

# Asking, seeking, and knocking

## The work-intensive nature of Christianity

*Matthew 7:7-11*

God could have included many things in His Bible. Think for example of the multitude of things He did not include in the Bible. Our Bible is very small in comparison to all of the things it could contain (cf. *John 21:25*). Given God's selectivity in choosing what would be in the Bible, we can therefore assume that what He did include must be very important. With that selectivity in mind, how can we reconcile passages like Acts 10:34 with Jesus' statement about the purpose of his parables in Matthew 13:10-17? What can we understand from the intersection of these passages about God's expectations for us?

### The main point

Christianity requires work

### The blessed gospel is for all?

- While God's desire to save everyone motivates Him to extend the gospel message to everyone (*I Timothy 2:4*), He does not extend it indiscriminately (*Matthew 7:6*).
- Jesus' parables illustrate the discriminating nature of God's message – he used parables to hide the truth from those who were not interested in his teaching (*Matthew 13:10-17*).
- We must keep in mind that God repeatedly presents Himself as treating every person fairly and justly (*Acts 10:34; Matthew 5:43-48*). The discriminating feature of His word should therefore be understood as means for interested people to evidence their desire by working to understand God's will.

### The blessed gospel is for all...who work

- God has given us everything we need to know what we should in life (*II Timothy 3:16*). But the Bible, the way God has delivered what we need to know, does not specifically address the majority of the situations we face.
- God has instead given us principles (cf. *Matthew 22:34-40*) that He expects us have the maturity of understanding to apply to the various situations of our lives (*Galatians 3:19-4:7; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 5:14*).
- As with Jesus' parables, God expects us to dig into His word (*I Timothy 2:15*).
- But God's expectations move beyond knowing to doing (*James 1:22-25; 2:18; Ephesians 2:10*).
- Doing requires Christians to discipline themselves, a result accomplished through practice (*I Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 5:14*).
- Jesus gives us the key – loving him (*John 14:15, 21, 23-24*).
- We also have God's promise that if we work, He will aid us (*Matthew 7:7-8*).
- God consequently praises those who study His word and work to practice it within their lives (*Acts 17:11; Matthew 7:26-27*).

- Why does God expect us to work? Things accomplished through work are more memorable and testify to our understanding of its value.

### **What does all of this mean for us here at Karns?**

- Being a part of a congregation with a strong teaching program, having access to many knowledgeable teachers, and having a good church library available for our use provide blessing to us – if we take advantage of them.
  - We cannot rest on the accomplishments of others in our congregation; we must take responsibility for our own lives.
  - The many activities available to us through Karns provide us with such opportunities to take personal responsibility for our lives and practice our Christianity. We have opportunities like:
    - ETSPM Tuesday evening classes
    - VBS
    - Visitation teams
    - Card writing ministry
    - Monthly door-knocking
    - Correspondence courses
    - Edwin's Thursday class
    - Monthly study at the Mercer's home
    - Ladies' class
    - Mission trip to Honduras
    - Peer groups such as the Singles group, College-age group, Teen group, Taft to Eisenhower group, etc.
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God expects us to work. He designed Christianity to require our work as a way we can evidence our understanding of the importance of His will for our lives. What does your level of Bible study and involvement here at Karns say about your understanding of the value of God's will?