LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 7 (Part 3) :7-11

Ask, And It Will Be Given To You

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Open your Bibles up to Matthew chapter 7 and we'll get into our our section of scripture that we're going to deal with here today. We're still in the Sermon on the Mount and we're going to deal today with verses, if I can get there, 7 through 11. So Matthew 7 and verses 7 through 11. Okay, let's read that section and then we'll pray. It says, Ask and it will be given to you.

Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds, and to him who knocks the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? Your Bible may say serpent. 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? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of your word this morning and guide us in understanding it as we ought.

We always, Lord God, look to you because we recognize that your word contains spiritual truths expressed in spiritual ideas and we ourselves, Lord God, apart from you, are carnal and we need the work of your Spirit that we might understand and apprehend and then apply the things that are given to us here in the Scripture. So lead us, Father, we pray. Guide us. Open our hearts and minds to what you're saying here. We ask it in Jesus' precious name.

Amen. As you can see in this passage, once again, Jesus turns to the subject of prayer. We've already dealt with prayer even here in the Sermon on the Mount. We dealt with, you know, what we refer to as the Lord's Prayer, and yet Jesus now turns back to the topic of prayer, and I think that probably speaks of the importance of this topic. But to do that, and as he does it, he expresses prayer kind of in three levels of intensity.

If you look in your Bible here, once again in these verses, you'll notice that he talks about prayer in terms of asking, he talks about prayer in terms of seeking, and he talks about prayer in terms of knocking. And Jesus is basically telling us is that prayer is like asking in the sense that sometimes, you know, we just make our requests known to God. We ask, you know, James said, you have not because you ask not, or as the NIV says, you don't have because you don't ask God, and so forth. Prayer is also like seeking, in that sometimes we have to search after God. Sometimes we have to search out his word, and seek his will, and search out his will, and there's a challenge.

You can see that we've kind of raised the level of intensity, you know what I mean? It's gone beyond just that simple ask. Now we're searching out, we're going, God, you know, and we're going through the word, and we're reading chapters after chapter, and we're looking into it, and so forth. And sometimes prayer is like that. But then also, prayer is something like knocking.

Now we're kind of talking about that, kind of that physical, kind of a, your whole body's into it now, sort of, you know, now I'm coming after God, and I'm knocking on the door, and saying, you know, Lord, and sometimes it is, it's like that, you know. We're knocking on the door to gain entrance to what we, to what we're looking for from God. And the promise that goes along with all of these levels of prayer that we see here, that Jesus talks about here in Matthew 7, in this section, are that all who ask, receive. All who seek, find. And to all who knock, the door will be opened.

And by way of comparison, Jesus, you'll notice here, uses the example of human parenthood to kind of just help us make a connection here. And he makes the point that, and this is important, responsible human parents, who are born with sin in their hearts, are still capable of giving good things to their children. And what that means is, and what he means to say is, responsible human parents are not good in and of themselves, because remember, no one's good but God. But yet, they are capable of doing good. They're capable of expressing good, and doing good things for their children.

And the point of the whole comparison is for you and I to ask the question, essentially, do we think that human parents, who are sinful creatures, have more love than God, and have better intentions than God does for his own children? And of course, that's a question that he's kind of forcing us to ask by making the comparison. He's basically saying, you think you love your kids more? You think you care about your kids more than I care about mine? Is that, you know?

And he wants you and I to ask the question. He wants us to think it through. He wants us to ask the question, do I exceed God in my love for, you know, my own children? Do I exceed his love for his, you know? Do I exceed God in the area of mercy, or whatever?

And he goes on to say, you know, if a child asks a responsible human parent for something like bread, for example, and he uses that as an example, he says there's no way they're gonna, you know, be given a rock instead. It's interesting he should use a rock, because it can look deceptively like a loaf of bread, you know? A rock can. But if a parent were to give a child a rock, that would show cruelty rather than compassion and care. And so Jesus is saying, you know, listen, a parent, a responsible human parent would never do such a thing.

