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*"Christ caring for People  
through People"*

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### Matthew 7 (The Message) A Simple Guide for Behaviour

*1-5 "Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, and criticize their faults— unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbour's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbour. 6"Don't be flip with the sacred. Banter and silliness give no honour to God. Don't reduce holy mysteries to slogans. In trying to be relevant, you're only being cute and inviting sacrilege.*

*7-11"Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This isn't a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-peek game we're in. If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So don't you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better?*

*12"Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behaviour: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them. Add up God's Law and Prophets and this is what you get.*

“Father, if you would just get me out of this mess I’ll ... “

How many times have you mistakenly prayed as if God needed to be paid off for blessings you might ask of him? As if God needed anything we might be able to offer. Kind of silly when you think of it, isn't it?

Yet when we read this passage from one of the older translations (Ask and it will be given to you. NIV) many times we immediately think: “That can't be. Surely there is a cost to be paid.” Then we try to figure out what the price might be and begin to bargain.

This is the kind of revealing translation that can open our eyes to the truth. God is generous. He gives generously to those who ask. So keep your prayers simple and trusting. (Unless you approach with the simplicity of a child, with child-like trust, you won't enter God's city.)

Are you in need? What kind of need is it? Doesn't matter really. Whatever the need we can bring it to God in prayer and then leaving it in his hands move on. And real trust means we don't then put all our efforts into solving the issue ourselves. Act when He prompts, listen for His quiet voice, and trust.

*Loving Father God, help us to pray and then to trust and to praise you for the love and care your pour upon us. Amen.*

(Rev.) John McGurrin