

# Getting Spiritual Support

A Sermon by Rev. Joel Christian Glenn

23 November 2025

## Children's Talk: Ask and You Shall Receive

Today we are going to talk about help. Usually in church we talk about how we can help other people but today we are going to talk about how we get help. I want you to think about what it feels like when you need help, especially when you need help with something that you want to be able to do on your own. What does that feel like? You might be embarrassed to ask for help; or too proud; or scared of what people will think.

There is a story in the Word about Peter trying to do something that he thought he could do, but partway through he realized that actually he could not. He needed help. As I read this story think about what would have happened if Peter had not asked for help:

<sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. <sup>23</sup> And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. <sup>24</sup> But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

<sup>25</sup> Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

<sup>29</sup> So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

<sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

<sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:22-33)

So Peter had tried to walk on the water like Jesus was doing. And for a little bit it worked! But then he started to sink and realized that he would need the Lord's help, so he cried out to the Lord, "save me!" What would have happened if Peter had tried

to just keep doing it on his own? He would have drowned. Would that have been good? No! Because then Peter would not have been able to do all the good things he did later in his life. He needed to ask for help even if he was embarrassed about it. And when he did, the Lord *immediately* helped him,

A lot of times we start trying to do something, thinking that it will be easy. When it gets hard and we realize we can't actually do it, it is hard to ask for help. But that is exactly what the Lord wants us to do: He knows that we cannot do anything without help. All we need to do is ask. Always remember that it is ok to ask for help. It is in fact the only way that we can find spiritual success. *Amen.*

# Getting Spiritual Support

A sermon by Rev. Joel Christian Glenn  
23 November 2025

What stops you from asking for help? If I were to ask you to think of your deepest need, your deepest flaw, or your deepest failing, and then turn to the person sitting next to you or behind you (someone not your husband or wife), and simply tell them what it is and ask them to help, how would that feel? For most of us it would probably not be the most fun part of our day. It's awkward to tell people about that stuff and even more so to then ask for them to do something about it. Yet part of human nature is that we are all fundamentally flawed and that we all need help. There is no human being who escapes that need.

So what stops you from asking for help? We all need it. That shouldn't come as a surprise to any of us. And still, in spite of needing it, and knowing that we need it, asking for it is such a challenge. There's often a part of us that hopes the help will come without asking for it, without revealing to anyone that we couldn't make it on our own, without having to humble ourselves before another person, without losing our sense of pride and independence. Because that's what asking for help does: it proves to ourselves and the world that I am weak, that I am needy, that I am flawed, that I am dependent on someone else. So we hope that we can do it on our own and that help does come our way without having to be asked for. Unfortunately that path at best leads to not getting the help that we need and at worst resentment towards people for not giving us the help that we've never even asked for. The Lord in His Word shows us our need to ask as part of our spiritual life. He says,

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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 good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:7-12)

If you do not ask, it will not be given; if you do not seek, you will not find; if you do not knock, it will not be opened to you. God's gifts are available to all but they are only received by those who ask. As a fallible human being you need help, and if you do not ask for it you will not receive it.

There are many reasons we don't ask, but one of the biggest is shame. Shame is represented in the Word by nakedness. That makes sense if we think about nakedness on the natural level: if you were to find yourself completely naked in a public space, how comfortable would you be exposing yourself to someone in order to ask for something to cover up? Likewise, when we are ashamed of the things we are struggling with it becomes extraordinarily difficult to ask for help with them. Consider the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the beginning they were happy and free. We are told that they were naked and unashamed. When they had done wrong by eating from the forbidden tree they became ashamed and began to hide themselves from the Lord.

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed... Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate..."

<sup>21</sup> Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. (Genesis 2:25, 3:7-13, 21)

The spiritual meaning of a few details here will help us understand this story a little better. The fig leaves that Adam and Eve cobbled together stand for the superficial goodness that we put out to the world to try to cover up our flaws. Just as one example, the smile you plaster on and think that it makes everything ok, even as inside you're doing terribly. Even so, Adam and Eve recognized that these coverings were not sufficient and hid themselves from the Lord altogether. Specifically they hid from His face. Now think about that for a moment: no one in the entire universe has a more loving face than the Lord. One passage in the teachings of the New Church says,

Since the Lord's face is mercy, peace, and all good, it is clear that He never looks on anybody from anything other than mercy, and never turns His face away from anybody. (*Secrets of Heaven* §223)

In short they were hiding their nakedness from the one Person who would never look on them with anything other than perfect love. In fact it is the Lord Himself who gives them real clothing to replace their fig leaves so that they can survive when they go out from Eden and face the world. Where they sought to hide their shame, He gave them exactly what they needed to recover from it.

When we expose our struggle to others then we are able to receive the things that we need. Far from being shameful it is the best way to overcome the things that we feel shame around. Imagine, if you will, someone sitting in a small group. The thing he most feels at this point in life is loneliness. As the evening comes to the sharing portion and he is invited to share where he is his mind starts to churn. How could he tell the people in the group that he is lonely? He's a full-grown man; he should know how to make friends. This isn't high school anymore. Everyone else knows what they're doing. He just needs to try a little harder. He mumbles out a few words about how life is busy, but really he's doing fine. Who's next?

So what kept him from getting help with his loneliness? Some shame, some pessimism about people actually helping, and a vague belief that he'll work it out on his own. That's kind of like being naked, being ashamed of it, and trying to cobble together some clothes out of fig leaves. Yeah, you can cover up a little; but it hasn't fixed the problem. Contrast that with what the Lord provided Adam and Eve: clothing that could last and would protect them going forward. And yes, He also kicked them out of the garden; but he did not do so out of malice but knowing that it was, in the long-run, what was best. When we open up and ask for help we make ourselves vulnerable. But in doing so we get something that we cannot provide for ourselves. Whoever it is that we ask, whether it is the Lord or a friend, they can give us the truth that we cannot see on our own, the truth that will serve us, allow us to amend our faults, and provide a balanced picture of what we need to do.

So asking for help is hard but it's also the best way that we have of taking care of and loving ourselves. We actually need to be able to love ourselves. If we don't it becomes a problem for the people around us because as long as we are held back by our own problems we will be in no position to help them with theirs. The teachings of the New Church go into detail about how we can love ourselves without becoming selfish.

This commonly stated idea that everyone is a neighbour to himself and has to look after himself first should be understood in the following way. Everyone must first provide himself with the necessities of life - with food, clothing, accommodation, and many other things which he needs for life in the local community where he is. He must provide them not only for himself but also for his dependents; and not only for the present but for the future also. Unless everyone acquires the necessities of life for himself he is in no condition to exercise charity towards the neighbour, since he himself is in want of everything. (*Secrets of Heaven* §6934)

If you don't deal with your own issues you are in no position to help anyone else with theirs. You need to love yourself enough to ask for what you need so that you can be

the person that the Lord has created you to be. What is the world losing because you are holding back from asking for help?

Now even though asking for help is incredibly challenging, it's only the start of a process. Help is only as good as what you do with it. No one is going to solve your problems for you. If you accept people's help and think that means you can stop trying because other people have everything covered then you are missing the whole point. The point of getting help from other people is so that *you* can be supported in what *you* are working on. So don't use other people offering help as an excuse to abdicate your responsibilities.

We all need help. None of us can do this on our own. That's why the Lord has surrounded us with all the people who can do this. And above all the one who will help is when we ask is the Lord. He is the source of all help, no matter where it comes from. We will discover this if we can put aside our fear, embarrassment, and pride, and ask for what we need. As David says in the Psalms,

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—  
From whence comes my help?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
Who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)

*Amen.*