

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

LESSON TEXT

Matthew 7:7-8

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will explain how to ask for things in a Biblical way.
- The students will determine the difference between things that are wanted and things that are best for us.
- The students will ask, seek and knock about a specific character trait in each of their lives that needs to change.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- 1-2 sheets of paper

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News for the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world
- extra Bibles
- dictionary
- 1 piece of poster board
- 1 thick marker
- large writing surface
- marker/chalk for surface

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 1 copy for each student
- Page C, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: My Way
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer
 Victories
 Good News from the Kingdom

Getting into God's Word

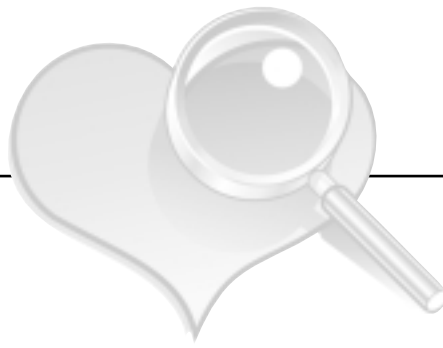
Story: Learning the Hard Way
 to Do It God's Way
 Scripture Study
 Activity: Dreaming Big

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Matthew 7:7
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."
 Matthew 7:7



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray about this class. Read and meditate on Matthew 7:7-12. You want to help the students understand (1) how to ask, seek and knock, (2) what things to ask for and (3) how God answers and why.

Before preparing this lesson, focus on God's heart and the ways in which he has worked in your life. Take an evaluation of your prayer life. Make decisions about being more specific in prayer. Prepare several new songs to sing during the class. It would be good to teach the students some devotional songs like: "He Is My Everything, He Is My All" or "Thank You Lord (for loving me)" etc. Make sure your relationship with God is one of joyful surrender.

TEACHER TIPS

Before preparing this lesson, have a special time with God. To help your students better understand the Activity for this lesson, take inventory of some ways that God has answered your prayers.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

MY WAY

This worksheet has the students identifying how they go after what they want in their lives. In the remainder of the lesson they will be able to evaluate how God wants them to go after things.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

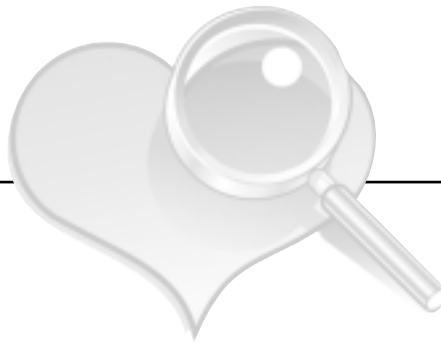
Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students arrive, hand them each a copy of Reproducible Page A (My Way).
2. Encourage the students to answer the questions honestly.
3. Have them put their names on the papers and keep them until later in the class.





STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few of the songs that you prepared to lead.

OPENING PRAYER

Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together? Select one or two students to pray for several minutes. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to be especially thankful that God answers our prayers.

VICTORIES

Take the time to have the students share about the challenge they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent time with God in prayer and Bible study? Who would like to share something they learned this week?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week. Also, briefly share about your own week and what you learned.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

INSTRUCTIONS

Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom." Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that the Kingdom of God is worldwide and the victories of disciples on other continents can inspire us and spur us on.





STORY

"LEARNING THE HARD WAY TO DO IT GOD'S WAY"

This story will help the students contrast the results of getting what they want their way and getting what they want God's way.

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page B, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page B ("Learning the Hard Way to Do It God's Way") to the students.
2. Read the story aloud to the students.
3. Ask the following questions:
 - *In the beginning, what does it seem that Matt wanted?* (to have fun, possibly do things to make his friends think he was cool, etc.)
 - *How did Matt go about getting what he wanted?* (It seems that he just forgot God and went for it!)
 - *What was the result of Matt doing what he wanted in the way that he wanted?* (lots of senseless destruction / people being scared and inconvenienced / ending up in jail / possibly lost friends / parents' disappointment)
 - *Then, after that week of thinking about what he had done, what was it that Matt decided he wanted?* (hope / God / a church—Try not to just let the students answer "God," although that is what he wanted. That can be trite to our religious preteens. Try to dig deeper by talking about how God does give us things like hope, real friends, something to work hard for, etc.)
 - *How did Matt go about getting these things?* (He prayed for a church, for relationships, for people to help him.)
 - *Did God answer right away?* (Yes—He prayed to know God. God brought him friends who were disciples; he began to study the Bible; he was obedient to what the Bible said.)
 - *What happened when Matt went after good things in the right way?* (became a disciple / stayed out of jail / kept scholarship)

