

July 31, 2016

Transformed from the Inside Out

"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."
Matthew 7:7-8

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock..."
Matthew 7:24-27

What kind of relationship do you personally have with God? Is it everything you would like it to be? All of us would probably say we really want to have a better relationship with God than the one we now have. So, why don't we have that better, closer, more transformative relationship with the Father?



The answer is really quite simple. We are not closer and more connected to God because we do not chose to be. As the Master concludes his 'Sermon on the Mount' he begins to challenge those who would follow him about their relationship with him and with the Father. ***"Ask,"*** he says, ***"and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."***

Most of us frankly do not have the relationship we would like to have with God because we do not ask for a closer relationship with him. In the old hymn we sing, "Draw me nearer, nearer..." but in fact we seldom ask God to do just that; to draw us nearer. Paul tells the Ephesian believers,

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." (Ephesians 1:17) He prayed that because the Ephesian believers did not have that. They did not know God well, and in reality, neither do we. We don't have a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Father, because we do not ask for one.

Even if we ask for a closer relationship with the Father most of us do not spend much time looking for it. Like my kids getting ready for an Algebra test in seventh grade, we ask God to help us pass the test, but we don't actually open the math book to study for that test. We don't work at having a closer relationship with God, we don't study his Word to us, we don't spend time in conversation with him, and we don't spend time with the rest of his family. We want to be closer to him, but we don't want to do those things that would naturally bring us closer to him.

Sadly, most of us aren't knocking down any doors to find a closer, more intimate relationship with the Father either. We let so many things get in the way of that closer, personal relationship. We are too busy living, working and playing in the world. We have too many demands on our time and energy to devote much of ourselves to that relationship. We let our sin and our self-serving ways create obstacles to a closer walk with the Father, and so, we don't have one.

And that's really the point. We don't have a close, intimate relationship with the Father because we really don't want one. We would much rather keep our relationship with him the way it is. We are satisfied with occasionally 'going' to church, or occasionally reading our Bible, or

occasionally praying. We are not actively pursuing a close, intimate relationship with God and so we do not have one.

God, on the other hand, is like a perfect loving parent. He waits patiently for us to turn to him so that he can give us everything we need. He longs to love us and care for us. He longs to be close and personal and intimate with us. He will not make us come to him, but he so want us to.

In the end it all comes down to us. Not us generically, but us individually. Each one of us must decide what kind of relationship we want to have with God. If we want a close, personal, life changing relationship with God then it is up to each one of us, individually, to pursue that relationship. In the end we have the relationship we choose to have.

And, in the end, our chosen relationship will either save and sustain us or condemn us. We can be the wise man whose life is built on the rock that is God, or we can be the foolish man whose life is built on nothing. So, what kind of relationship do you want to have with our loving Father?