So the conclusion of all of this is, in verse 11, if you look with me again in verse 11, and he says, if you then, though you are evil, and what he means by that is you're born into sin and you have sinful hearts, and he says, if you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more, and it should be infinitely more, will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask? And so these two basic points are made in these verses. Number one, God answers prayer, and that's the first thing that he's really making the point about, God answers prayer. But number two, he's making the point that God will always do what is best for his children. Okay, now, there we go.

I've basically kind of taught the passage from the standpoint of, this is what it says. But we're not done, are we? Because having said all of that, we now have to address the gulf that sometimes exists between these promises that are given to us here in Matthew chapter 7 and the way life seems to play out for us at times. And to be completely honest, I think probably most of us have gone through what we would say are puzzling, if not discouraging at times, situations that seem very much to us like unanswered prayer, that seem very much to us like God does not answer our prayers. And, you know, it could have been any number of things, you know.

A relationship that we wanted very much to work out, you know, did not. A job interview that we diligently prayed about, you know, did not result in a job offer. A financial investment went sour, or perhaps the request for physical healing was not answered. And this problem and these issues cause us to wonder if maybe, I don't know, maybe we haven't asked in the right way, or perhaps we did something wrong. A lot of people will come to me when prayer is not answered, and, Pastor Paul, what do you think I've done, you know, that might be barring the way or barring the answer that the Lord might have otherwise given or something?

And then sometimes we struggle, although we probably aren't going to voice this to very many people. Deep in the center of our hearts, we struggle with the question of whether or not God really cares. I mean, maybe He just doesn't care, and perhaps that's what's going on. And frankly, the problem wouldn't be such

a big problem if it wasn't for the fact that God talks about prayer so much. I mean, it seems like you'd read through the pages of Scripture and over and over...

over and over again, it basically kind of tells us, you know, that specific prayer brings specific results. And yet, when reality doesn't meet our expectations, it can really cause a huge crash, and I mean a huge crash in our lives. I want to relate to you a true story that I read about. The following is related by a pastor who had just received a phone call from a woman just after finishing his radio broadcast. He was one of these guys that was on the radio, you know, sharing God's Word and so forth, and as soon as he got off the air, the phone rang and he picked it up, and a woman on the other end said to him, basically, I just wanted to call and let you know that I used to believe in God, but I don't believe anymore.

And he says, I asked her why she had lost her faith, and she related to me this experience. A few years ago, she and her husband were attending a Bible-believing church in Queens, and one day, her husband, who wasn't feeling well, came home from the doctor's office with the news that he had cancer. They went to their church and told the pastor and asked everyone to pray for her husband's recovery. Their church prayed for him. Other churches prayed for him.

The pastor prayed, and the elders prayed, and all the time they were praying, her husband was slowly becoming weaker as the cancer continued to spread. But her pastor continued to encourage them, just have faith. God will heal. And the pastor quoted verses from the Bible and said, have faith and do not doubt. God will heal.

He said, God promises. So you ask what you desire, and it will be done for you. Believe it. Trust in God, and so forth. He will heal.

And as her husband continued to suffer and the sickness grew worse, she followed the teaching to the letter of James, called for the elders to come and anoint and pray, and her pastor continued encouraging. The Bible says that the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. Believe it, and God will heal. And eventually, however, her husband died, and the pastor was then forced to kind of explain the failure and told her that it must have been that she didn't have enough faith, or perhaps there was some secret sin in her life, or her husband's, or maybe he wasn't really a Christian after all. Obviously something was wrong.

She had no explanation. She had tried her best to believe. She knew of no secret sin, and she always believed her husband to be a true Christian. She finally concluded that the Bible must not be true, and that

there really is no God, and that all she once believed was in fact untrue. At least it didn't work out when she needed it.