SCRIPTURE STUDY

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- extra Bibles
- dictionary

Begin by asking the students these questions:

- *What are some of the things we want?* (allow the students to name as many as they wish).
- *Why do we want these things?* (prestige / appearance / popularity, etc.)
- *How do we try to get the things we want?* Have the students refer to Reproducible Page A. (whining, begging, deceit, nagging, possibly illegal means)
- *Today we will talk about things we want, and how God expects us to ask for them.*

Have the students open to Matthew 7:7-8, and select a volunteer to read the passage.

- *What does Jesus tell us to do about the things we want?* (ask, seek, knock)
- *Are these all the same?* Allow several students to share their ideas, then read the definitions of each from the dictionary: Ask = to request; Seek = to actively search for; Knock = to strike hard or collide with something.
Example: *If a parent realized his child was missing, he would be desperate to get his child back. He would be intense about it. He would ask everyone he saw if they had seen his child. He would seek for his child with all his energy. He would knock on doors, trying to find his child.*
- *What is the main point Jesus is making by using all three of these verbs?* (be intense / go after it wholeheartedly / don't be casual)
- *What does Jesus promise if we ask, seek and knock?* NOTE: Your point to get across here is that Jesus promises "an answer," but we are not promised the specific answer we are looking for. *In this verse, Jesus states that he who asks "receives" (not "receives what he wants"); he who seeks "finds" (not "finds what he wants"), and to him who knocks, the "door will be opened" (not "the door will be opened in exactly the way he asks").*
- *Is Jesus saying that if we ask, seek and knock we will get everything we want? What will we get?* (We will always get an answer of some kind from God.)



- *If this is the case, what kinds of things should we be asking/praying about?* (anything that is important to us / things that others need / other things in your life that might seem small, but God still cares / not selfish prayers)
- *Give an example of something small that might be important to you.* (finding the most encouraging birthday card for your mom)
- *Give an example of a selfish prayer.* (Help me to make a better grade than Jim on the test.)
- *What are some things that would be important to ask, seek and knock about?* (relationship with God / people becoming disciples / character changes, etc.)

Now we are going to do an exercise that shows what can happen when we bring our right requests to God.

ACTIVITY

DREAMING BIG

This exercise will show your students what God has done and can do through their righteous prayers.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- 1-2 sheets of paper

For the teacher:

- 1 piece of poster board
- 1 thick marker

PREPARATION

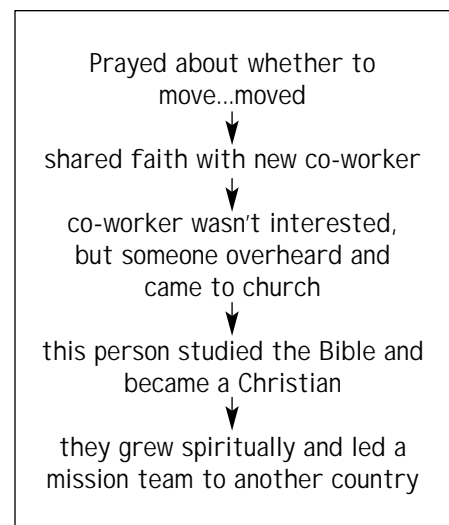
Think about a time when God answered your prayers and the results of that particular answer. For example: Maybe you prayed about a decision to make a move to a new state. This led you to share your faith with a new co-worker. The co-worker wasn't interested in church, but someone else in the office overheard and came to church. The person studied, and became a disciple. The person rose up and led a mission team to another country.

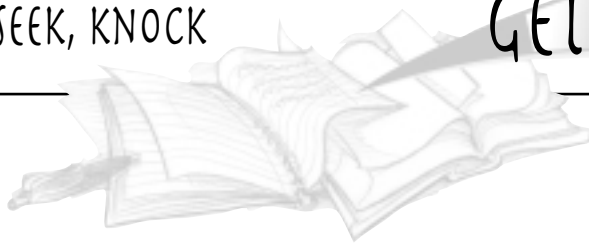
Think about a similar situation where you can trace results back to a specific prayer. Chart this on a piece of poster board for your students to see as you explain. (See example to the right.)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student 1 or 2 sheets of paper and a pen or pencil. Each student should think about a way that God has answered a prayer for them personally and then trace the results of that prayer. Explain using the example from your own life that has been mapped out on poster board.
2. Have the students map out a prayer that they have seen God answer and what the results were. At the bottom of the sheet, have the student answer the following questions:
 - Did God answer the prayer exactly the way you expected him to?
 - If not, did the results surprise you?
 - What does this tell you about how God answers prayers when we pray in a righteous way?

