

The Coming and Going of the Disciples

Chapter 23

Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 23



Objective: To understand Jesus' invitation to be persistent in prayer and to learn the Golden Rule, which sums up all of the Bible's ethical teaching. (Text: Matthew 7:7-12)



“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

—Matthew 7:7-12

Jesus told His followers to make a commitment to “look up.” That is how we receive the spiritual disciplines and values that come from God. Jesus used continuous verbs for “asking, seeking, and knocking” in order to challenge His disciples to look up continuously and with perseverance. Seeking is repeated and intense asking, and knocking is repeated and intense seeking. Jesus was calling His disciples to be people who are passionate for God. He promised that everyone who asks, seeks, and knocks in this way will be answered. Then Jesus summed up His ethical teaching with one sentence: “Do to others what you would have them do to you.” This is known as the Golden Rule.



1. True or false? Jesus taught that we should only ask God for something once. If we continue to ask, we are showing a lack of faith.
2. True or false? The promise that those who seek will find applies not only to the prayer for salvation but to spiritual gifts, disciplines, values, and all good gifts God chooses to give.
3. True or false? According to Jesus, what many call the Golden Rule is what the Law is all about.
4. True or false? The Golden Rule only applies to certain people at certain times; otherwise some people might take advantage of our kindness.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. For whom is the promise of asking and receiving intended?
 - a. Only Jesus' disciples
 - b. Only the people in the crowd who heard Jesus that day
 - c. Everyone!
6. Why do you think many people do not accept this invitation to ask persistently for God's good gifts? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. They think this promise is too good to be true.
 - b. They lose faith after asking once or twice.
 - c. They do not think this promise applies to them.
 - d. They do not know this promise is in the Bible.
 - e. They do not understand what the promise means.
 - f. They do not believe God cares personally about them.
7. Which of the following is a primary purpose of the church?
 - a. To be an exclusive community of select members
 - b. To keep people busy with meetings
 - c. To be a missionary organization for the world
 - d. To provide a social network for Christians
8. To whom should you apply the Golden Rule? (*choose all that apply*)

Husbands/wives	Children
Friends	Co-workers
Teachers	Students
People of other races	People of other status
Enemies	Brothers and sisters
Other Christians	People who don't know Jesus



What things or opportunities have you been seeking the Lord for? How long do you think He wants you to keep asking? What is His promise for those who keep asking, seeking, and knocking?



Thank God for His promise to answer our prayers according to His wisdom and love. Ask Him to help you live according to the Golden Rule—doing to others what you want them to do to you—and to show you opportunities to do so.



Going Deeper

1. For what things or opportunities have you been seeking the Lord? _____

2. Why does the Lord want us to be continuous and persistent in our search for Jesus and His blessings? Describe a parable of Jesus that illustrates this principle. _____

3. In what situations does the Golden Rule apply where you work? In your home? _____

4. What is the hard part of the Golden Rule? Why? _____

5. Have you made the commitment to “look in, to look up, and to look around,” as Pastor Woodward puts it? How do you intend to do that? _____

6. Why is going for the Lord fruitless if one has not yet come to the Lord? _____

7. Describe how the church is a missionary organization. _____