Terrible story, obviously, and I don't know how common or rare that kind of experience is, but I think there's probably something of that story that all of us can relate to, at least something of that story, to what degree it may be different. But we come to Christ, and when we come to him, we're so excited about the promises that we see regarding prayer, and yet we don't spend a whole lot of time walking with the Lord before we see some serious bubble popping happen in that area of our Christian life. And experience quickly shows us that we have no special claim to an easy life as Christians, that we are not exempt from those sorts of situations. And so Christians then feel the need to kind of justify the fact that prayer isn't answered at times, and they will basically conclude various things, one of which is there was something wrong with how we prayed, kind of like the pastor in this story. The conclusion is, well, there was something wrong with the way you prayed.

You obviously didn't pray with enough faith, or you prayed with some area of unconfessed sin in your life. There was something wrong with you and the way you prayed and so forth. Or they will say there was something wrong with God. Now, that's admittedly not one that people often do. They usually throw out other things, but sometimes, like in the situation of this story with this woman, sometimes it becomes such a crisis of faith that the individual actually comes to the point of concluding, I don't think if God is there, he can do anything about this thing.

And some have a hard time charging God with wrongdoing. They simply come back and say, well, I don't think he was as powerful as we were led to believe. And then some, of course, come flat out and just accuse God of injustice, kind of like Job, you know, and try to justify it that way. But either way, whichever conclusion they come to, it presents a huge crisis of faith. It is absolutely enormous, and so forth.

So I had quite a bit of time to think about this, and I decided that I wanted to kind of really think through the Scriptures and things that the Lord has shown me. And I wanted to advance for you today seven reasons why I believe that there are times when it appears that God is not answering prayer. And I do want to specify that it appears that God is not answering prayer. And I'm going to be putting these seven points up on the screen for those of you that are taking notes. Maybe you'll have a little more time to be able to write them down.

And after I put this first one up on the screen, please promise me you won't throw anything at me, okay? But the first reason that I do need to put on there as to why God does not answer prayer is we have

little or no faith. Even though we've seen the explanation of faith abused like it was in the story that I related to you, okay? We have to admit that the Bible does say a lot about faith. You know, here's...

I got to tell you just real quickly. When I was kind of coming up through the ranks in my early serious walk with the Lord, I was involved in a church that was a little bit... I would say definitely tended toward the word of faith kind of posture. And some of you know what I mean by that. And it was more of a charismatic type church that emphasized the issue of faith, sometimes to the point of it being unhealthy.

The emphasis being not on God but on faith, which is a real strange sort of a twist, you know, where you start having faith in your faith rather than having faith in God. And I saw that and I reacted to it in such a way that I kind of backed away from the whole faith thing. And I... You know how we do that? We have this reaction, this knee-jerk reaction to things to the degree that we kind of overcompensate for what we think appears to be, you know, a problem.

So I overcompensated in the area of that and for years would not emphasize the same biblical emphasis of faith that I was seeing in the scriptures. I would kind of downplay it a little bit because I had seen it so blown out of proportion that, like the story I shared with you, you know, people were always going around saying, well, if it didn't happen, you didn't have enough faith, there you go, bye. You know, whatever, and just boom, you know, leaving a trail of blood with their responses. And I just didn't want to do that anymore. And then I just...

The Lord just started taking me back to the Word. And I started seeing how many times God's Word emphasizes the issue of faith. Oh, you have little faith. How... Sometimes the disciples would come to Jesus and say, how come we couldn't do that?

Well, for one thing, you don't have any faith, you know. I mean, Jesus said it. Of course, I recognized also he's uniquely qualified to say it, whereas I'm not. I mean, how am I... It's really difficult for me to be able to judge...

Well, no, difficult. Let me back up. It is impossible for me to judge the level of a person's personal faith. I just can't do that, you know. I mean, I try though as I may, I'm going to fail every time.

Jesus can nail it every time. But as I looked through the Word of God, I began to see how many times the issue of faith came into play. And I realized that faith was a huge issue. But here's the balance. Here's the balance.

