

GOD GIVES GOOD GIFTS TO THOSE WHO ASK

God is there for us if we will but ask, seek, and knock. And what He gives is that which is truly good for us – for our ultimate good and His glory.

Matthew 7:9 (NKJV)

9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

The way they made bread in Bible times often looked a little bit like a stone – a flat round stone, but no one would give their child a stone for breakfast. It gives new meaning to “crunchy”.

Matthew 7:10 (NKJV)

10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

There are some snakes that look somewhat like a fish in form, but no one in their right mind would give their child a serpent to eat instead of a fish.

“Daddy, what’s for dinner?” “Oh, you know the usual- stones and serpents.” No way, no sane parent would do this to their child. Even the thought of it is repulsive.

And here is the application...

Matthew 7:11 (NKJV)

11 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!

Christ here shows that even though we as believers know God as our Father, we still have a sin nature. We still know evil in that sense. Even the disciples of Christ still deal with ***“being evil”*** in the sense of ***“sinfulness”***. None of us are perfect in practice although we are in process.

Nevertheless, although we are tainted by sinfulness, yet we still know how to give good gifts to our children. We know what is good for them and we desire to provide it for them. If this is true of us (sinful beings) how much more will our holy Father give good things to His children who ask Him.

The contrast is drawn to make a point of emphasis. God wants to give us GOOD THINGS, enriching things that empower our spiritual lives. On another occasion, in what in many ways is a parallel passage, Luke replaces “good things” with “Holy Spirit”.

Luke 11:13 (NKJV)

13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father **give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!**”

This indicates that what Christ essentially has in mind are “spiritual gifts” related to spiritual growth and empowerment. It is by the Spirit that we are enabled to live out the commands of Christ. This a “gifting” from God. In view is being able to respond to people and life circumstances with God’s wisdom – that is in a godly way as brought out in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is by the Spirit that we are able to properly discern (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14-16). It is by the Spirit that we can love and live out the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:14-23). It is by the Spirit that we enjoy all the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:3).

But note the emphasis here: **We must ask!** This shows that Christ is dealing with practical sanctification and not our position as God’s children. We don’t have to ask about our position because that is a settled matter!

In terms of practical sanctification God is happy to give us what we need spiritually but He wants us to ask. If we lack wisdom we are to ask (cf. Ja. 1:5-8). If we are struggling with temptation, we are to ask for help (cf. Heb. 4:15-16). Whatever our need may be related to our walk we are instructed to ask, seek, and knock and to do so persistently. You can’t ask to much or to often. God wants us to be constantly depending on and looking to Him.

The issue here is not “informing” God because God already knows everything that we need. In Matthew 6:8 Jesus said, ***“your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”***

The reason for persistent asking is because of our constant need for divine help and our asking indicates our realization of continual dependence upon God. God wants us to recognize our total dependence upon Him. As Jesus said in John 15:5, ***“without Me you can do nothing.”***

Here is the point: Jesus wants us to recognize our continual dependence upon our Father God, but He also wants us to realize that our Father is a GIVER Who wants to bestow His riches upon us. Jesus wants us to have the proper view of our Father. God wants to share with us. He wants to fill our lives with the good things of the Spirit. God is not some miserly giver. No, He wants to give His children good spiritual gifts.

James 1:17 (NKJV)

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

If it is truly good for us, which is to say for our ultimate good and God's glory (they go together), if it is truly good for us - then we can be assured that God will give it to us! The only condition is that we ask. God wants us to ask. Remember James said, ***“you do not have because you do not ask.”*** (Ja. 4:2) How much is left in the Father's storehouse simply because we do not ask?

We need to do more asking – not selfish asking but truly asking for our ultimate spiritual good and God's glory.

In Matthew 7:7-8 there is a six-fold affirmation that those who ask God for good things will get them. If it is good for you and you ask, rest assured you will get it. The only qualifier is that we don't always know what is truly good for us. This is so true that Romans 8:26 says this:

Romans 8:26 (NKJV)

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For **we do not know what we should pray for as we ought**, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The real challenge is to align our prayers with what is really good for us. But when we do our gracious Father always says, “Yes”.