Dear Open Door Family,

There I was, up on a ladder working on the downspouts of my house. I was working as quickly as I could to place a screen over the top of each of the downspouts. The thunder had been rolling in the distance, and it had rained enough that I was wet. But as I started up the ladder for what I hoped would be the last time, I discovered the downspout clogged. So I went up and down the ladder several more times praying all the time please Lord keep the lightning away. On one level that is a perfectly honest and good prayer. But on the other hand I was asking God to rescue me from my own foolishness. If I had done this earlier when it was good weather then I wouldn't be trying to get it all done without getting hit by lightning. I'm glad that God is gracious when He answers prayer. But there is more to prayer than merely asking for things. We need to think through what our motives are as we pray. Let's see what these verses together.

Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV) 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; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

James 4:3 (NIV) When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Psalm 37:4 (NIV) Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

This seems like such a simple verse if we merely read without taking time to think and meditate on it. There is much more intended than just our physical wants or needs when Jesus said ask, seek and knock. James makes it clear that when our own selfish and wrong motives are the focus of our prayers and our asking, that God will NOT answer. Psalm 37 takes it even further as it tells us that if we delight ourselves in the Lord that HE WILL give us the desires of our heart. I remember as a teenager taking that verse and praying some incredibly selfish and foolish things. I was focused on the physical or monetary rather than all the other aspects of my life. I believe the idea is that if I seek after God with all my heart He will answer that pursuit by showing me how much more there is yet to know about Himself. As I delight myself in Him He will continue to open my heart and eyes to know and understand Him better. As a result I will be able to Love and Obey Him even more. If the Lord is truly my Delight nothing else will matter. I will be able to deal with not having the things I thought I needed because Jesus has become more important to me than stuff.

PRAYER: Lord, thank you for the fact that I can come to you in prayer. I can make known my needs and my desires. But Lord, please help me to pursue knowing YOU and learning to delight in YOU more than in seeking answers to my prayers. Please keep from asking for things with wrong and twisted motives. May the things I ask for be things which will honor You.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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