Instead of treating faith like a guarantee of getting everything I asked for, which is what I saw abused, God began to show me that instead faith is an expression of our hearts as to God's unlimited ability, you know. It's not... See, faith had been presented to me as kind of like a get-out-of-jail-free card, you know, when you're playing Monopoly, you know. As long as you got this in your hand and then something comes along, you go, you just take that card and you lay it down, ha, boom, take that, devil, or take that. This is my faith, boom.

And this is my guarantee that what I ask, you know. I'm just gonna take out my gun and get a bullseye every single time because I got the faith card And I'm playing the faith card and I'm gonna get it sort of a thing You know what? I mean and I began to realize you know That's a really immature way to look at faith ultimately and what the kind of faith that God wants us to have is faith That says to him You can do anything You know It's kind of like, you know, remember when Jesus came down off the Mount of Transfiguration and there's this kerfuffle going on with this man You know who's got a son who who's literally possessed by a demon and the disciples are trying to do this thing and it's not working And Jesus comes down there and of course an argument ensues from all of that. Jesus comes down He goes what's what in the world is going on here with you guys? Well, this man says, you know I brought my son to your disciples to cast out this demon and and they they couldn't do it And so Jesus said oh, you know, he's like, you know you unbelieving perverse generation How long will must I be with you and he turns to the boy to cast out the demon and and but but before that takes Place you remember that little conversation going on between him and the dad Because what what the father says to him after explaining what's going on He says if you can do anything, please help my son and Jesus turned him and said if If I can do anything You know And That's really I think One of the well, I think it's the most important element of faith is just that constant understanding that there's nothing God can't do I don't have a guarantee card But it's always gonna happen exactly the way I want, but you know what?

It doesn't mean God's limited and I think that the emphasis of what you and I are to really kind of Hold on to in terms of faith is is expressed for us best in Ephesians chapter 3 I'll put this on the screen for you Ephesians chapter 3 verses 1st 20 says now to him who is able to do what? Immeasurably more than all we ask or good grief even imagine according to his power There's a work within us and so forth. That's that's the attitude. You see that we're to have toward God. That's faith He is able to do immeasurably more than I even ask I'm asking him to do a but he can do immeasurably more than that and That's where faith comes into play Faith God wants us to have that kind of faith that not unbelief that says, you know Or doubt that says, you know God if if you can do anything about this I'd really appreciate it.

But faith that comes to God and says, you know what Lord? I know you're not limited by anything. You can do all things. There's nothing this is like a blink of the eye to in fact, it's less than that and Then my faith is in you my fan. You know what God I'm not even sure what you're gonna do here exactly But my faith is in you because you can do anything you want to do, you know, I Frankly think that that is a better and healthier view instead of faith saying to God you have to Because I've produced this this faith it becomes instead a way of saying you can you can Number two reason why we don't Often see what we believe are the answers to prayer is that we don't persevere in prayer Do you guys remember that and we don't have time to turn there?

But do you guys remember that that parable that Jesus gave of the persistent widow? It's it's given to us if you're taking notes and you want to read it later It's in Luke chapter 18, and I would encourage you to read it. It's a great story It's a great little parable where Jesus talks about this widow that comes up before this Unjust judge and Jesus once again uses a comparison like he's doing here in Matthew 7 again in Matthew 7 he uses the comparison of God versus a responsible human parent in in Luke 18, he uses the Comparison of God and an unjust judge and you'll remember the woman keeps coming and keeps coming and keeps coming before this man to get justice and and in a way And finally the man goes, you know I am sick to death of having this woman come to me and and lodge her complaint And so I'm gonna I'm gonna grant her her wish just because I'm tired of seeing her face in my courtroom And and he says now that's how an unjust judge would respond He does it because he's lost patience because you know, he doesn't really care He doesn't really care for the woman. He just wants to get her out of his sight He goes now by comparison Remember God loves his children. God longs to bless his children.