NOTE: The students may not be able to come up with a prayer.
3. Now, have each student turn their paper over, and think of a prayer that they would like God to answer. Then, they should trace the possible results of the answer that God could give them. For example: You pray to be a better student. You start doing better in school. You get 100% on your next test. Your teacher is excited and asks about the change. You share your faith with your teacher. Your teacher comes to church.
4. Encourage the students to dream BIG and to see how much God can bless righteous prayers.





SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."
Matthew 7:7

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- large writing surface
- marker/chalk for surface

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page C (Memory Verse).
2. Have the students say the memory verse aloud together one time.
3. *What are the three things that Jesus says we should do when we pray? (Ask, Seek and Knock) Write those three down in a column as they say them. Write the first letter in capitals.*
4. When they are put together, what do the first letters of each spell? ASK. *This will help make it easy to memorize. What happens when we ask? (We receive or will be given to.) What happens when we seek? (We will find.) By the way, what tense are does Jesus use here? (Future tense) We will receive an answer at some point. And lastly, what happens when we knock on a door? (The door opens.) Does this happen every time? Yes, because Jesus says "whoever" asks, receives, etc.*

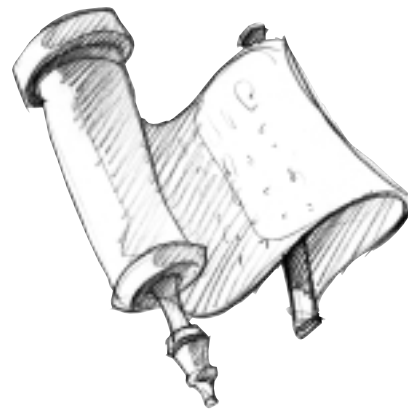
WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you remind them of the challenge for the week.

Have each of the students think about a character trait in his or her life that needs to change. (They may ask their parents for some help on this.) Then, they need to spend this week asking, seeking and knocking for God to change their character to whatever he wants it to be. Remind them that we can just ask, or we can truly be desperate and ask God, seek advice on how to change and knock (be serious—rap on God's door daily with the request). During next week's class, students should be ready to share how they are changing daily.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week, ask, seek and knock for God to change a specific character trait in your life. Be desperate in your prayers, get advice, and see how God answers your request.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

LESSON TEXT

Matthew 7:9-12

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will state three ways that God answers prayers: yes, no and wait.
- The students will explain why we need to be grateful for all the ways God answers prayers.
- The students will ask, seek and knock about a character trait in their own life that needs to change.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- extra Bibles
- bag or hat
- strips of paper, 1 per student
- 1 thick marker

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: Making Connections
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer and Review
 Great News Sharing

Getting into God's Word

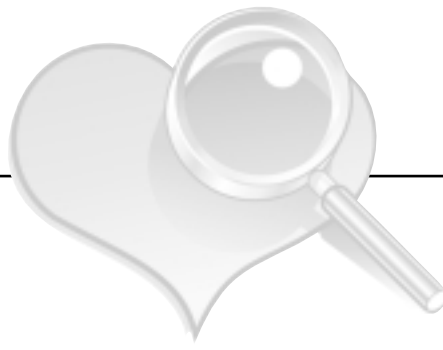
Scripture Study
 Activity: Yes, No or Wait

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Matthew 7:7
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."
 Matthew 7:7



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray about this class. Read and meditate on Matthew 7:7-12. You want to help the students understand how to ask, seek and knock and what things to ask for and how God answers and why.

Make sure your attitude toward prayer is one of gratitude and humility. Think through times in your life that you have prayed selfishly and how God has had to say “no” and at times when you have not been selfish and yet God still has said “no.” Think about the invaluable lessons that you learned about trusting God. Think about how God has answered “yes” at times and how that has made you thankful. Think about how God has said “wait” and how that has taught you perseverance. Remember God told Jesus “no” for a greater good: so we could be saved. But Jesus learned to trust and obey. How much more must we?

