

# Matthew 7:8

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

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**For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.** This verse concludes Jesus's teaching on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:7-11), offering sweeping assurance about prayer's efficacy. The threefold promise—ask/receive, seek/find, knock/opened—creates a comprehensive picture of prayer as persistent, confident approach to God.

"For every one" (πᾶς γὰρ ὁ/pas gar ho) emphasizes universality and grounds the promise in God's character rather than human merit. The γὰρ (gar, "for") connects this verse to the preceding commands (v.7), providing the rationale: we should ask, seek, and knock because God responds to all who do so.

"Asketh" (αἰτῶν/aitōn), "seeketh" (ζητῶν/zētōn), and "knocketh" (κρούων/krouōn) are all present participles, indicating continuous, habitual action—not one-time requests but persistent prayer. This isn't mechanical repetition but sustained, earnest pursuit of God in prayer.

"Receiveth" (λαμβάνει/lambanei), "findeth" (εὑρίσκει/heuriskei), and "it shall be opened" (ἀνοιγήσεται/anoigēsetai) are present tense (except the passive future for "opened"), indicating certainty and regularity. God's response to prayer isn't sporadic or uncertain but consistent and sure.

The progression intensifies: asking (verbal request) → seeking (active pursuit) →

knocking (urgent persistence). Together they portray prayer as involving our whole being: voice, will, determination. The corresponding responses mirror this progression: receiving what we asked → finding what we sought → entrance granted to what was closed.

Context is crucial. Jesus isn't promising carte blanche for selfish requests. Verses 9-11 clarify that God gives good gifts to His children—not whatever they demand, but what the wise Father knows is good. This promise operates within the framework of God's will, character, and kingdom purposes (cf. Matthew 6:33, 1 John 5:14-15). The prayer that asks, seeks, and knocks aligns itself with God's purposes revealed in Christ.

## **Historical Context**

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Jesus spoke these words on a mountainside in Galilee early in His public ministry, addressing both disciples and crowds (Matthew 5:1-2, 7:28). His audience included Jews familiar with the Old Testament's teaching on prayer, yet Jesus introduces revolutionary concepts about approaching God.

In first-century Judaism, prayer was highly structured and formal. The Shemoneh Esreh (Eighteen Benedictions) was recited thrice daily, and prayers often followed prescribed formulas. Access to God seemed mediated through priests, temple, and elaborate ritual. While the Old Testament contains beautiful prayers of intimacy (Psalms), by Jesus's time, religious prayer had become largely institutional and ceremonial.

Jesus's teaching transformed prayer from religious duty to personal relationship. He had just taught them to pray "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9-13)—addressing God with the intimate Aramaic *Abba*, like a child approaching a loving father. Now He assures them this Father delights to answer His children's prayers.

The cultural context of verses 9-11 (comparing God to earthly fathers who give good gifts) assumes fathers' care for children, yet recognizes even sinful human fathers know how to give good gifts. How much more will the perfect heavenly Father give what's good! For first-century hearers living under patriarchal

structures where fathers held absolute authority yet bore responsibility for family welfare, this illustration powerfully communicated God's benevolent care.

Early Christians embraced this teaching enthusiastically. Acts records the church devoted to prayer (Acts 2:42, 4:31, 12:5), expecting God to answer. Throughout church history, this promise has sustained believers through persecution, suffering, and difficulty—confident that their prayers reach a Father who hears and responds.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does the present tense (continuous asking, seeking, knocking) challenge our tendency toward one-time, superficial prayers rather than persistent pursuit of God?
2. What is the difference between God promising to give us 'what we ask for' versus 'good gifts' (v.11), and how does this affect our expectations in prayer?
3. How can we maintain both confident persistence in prayer (this verse) and humble submission to God's will ('not my will but yours,' Luke 22:42)?
4. In what ways might unanswered prayers actually be God's 'good gifts'—protecting us from what would harm us or directing us toward better things?
5. How does understanding God as a loving Father (v.9-11) rather than a distant deity or reluctant giver transform our motivation and manner of praying?

## Interlinear Text

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

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 81:10** (Parallel theme): I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

**Psalms 81:16** (Parallel theme): He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

**Acts 9:11** (Parallel theme): And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,