God wants to see good things and so forth So what's his attitude going to be? What's his attitude going to be towards children? But again? He told he told that story So that we would be persistent so we would understand that sometimes prayer requires Persistence and sometimes you hear people say well, I prayed once and didn't do any good And it's like well, you know you prayed once Where's that persistence in prayer you see? when we're talking about the subject of prayer, we can't just take one verse or one passage even and Lift it out as the end all say all about prayer and say well see this is what it says on prayer There's all these passages about prayer.

Jesus talked a lot about prayer and and many times he talked about the need to Persevere and it's very very important Let me give you another reason why I think that it appears that prayer are not being answered on on the list here It's that we're we're temporal minded And I'll kind of explain what I mean by that we approach prayer and what we're looking for from God as If this world is all there is Temporal minded meaning that we're minded or we're fixated or focused on things that are of a temporal nature

rather than an eternal Nature we ignore passages like collages Chapter 3. Let me put this on there. It says since then you've been raised with Christ Paul says Set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God He says set your minds on things above which are eternal things not on earthly things which are temporal you see We're told in the Bible not to be fixated on Temporal things and yet what do we do if you if you put a if you took a piece of paper? And you put a line down the middle and you wrote down all of your prayers and on the left side You wrote down Everything that you are asking God for that was of a temporal nature in other words for this life And then you put on the right side of the page everything you're praying for that is of eternal value and perspective How much you want to bet you'd barely make a scratch on the right side of the page? And I am saying that for myself too.

By the way, I am no different than you are My point is we are So fixated and so focused even against the direct exhortation of Scripture on the things that are temporal and we make those the focus of our prayers and and and and yet God has given us all kinds of Direction in the word to lift our eyes From that which is temporal and so forth Here's the the the fourth reason Why our prayers may appear to go unanswered and that is our view doesn't match God's or our you know, that sort of thing And I'm and what I mean by that is it's not that God has necessarily refused to grant our desires He simply understands them better than we do It's not that God is isn't responding to our prayer. It says that his response isn't what we wanted it to be and And frankly appreciating this can do wonders to keep us from losing heart when our prayers seem to go Unheeded and and there's some so many things we have to remember in terms of Scripture When we're praying and I want to show you a couple here. The first is from 1st Corinthians chapter 13 Remember what Paul said now meaning right now temporary in our life. We see life. We see everything Really as a poor reflection You know as in a mirror and mirrors were not good back then but he says then when we're with the Lord We're gonna see things face to face Now I know in part then I will know fully even as I am Fully known and this is I think one of the one of the huge reasons why to us our prayers appeared to go Unheeded it's because we don't have all of the information We just don't and and I got to be honest with you some people find this a lame excuse I mean, I actually read several commentators on the when who dealt with this issue of Matthew chapter 7 and there and not just commentators but other pastors and teachers some people believe that the Explanation that we just don't know what God's doing is a lame one and it's kind of us Using rationale to kind of explain away God's Oversight Or lack of concern or whatever.

They happen to think may be the real reason behind it But I'm not giving you this as an opinion I'm showing you Chapter in verse where it says where Paul writes very clearly. We just don't see things clearly

We just don't have the full understanding. What did Paul say in that passage? We know in part. We know in part.

We don't know the full thing. We don't see the full thing. And there's frankly another passage that goes along with this. It's a companion passage from the Old Testament. Check this out from Isaiah chapter 55.

It says, and this is God talking here. He says, my thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways. My ways declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Now listen, I didn't make up that passage. That's in the Bible. Do you, I mean, and, and for us to say, well, that doesn't apply to prayer is ridiculous or to what we perceive to be the answers or lack thereof that we get from God related to prayer. You can't divorce, you know, those things from these, these insights that we have from God's word. There's a point where Paul says, you know, we just don't have the whole story.

We know in part and where God himself speaks and says, you know what? As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts than your ways. And what that means is I'm not going to do things always the way you think that I should do them. I'm just not, I'm going to do things the way I think is best because my perspective of the situation is complete. God is saying to you and I, I see the whole picture and I see it from the perspective of eternity.