TEACHER TIPS

Trying to understand God’s will and ways can be difficult, at best, for adults. Helping your students to understand why God says “no” or allows us to “wait” can cause them to struggle with their faith. Your goal in this lesson is to reinforce the fact that God knows better than any of us what we need and will answer prayers according to what is best for us. Remind your students that God can see much farther into our futures than we can imagine, and he knows what the results of each of our prayers will be. Use an example from your own life to show them how perseverance and faith always bring great rewards from God.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The students will match the scripture reference with the condition for effective (or ineffective) prayer.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

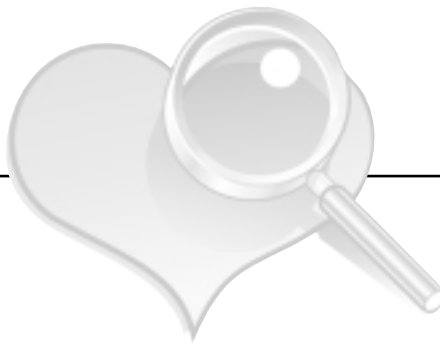
- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page D (Making Connections). They can work in pairs or by themselves.
2. Have them write at the bottom what they learn from these verses about prayer. How will they pray differently because of what they have learned?
3. When the students are finished, have them answer the following four questions on the back of their paper. (Read the questions one at a time, giving them time to answer each.)
 - What is one thing you want?
 - Why do you want it?
 - What have you done to get it?
 - Do you think God wants you to have it? Why or why not?



STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them and how much you have been looking forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs that you prepared in advance.

OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with one or more of the students praying for each student to grow in their prayer times each day.
- Have one student recite the memory verse for this lesson: Matthew 7:7.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson about asking for things God's way.

GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief so as many as possible can share.





SCRIPTURE STUDY

Have the students open their Bibles to Matthew 7:9-12. Review the last class:

- *What did you learn about asking for things from God.* (Don't ask with selfish motives. / God cares about small things. / He always answers.)
- *Why is it important to ask God for the right kinds of things?* (God will not give us things that are not best. / He will not reward jealous or selfish motives.)

Now let's look at the ways God responds to our prayers.

Select a student to read Matthew 7:9-12.

- *Jesus asks his listeners a very practical question: If you were a father and your son asked for something good, would you give him something bad? If Jesus were to ask you this question, how would you respond?*
- *What point is Jesus making by asking the crowd this question?* (We are human, and we know to give good things when those whom we love ask for them.)

Imagine you asked your parents for a gerbil. They find a poisonous snake and put him in a box. They give the box to you and say, "Put your hand in and take out your new gerbil."

This is what Jesus is telling us: Your parents give you good gifts. How much more will God give you good gifts? Your parents do not want to give you anything that will hurt you, neither does God. Your parents do not want to be mean to you or to trick you, neither does God. There are at least two differences between God and your parents: he loves you even more that they do, and he has all power to meet your needs.

- *What does this have to do with asking, seeking and knocking?* (God wants to bless us when we want what is good and we pray strongly about it.)
- *Does God answer all our prayers?* (Get the kids to realize that even if they didn't get what they wanted, God still answered their earnest prayers.)
- *God always answers us, but he answers in different ways. Sometimes, we get exactly what we want. Sometimes we don't. And sometimes, God has us wait for an answer. Why do you think this is*

so? (God knows best what we need. He won't give us things that will harm us or our faith. Sometimes he has us wait to teach us to be persevering and faithful. And sometimes, he feels we are ready for what we ask for.)

- *How many of your parents have given in to something you were pleading for, and it turned out not to be good for you. e.g., an extra piece of dessert that caused a stomachache or a game or toy that was too old or complicated for you.*
- *What was the result?*
- *Parents are human, and we make mistakes. But what about God? Does he ever make mistakes in what he does or doesn't give us? Why?*
- *How should we feel about any answer God gives to our prayers?* (grateful) *Why?* (because we know he has done it for the best / it was the perfect answer for us)

We must always remember that our response to God must be gratitude because he always wants what is best for us, no matter how hard it seems at the time.





