

Life Group Discussion Guide

2.14.21

ONE Series

God the Father

Matthew 7:7-12

⁷ *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

⁹ *"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ 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! ¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*

OPEN

When you hear the word "father" what words come to mind? We don't all have the same experience when it comes to fathers but what words *should* describe a father?

NEXT

On occasion God is referred to as "Father" in the Old Testament, (Ex. Isaiah 63:16) but something changes with Jesus. Do a quick scan of the teaching known as the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7 of Matthew. How often does Jesus use the word "Father?" Why is that significant? How is Jesus filling out our understanding of God?

Read Matthew 7:7-12 together. Jesus builds a case for the character of God as "Father" by using a method known as an a fortiori (the Jewish rabbis called it *qal wahomer*). It is an argument from lesser to greater. If this is true *"...how much more will your Father give good gifts to those who ask Him!"* What is the point Jesus is making here? Have you found this to be true? What "good gifts" have you received from your Father in heaven when you have asked?

Jesus begins this section of teaching by making some bold statements. "Ask...receive." "Seek...find." "Knock...opened." What about the times when you "ask" and it seems like nothing happens? Have you prayed and found that an answer has been long in coming or yet to come at all? Does God ever say "no?" How do you make sense of that? Does God withhold from us? Why might God withhold from us?

The final sentence in this section has been known as the "Golden Rule." How does the Golden Rule relate to what Jesus has just been saying about the nature of God as Father? How might our understanding of God change the way that we interact with the people around us?

CLOSING

Jesus dares us to "ask" with trust that our Father in heaven is ready to give good gifts. What do you want to ask of God? What are you searching for? What would you knock on the door about?

What do you need this group to be praying over you this next week?