You know, this kind of comes back to that whole temporal thing too. God is making decisions for your life based on eternity, hidden that a kick in the pants and we forget that. We forget that. We had a guy in our church in Montana who walked with a cane badly. Always had very little dexterity with his hands for picking up things, grasping things and his speech was so slurred I had to absolutely, you know, pay 100% attention to even make out what he was saying.

And the reason for all that is because he'd been in an automobile accident when he was about 19 years old. I think at the time when I knew him, which was quite a long time ago, he was probably in his upper twenties by that time. And through his slurred speech one day, he told me that before his automobile accident, he never gave God a second thought. Never once. God just wasn't on his radar.

Loving God, knowing God, loving God, heaven wasn't on his radar. But then something happened in his life which came as a tragic intrusion. At least that's the way a lot of people saw it. And he was in this accident and suffered serious neurological damage which left him unable to function physically in a way that you and I would consider normal. But he said to me one time through his speech, difficult as it was to

understand, that if I have to spend the rest of my life like this so that I can be with God for eternity, it was worth it.

Blew me away. Because here was a man who understood the true value of what he had gone through. And he began to see things from a different perspective. Rather than looking at it just on that temporal level, rather than looking at it kind of like we're saying here, that it doesn't make sense to me, he began to look at it from the perspective of, you know, would God do that to somebody? Would God, let's say, okay, let's say he was 19 years old and let's say he lived until he was 89 years old, okay?

So let's say he lived 70 years in that physically crippled sort of a situation. And then obviously with age he's probably going to deteriorate even further. I'm not even sure how old he is today. That was almost 30 years ago that I spoke with him. Wow.

Would God do that? Would God allow somebody to do that for 70 years? Oh, you darn tootin' he would. For to have an eternity? How do you compare 70 years with eternity?

Eternity! You know, with God. One of the things that we forget is that, you know, we were created to live forever. And even though these physical bodies experience an expiration date, the spirit and soul continue to live on and you're going to go somewhere. You're going to live somewhere and it's either going to be in the presence of God or outside of his presence.

And this man was on the fast track to outside of the presence of God until this difficulty slammed into his life like a freight train. But you know what? He's a born-again Christian today. He loves the Lord. He loves serving God with all the ability he has, limited though it is.

And he knows that he knows that he knows that when he dies, he's going to be with Jesus Christ for eternity. And he thinks it's worth it. And that's pretty amazing, isn't it? Number five, and this is another reason, frankly, I think we don't think our prayers get answered, is we tend to see God as a genie in a bottle who's just kind of there to, you know, give us everything we want whenever we want it. Do you remember that Jesus compared God's love for us in here in Matthew 7 with what?

A responsible human parent. Remember that? He said, if you then, though you are evil, know how to take care of your kids and give them things that they need and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, then what's God going to do? Well, you, everybody who's ever been a parent knows that, you know, responsible human parenting is not about always giving your child everything they want, right? I mean, good grief.

We would not call that person a responsible human parent who could just lavish their children with everything they ever wanted and never asked any questions or even applied any kind of discernment as to the appropriateness of what they were giving to the child. You know, it's about raising kids right, isn't it? I mean, that's what we do as parents. We're going to raise our kids right, regardless of whether it, you know, it makes them kind of sad in the short term and so forth. No responsible parent becomes for their child a genie in a bottle that grants their every wish magically, just, you know, rub on the bottle and out comes mom or dad and whatever you want, son, whatever you want, daughter, it's yours.

We would never do that. We would not consider that responsible parenting and yet Jesus compares, you know, God's love for us and God's providential care for us with responsible human parenting and to ask the question to say, are you greater than God? Are you going to do things, you know, in a greater fashion than God? And if parents are going to do that, isn't God going to do that too? Of course he is.