ACTIVITY

YES, NO OR WAIT

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- bag or hat
- strips of paper, 1 per student
- 1 thick marker

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prior to class, on one-third of the strips of paper, write the word "YES." On another one-third of the strips of paper write the word "NO." On the last one-third of the strips of paper, write the word "WAIT." (Write one word for each strip of paper.)
2. Place the strips of paper into a bag or hat for this activity.
3. Now tell the students to put the paper in front of them that has their answers to the four oral questions that you asked earlier in the class:
 - What is one thing you want?
 - Why do you want it?
 - What have you done to get it?
 - Do you think God wants you to have it? Why or why not?
4. Ask for a volunteer to come up and pick from the bag. If no one volunteers, you may need to show them how to do it. Have them tell the class what the thing was that they wanted. Then have them share what the slip of paper says.
5. For example, if they wrote that they wanted money to buy the kind of sneakers that everyone at school has, and their strip of paper says "WAIT," the question now is: What will the student do? Have the student answer. Ask the class what they think about what the student will do. Help the student(s) see why God might want them to wait. It may be that they are about to grow and the shoes would only last a week. Or, it may be that a new, cooler style is coming in and the shoes they want will soon be out of style. Or it may be that God wants them to not put their heart and self-value into what they wear, like most preteens do. Absolutely God wants them to wait happily and trust.
6. *Do you think God can bless us when we complain and grumble and are angry? No. God wants us to trust that he is our Father and knows what is best for us at just the right time.*
7. If they picked the strip of paper that said "YES," how should they be? Thankful to God and their parents and let their friends know that they prayed for the shoes and God allowed them to have them.
8. If they picked a "NO," then it is similar to the wait answer they just need to trust in the Fatherliness of God and realize the bigger lesson that life does not consist in the abundance of their possessions or how others look at them.
9. Continue until all the students have had a chance to go up and pick a strip of paper. Remind the students that, no matter what the answer is, our heart must always be grateful for what God has done because he loves us and wants only the best for us.



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."
Matthew 7:7

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Assign in random order one word from the memory verse to each of 22 students.
2. At your command (Go!), tell them to line up in proper order, one behind the other.
3. Then have them say the verse with each person saying his or her word.
4. NOTE: Vary the number of words given per student depending upon your class size.

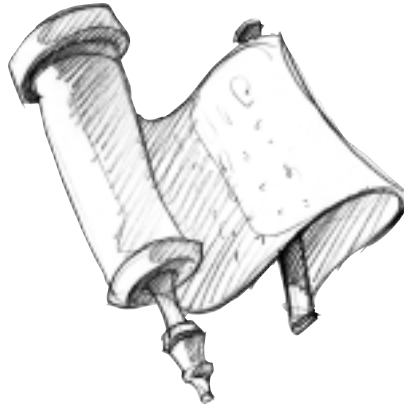
WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you remind them of the challenge for the week.

The students were to decide on a character trait that they needed to change. Remind the students to be praying each day for those traits to change. Ask if anyone is willing to share what they are praying about and how it is going. If students confess that they don't see any change, remind them that God's answers are not always immediate, and that he may be testing their patience and determination. Encourage them to keep asking, seeking and knocking with all their hearts.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week, ask, seek and knock for God to change a specific character trait in your life. Be desperate in your prayers, get advice, and see how God answers your request.



MY WAY

Take a few minutes and honestly assess which behaviors you use to get what you want. How you behave often reflects your heart (what is really happening on the inside). Are you willing to see the real you? Fill out the chart by circling the response that best describes you. Add up your score.

TO GET WHAT I WANT, I...	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
whine	2	1	0
say nice things	2	1	0
make people feel sorry for me	2	1	0
yell	2	1	0
hit	2	1	0
nag	2	1	0
forget God and go after it	2	1	0

TOTAL SCORE: _____



RATING:

- 0-2 You are near perfect (but are you telling the truth?)
- 3-5 There is room for change.
- 6-8 You are beginning to do things your way.
- 9-11 Do you see that your heart is getting hard?
- 12-14 Major change is needed!

LEARNING THE HARD WAY TO DO IT GOD'S WAY

TRUE STORY

Matt had everything going for him – he was smart and athletic, with a full four-year wrestling scholarship to Rutgers University and a great life ahead. But after just a few hours of reckless “fun with the guys,” he was about to lose everything.

