

Matthew 7: Prayer and People

Galatians 6:7-8 ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

This is God's Law of Reciprocity: the Law of Sowing and Reaping. It is a sign of God's fairness woven into society.

This Law is for all people, and for all Christians.

Romans 14:10b-11 ... For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God."

If I make a bad choice and disobey God, will God break covenant with me? No, He will not.

But, will the choices I make each day impact what kind of life I live and how I experience God? Yes, they certainly will.

Matthew 7:7-12 ⁷ "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

God will give what is good! That is the heart of the Father and the goal of prayer! But so that we don't miss it...

¹² "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

To follow this is to bring one's whole life in alignment with God's will as revealed in His Word. To defy it, then, is to defy the whole of God's Word and invite trouble and frustration.

1 Peter 3:7 ⁷ You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

How many a husband would like to see God do a new work in his wife, or in his own life, but his prayers are hindered because he does not conduct himself toward her with kindness and compassion?

1 Peter 3:1-2 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

How many wives are praying for God to change their husbands, or their circumstances, but their prayers are hindered by their rebellious, (in some cases) unchaste, and often disrespectful behavior?

Husband's peace is the Law of the house...

Colossians 3:18-21 ¹⁸ Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. ²⁰ Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

This passage touches everyone- men are admonished twice

How many families currently have rifts between parents and children- and other unanswered prayers- simply because they will not humble themselves before God's Word and form new behaviors?

Our prayers for each other cannot be answered while we violate these simple and clear verses that reveal how we must behave toward one another.

“In the same way”... it keeps coming up. In the same way as what?

1 Peter 2:21-25 ²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. ²⁵ For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Now we are at the source. Jesus is only asking us to do for one another what He has already done for us.

How patient He is with us! How He continues to love us while we resist Him, not returning evil for evil!

Forget about the other person's responses. Isn't it time for us to do what is right just because it IS right? To do it just to please Him?

When we do, the hindrances are removed and God will move heaven and earth to answer our most desperate prayers!