



GRACE CENTERED COMMUNITY

Matthew 6:8 *Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

It is important that we see the Sermon on the Mount as a whole. Often times commentators and preachers want to segregate the teachings into bite size bits (as we have done throughout the course of this series), but in so doing we forget how it fits together as a whole. The Sermon on the Mount has a flow to it that connects all of it together.

Can you, at this point, explain the flow of the Sermon on the Mount?

The sermon began with acknowledgment of God's blessing and our own personal bankruptcy, it has shown us how to understand our calling to be salt and light in the world, it has shown us what true worship looks like in light of law and grace. Jesus moves to show us all the negative and positive things that try to pull us out of relationship with God. After all of this, Jesus refocuses us again on the Fatherhood of God throughout the Lord Prayer. Jesus then teaches us what it means to trust God with our treasure and our lives.

After refocusing our vision in the right place Jesus moves the conversation to include how we interact with others when we get to chapter 7. He starts off helping us to realize that controlling and manipulating people is not how relationships develop or work. **Matthew 7:1** *"Judge not, that you be not judged."* One of the ways we deal with others is trying to manipulate them to do what we want. We try to control them.

How have you demonstrated manipulative behavior toward others? What were you trying to control?

Matthew 7:6 *Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs.* Shows us that sometimes we try to control people through positive things. We need to entrust others and ourselves to God.

Jesus is doing surgery on our hearts so we no longer try to manipulate or control others.

What would a relationship free of manipulation and control look like?

Jesus then moves into how we are to have real relationship with others and God; asking, seeking, and knocking. When we "ask" of someone else we are honoring him or her and the will God gave him or her. When we ask we are respecting (judging is not respecting, it is forcing our will on others). Asking, seeking, knocking is a different posture towards people and God; it is one of humbleness and humility.

How do you feel when you need to ask others for help?

What is the hardest part of asking, seeking, and knocking?

Jesus assures his followers that, far from demanding the impossible, he is providing the means for the otherwise impossible. Broadus wrote, "One may be a truly industrious man, and yet poor in temporal things; but one cannot be a truly praying man, and yet poor in spiritual things." Far too often Christians do not have the marks of richly textured discipleship because they do not ask, or they ask with selfish motives (James 4:2-3). But the best gifts, those advocated by the Sermon on the Mount, are available to "everyone" (Matthew 7:8).

Jesus wants us to understand the gift of what **asking** is better. This teaching shows again how our relationship with each other is based out of our relationship with God. They go hand in hand.

What kinds of things do you ask of God?

What type of things do you ask of others?

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Jesus invites us to change not only how we interact with others, but how we interact with Him. Understanding grace, truth, a good father, and grace centered community.

How has asking, seeking, and knocking brought greater connection between you and God?

How has it brought greater connection between you and others (either them asking you or you asking them)?