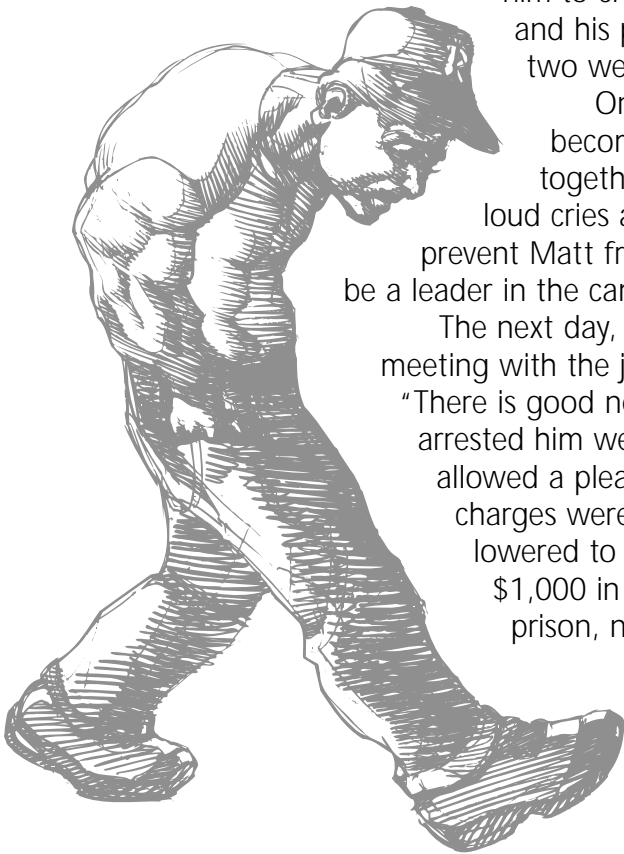
Matt and his friends had been drinking beer and began to smash the windows of parked cars. Then Matt smashed the window of a store and stole some clothing and other items. He was caught by the police and spent the night in jail.

Out on bail, Matt faced two felony charges which would bring 12 months in state prison and a \$1,000 fine. But worse, upon his conviction, he would lose his wrestling scholarship worth over \$60,000, his college education, his right to vote as a citizen, and his future. After a week of agonizing over his painful reality, he was utterly hopeless. All he worked so hard for was lost.

But as he walked along the street, he passed a church building and he realized that his only hope was God. He immediately began praying to find a church. The next day, two students who were members of the Rutgers football team, introduced themselves to Matt and invited him to church. They were totally unaware of his misfortune and his prayer. Matt went to church, studied the Bible and, two weeks later, was baptized as a disciple of Jesus.

On the night before his trial, only a month after becoming a Christian, the disciples at Rutgers came together with Matt to pray. They called out to God with loud cries and tears, and with specific prayers that God would prevent Matt from going to prison, allow him to stay in school and be a leader in the campus ministry.

The next day, the atmosphere in the courtroom was tense. After meeting with the judge in private, Matt's attorney came out and said, “There is good news”! He explained how the police officers that arrested him were “somehow unavailable” and the prosecutor allowed a plea bargain with the court. Miraculously, the original charges were merged into one felony charge, which was then lowered to disorderly conduct with only a \$200 fine and \$1,000 in restitution to the store. No criminal record, no prison, no lost scholarship!



SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find; knock and the
door will be opened to you."

MATTHEW 7:7

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week, ask, seek and knock for God to change a specific character trait in your life. Be desperate in your prayers, get advice, and see how God answers your request.

This page intentionally left blank.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Directions: The Bible tells us how to pray and how not to pray. Our attitudes are key in having our prayers answered. In the blank to the left of the numbers, place the letter of the scripture reference that matches the condition that keeps our prayers from being answered:

CONDITIONS THAT KEEP PRAYERS FROM BEING ANSWERED

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE TO MATCH

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| _____ 1. lack of faith/belief | A. James 4:1-3 |
| _____ 2. not obeying commands/not pleasing God | B. Proverbs 21:13 |
| _____ 3. sin | C. Hebrews 11:6 |
| _____ 4. selfish desires/not asking God with a right heart/selfish | D. Isaiah 59:1-2 |
| _____ 5. lack of unity/not agreeing with others | E. Luke 18:1-9 |
| _____ 6. not forgiving others | F. Philippians 4:6 |
| _____ 7. not believing God will answer | G. Matthew 18:19-20 |
| _____ 8. not according to God's will | H. Mark 11:25 |
| _____ 9. not being persistent/giving up | I. Mark 11:24 |
| _____ 10. anxious/not thankful | J. 1 John 3:21-25 |
| _____ 11. not helping the poor | K. 1 John 5:14-15 |