And it's frankly very gratifying to have your kids grow up and get married and move out of those teenage years, I mean, get to the point where they begin to raise their own children and that sort of thing and they come back to you after years and years and they say things like, hey, I want to just thank you for sticking to your guns even when we made life miserable for you. And I've actually had my kids say that to me. Hey, dad, thanks for making me miserable while I was a kid because I didn't understand that. I thought you were just out to, you know, dangle a carrot in front of me and then take it away. But I just want you to know that now that I'm parenting my own kids, I understand.

I see what you were doing and I see that, you know, you really had my best interest in mind and so forth and, you know, think about some of the prayers that you've prayed over the years. And then you come back about six months later and you're going, God, I am so happy you didn't answer that prayer the way I wanted you to, you know, it's like I'd have been dead meat, you know, or I'd have, you know, it's just, it would have turned out awful. I'm just so glad that God's not this genie in a bottle that I rub and I get what I want because I just, you know, like we said earlier, I just don't see the big picture. God does. And yet if I see God as a genie in a bottle, I'm going to come away with some pretty wounded expectations related to God's apparent love or lack thereof.

And I'm going to come away going and probably do a little spiritual pouting from time to time and saying, God didn't give me what I wanted, you know, Oh no, you think he's an irresponsible parent, you know? So sometimes that's just the way it goes. But like Paul said earlier in that passage, we looked at in first Corinthians, there's coming a day when we're going to see everything we're going to see clearly, we're going to see face to face and we're going to be able to do what we, we're going to be able to say with

intelligence, with intellect, what we now say by faith, God, I trust you see by faith. We say, God knows best. Don't we but do we see the best?

Huh? We just say it by faith. I Appreciate frankly when people say that when they start telling me about a really rotten Sort of a circumstance that's going on in their life. And then they end it by saying but God knows I Appreciate that But there I understand what they're doing. They're they're expressing faith Paul says there's gonna come a day when we're not gonna need faith to be able to say that we're gonna see it As it is and we're gonna say Whoa God knew I mean, is that cool or what?

That's what we're going to do we're gonna look at it and we're gonna go man, did you have that one dialed in and I thought that this was you were like sleeping on the job and you had this baby just Then it won't take faith then you see because we'll see it we'll see it as it is Number six I got two more real quickly This number six is that we fail to see the value that suffering and difficulties can bring Into our lives and and here's a verse to go along with that 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 up on the screen It says for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us in eternal glory that far outweighs them all You know why I kind of laugh a little bit is because of who's writing this the Apostle Paul who At the beginning of this very letter in the first chapter of this very letter says to the people to whom he is writing Listen to this Brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant about the troubles in the trials. We suffered in the province of Asia for we suffered in a way that was far beyond our ability to endure to the point where that we Despaired even of life and we felt the sentence of death It's a very poetic way of saying we thought our goose was cooked and it was so bad We literally looked forward to death as a relief That's what Paul was saying in the first part of this very letter and then he refers to those kinds of sufferings which by the way are probably beyond what you and I have ever experienced and he refers to them as light and Momentary troubles, is that crazy or what? I mean you almost have to laugh when you read that It doesn't seem to To match up to reality does it you know why our reality is too Centered on this life and on the temporal issues of this life Paul is calling our troubles light and momentary in light of eternity And when they are viewed in light of eternity, they are light and momentary to us They're heavy and eternal but they're not eternal and It's kind of like pastor Chuck, you know when you we we played that interview with with pastor Chuck on a Wednesday night here a number of weeks ago and most of you some of you may know that pastor Chuck was diagnosed with lung cancer here a few months back and He referred to it as a bump in the road I Wouldn't refer to it as a bump in the road, but he did and What he's doing is he's looking at it in the perspective of You know God's eternal program for my life. This is a this is a bump in the road I Tell you it's just it's just you know, it's crazy, you know, but we forget Can we put that scripture back up for just a moment? 2nd Corinthians 417 look he says for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us what

an eternal glory an eternal glory That that far outweighs the light and momentary aspect of it Do you guys remember also in this very letter later on in chapter 12?

