

Tenth Invitation from Our Savior



ASK = GIVEN
SEEK = FIND
KNOCK = OPEN

- 7 ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
- 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8

Some ask since Heavenly Father knows what we need before we pray (see Matthew 6:8), why do we need to pray? This tenth invitation tells us that we are to ask, seek, and knock for Heavenly Father's help because our spiritual progress is proportionate to the effort we make to draw near to Him.

I love how Matthew 7:7 tells us that if we ask it will be given to us; if we seek, we shall find, and if we knock, it shall be opened to us. Prayer and scripture study is an important part of obtaining the Savior's promise that "every one that asketh receiveth" (Matthew 7:8).

The key here is effort. The more we want to find and know the more effort that is required to ask, seek and knock before it is opened unto us.

It is a rule of life that the more important that which we are looking for or wanting in our life is to us the greater the effort we will make.

The Bible Dictionary defined the following within its definition of prayer:

"As soon as we learn the true relationship in which we stand toward God namely, God is our Father, and we are His children, then at once prayer becomes natural and instinctive on our part (see Matthew 7:7-11). Many of the so-called difficulties about prayer arise from forgetting this relationship.

“Prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other. The object of prayer is not to change the will of God but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant but that are made conditional on our asking for them. Blessings require some work or effort on our part before we can obtain them. Prayer is a form of work and is an appointed means for obtaining the highest of all blessings.”¹

Unfortunately, some give up and stop asking, seeking or knocking because they don't receive what they are asking for at the time they ask for it or in the way they would like it. Even more unfortunate is the hard truth that people who do not persevere in their life pursuits most often fail to achieve their potential not only in this life, but in the life to come.

Our Heavenly Father requires effort and perseverance on our part through asking, seeking and knocking before He opens unto us the windows of heaven and pours out blessings upon us (see Malachi 3:8-12). Perseverance is defined as “steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.”²

The hard reality of life is that success is earned by persevering and not becoming discouraged when we encounter challenges. It is the challenges of life that derail those who lose hope and faith in what they are doing. Paul Harvey, the famous news analyst and author, once said: “Someday I hope to enjoy enough of what the world calls success so that someone will ask me, ‘What’s the secret of it?’ I shall say simply this: ‘I get up when I fall down.’”³

Hope is defined as “the confident expectation of and longing for the promised blessings of righteousness. The scriptures often speak of hope as anticipation of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.”⁴

Hope comes of faith, for without faith, there is no hope. In like manner faith comes of hope, for faith is “the substance of things hoped for” (Hebrews 11:1; see also Ether 12:4, Moroni 7:42).

Faith is defined as “confidence in something or someone. As most often used in the scriptures, faith is confidence and trust in Jesus Christ that lead a person to obey him. Faith must be centered in Jesus Christ in order for it to lead a person to salvation. ... Faith includes a hope for things which are not seen, but which are true”⁵ (see Hebrews 11:1; Alma 32:21; Ether 12:6).

Continuous trusting in the Lord through faith and hope in Him is how you avoid the pitfall of giving up. Believing in faith that God who knows you best and wants what's best for you is waiting for you to approach Him in prayer is foundational to your getting the answers and help that you seek for.

Jesus knows what is right for us as He shared with the ancient inhabitants of America following His resurrection, “And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20).

I love the words of Jeremiah associated with the power of prayer, “Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:12-13).

The following question and answer from Nephi towards the end of his ministry speaks to why this tenth invitation from our Savior is so important to our living a more excellent way everyday: “And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

“And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen” (2 Nephi 31:19-21).

The gift of eternal life will only come to those who press forward asking, seeking and knocking in faith so they can feast upon the word of Christ as they endure to the end. Our success in mortality is grounded in our persevering in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and hope through the abiding trust that the Lord will fulfill His promises to us.

Application Exercise

We live in difficult times. Being a disciple of Christ requires each one of us to maintain a positive, hopeful perspective about the future. Our Savior has promised us that if we ask it shall be given to us; if we seek we shall find and when we knock it shall be opened unto us (see Matthew 7:7-8).

The problem is too many of our brothers and sisters don't ask, seek, or knock for divine assistance. They lack the faith to try or have lost the faith to continue. Our Heavenly Father and elder brother Jesus Christ understand the spiritual, physical, and emotional difficulties we face in life. Their promise to us is, “He that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome” (Doctrine & Covenants 63:20).

Read each item below carefully. Choose the most appropriate response from the response key relative to how true that statement is about you. Your goal is to be honest with yourself and accept that you will rate yourself better on some items than on others.

Response Key: 1 = Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Almost Always 5 = Always

___ Prayer is a natural and instinctive part of my life because I accept that God is my Father, and I am His child (Prayer).

___ I keep going when the going gets tough and don't give up even when others say, “it can't be done” (Perseverance).

___ I recover quickly from difficulties, failures, misfortune, and disappointing setbacks without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional or harmful ways (Resiliency).

___ I maintain hope in God, His goodness, and His power that sustains me with courage to carry on during difficult challenges (Hope).

___ I have confidence and trust in Jesus Christ that he will help me if I press forward with steadfastness in Him (Faith).

Your goal is to maintain an abiding trust that the Lord will fulfill His promises to you. When you live with confidence, optimism, enthusiasm, and patient perseverance than you are living with the power of faith and hope. Review your responses above and identify where you could be better.

Write down a problem or concern that you have. Be specific about what is worrying or concerning to you. Next identify what you believe and expect will occur.

Review your prediction of what you think will occur. Does it reflect hope that you will work through your trial and difficulty with the confidence and assurance that all things will work together for your good or is it full of despair and discouragement?

If you chose the second option, rewrite your expectation from a perspective of hope and confidence in the Lord helping you and in yourself.

Hope will help you conquer discouragement. If you are discouraged, search the scriptures and the words of the prophets and apostles in the spirit of prayer to deepen your understanding of hope in Jesus Christ. Continue until you feel in you the assurance that you will inherit eternal life in the celestial kingdom.

See the seventh invitation in Matthew 6:5-13 containing the Lord's Prayer where we are invited to be thoughtful in our prayers for another application exercise on prayer.

¹ Bible Dictionary, "Prayer"; scriptures.lds.org

² Google word definition for "perseverance"

³ Quoted in Marvin J. Ashton, *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 89.

⁴ Guide to the Scriptures, "Hope"; scriptures.lds.org

⁵ Guide to the Scriptures, "Faith"; scriptures.lds.org