds to His children's prayers, and we should pray with confidence and persistence.

Historical Context

This teaching continues Jesus' instruction on prayer prompted by the disciples' request to learn to pray (Luke 11:1). The repetition and reinforcement (verse 10 essentially repeats verse 9 in different form) reflects Jewish and ancient Near Eastern rhetorical patterns, where important truths were stated multiple times for emphasis and memorability. Oral cultures relied heavily on such repetition for transmission and retention of teaching.

First-century Judaism held complex views on prayer. While Scripture taught that God hears prayer (Psalm 65:2, 145:18-19), later rabbinic literature debated conditions for answered prayer—some taught that only the perfectly righteous could expect God to hear, others that prayer's efficacy depended on proper ritual, location (Jerusalem), or timing. Jesus democratizes prayer, teaching that all who genuinely seek God will be heard, not based on personal merit but on the Father's character.

The early church demonstrated radical confidence in prayer based on Jesus' promises. Acts records numerous answered prayers: Peter's release from prison (Acts 12:5-17), guidance for missionary journeys (Acts 13:2-3), Paul and Silas's prison deliverance (Acts 16:25-26). Paul's epistles repeatedly encourage confident prayer (Romans 8:26-27, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:6-7). Hebrews 4:16 exhorts believers to "come boldly unto the throne of grace," reflecting confidence rooted in Jesus' teaching and His mediatorial work.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the universal scope ('every one') of this promise encourage believers who feel unworthy or unqualified to pray?
2. What does the repetition and emphasis in this verse reveal about Jesus' concern that His disciples pray with confidence?
3. How can believers reconcile this promise with the experience of prayers that seem unanswered?
4. What is the relationship between persistent prayer and trust in God's sovereignty and wisdom?
5. How should this verse shape Christian expectation and practice regarding prayer?

Interlinear Text

πᾶς	γὰρ	ὁ	αἰτῶν	λαμβάνει	καὶ	ὁ	ζητῶν
every one	For	G3588	that asketh	receiveth	and	G3588	he that seeketh
G3956	G1063		G154	G2983	G2532		G2212
εὕρισκει	καὶ	τῷ	κρούοντι	ἀνοιγήσεται			
findeth	and	G3588	to him that knocketh	it shall be opened			
G2147	G2532		G2925	G455			

Additional Cross-References

James 4:3 (Parallel theme): Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Psalms 31:22 (Parallel theme): For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Lamentations 3:18 (Parallel theme): And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD:

Luke 18:1 (Parallel theme): And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

James 5:11 (Parallel theme): Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Lamentations 3:8 (Parallel theme): Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.

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