He starts talking about his thorn in the flesh remember that now that that deals with the issue of prayer because Jesus said or excuse me Paul said three times I prayed and I said I don't want this anymore take it from me now and he doesn't tell us what it was all we know is it was a thorn in the flesh, which does give you I think a a Sense that it was a physical, you know some sort of issue But we also know Paul didn't want it it bothered him and he didn't want it and we know also that he prayed three times That it would be removed from his life. What happened? What happened? What did he tell us in the passage? Jesus came back and he said no This is working a far greater an eternal value in your life and then Paul realized he said that God showed him He said, you know, I'm the kind of guy who has had just some pretty stinking amazing things happen in my life You know what?

I mean? I mean the revelations that have been given me I have seen Jesus I have been to the third heaven whatever that is and and all these other things that that he did He said, you know and and and God knew that there was the propensity in my flesh to get puffed up to get conceited To think that I was better than other people and so God allowed this thorn in my flesh as a reminder of my humanity So I'd keep my feet on the ground Imagine that Paul came to the revelation that some aspects of difficulty in life actually have a redemptive value Oh I get it. I see what you're saying here. Hmm. Okay, you know what?

There are some Christians that reject that altogether outright just carte blanc boom We're not even going to entertain the idea because God never wants to use anything like that in our life and God always wants us to put our faith in him and That sort of thing and it just it literally denies the very very aspect of God's Word now I'm not saying that every situation is that I'm not saying that I'm literally not saying that every situation is some sort of redemptive You know Purposeful thing that God's brought into your life I'm just saying that it happens and it and we see it in Paul's life and we've seen it in others and Chances are you may have seen it in your own. You may have seen a situation that you've endured that God used powerfully You know, so there you go and then lastly number seven is that and this is very closely tied with number six But we reject the Lord's discipline and That's what often hardship is. Let me show you another verse from Hebrews chapter 12 It goes like this and you have forgotten the writer here says that word of Encouragement that addresses you as sons that says my son do not make light of the Lord's discipline And do not lose heart when he rebukes you Because the Lord disciplines those he loves and punishes everyone he accepts as a son He says and so our question is kind of like well, how do I know if it's discipline? He says just endure all hardship is discipline. Just just do that You know, you and I aren't gonna be able to know the difference between when God is actually kind of Specifically disciplining us or

whether I'm just going through a hard time So, you know what the writer says just endure hardship is discipline When you're going through a difficulty endure it as if it were disciplined bring it into that realm of training Let it be a training opportunity for you regardless of what it is and regardless of the reason but you see you and I we We've got to categorize it.

I can't sleep tonight unless I categorize it Why are you letting this happen to me and if I don't know that you see then I can't put it in the right little slot Well, you know what sometimes God doesn't say In the situation I referred to in 2nd Corinthians God revealed to Paul why that thorn in the flesh Existed and remained but you know what? He doesn't always do that He doesn't always do that Sometimes he doesn't reveal that sort of stuff But what are you gonna do if God never says anything what are you gonna do if God never tells you what what's going on What if he never shares his ideas until you're with him and and on the other side of the veil as it were You're gonna just get mad You're gonna just spend your time being angry and shaking your fist at God and and whatever else So the writer of Hebrews just says endure hardship is discipline James Comes back and even in a you know Weirder sort of a way says to you and I that whenever we go through difficulties of any kind we should consider it pure joy Once again because of the value of what we're going through the training learning perseverance Learning patience and remember what he said, you know, his patience has to finish its work so that will be complete I hate those lessons don't you I Hate him and isn't that what the passage actually goes on to say here in Hebrews? No training seems pleasant at the time but painful but later on it produces a harvest of righteousness For those who have been trained by it Doesn't mean it produces a harvest of righteousness to everybody for those who have done what the writer says Endured it as discipline as training Lord. Talk to me. What are you saying?

How do you want me to grow from this? What do you want me to learn? Well, if we forget about that if we forget that word then it becomes just this this this terrible sort of Hardship that has no purpose or no meaning Thanks, everybody. Thanks, everybody. Thanks.