

TEXT Matthew 7:7-11; 9:27-30; 1 John 5:14,15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Mark 11:24; 1 John 3:22

OBJECTIVE The students should be able to explain that petitioning prayer without faith is ineffective, but when used together, the believer receives an answer from God.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. — Matthew 21:22

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. — John 15:7

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **One Important Requirement**

**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Faith and Prayer**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

In the Bible, prayer is communication with God. Created in the image of God, man has a tendency toward worship. Because religion is universal, prayer is the same. People everywhere, of all times, have sought favor with a "higher order" no matter what their understanding of that may have been. Primitive people cried out to their gods and the "learned" idolaters of Paul's time built altars to their many deities.

Prayer is talking with God. It is making your request known unto Him in faith. The promise given in Matthew 7:7 is so simple on the surface that we are in danger of failing to recognize its immensity. Our Lord instructs the believer to ask, seek, and knock, because these three words cover a wide spectrum of prayer.

Prayer is asking and believing you will receive. When you know the will of God regarding a need,

whether it be material or spiritual, you can ask and receive. This is prayer according to the revealed will of God.

Prayer is seeking and knowing you will find. When you do not know the will of God regarding a need, whether it be material or spiritual, then you are to seek His will in prayer concerning this need until you find it. This is prayer for a knowledge of the unrevealed will of God in a specific need.

Prayer is knocking and trusting that the way will be opened to you. When you know the will of God, and yet you find a closed door, you are to knock, and keep on knocking until God opens the door. This is tenacious prayer—prayer with mountain-moving faith—which perseveres until the impossible becomes the possible. This is miracle-working prayer.

YOUR OPENER

Faith and Prayer

TEXT: Matthew 7:7-11; 9:27-30; 1 John 5:14,15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Mark 11:24; 1 John 3:22

KEY VERSE: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. — John 15:7

RESPONSES

1. The first verse of our text indicates that we are to ask, seek, and knock. When one asks he expects an answer, or at least, a reply. When one seeks, he hopes to find. And in knocking, the person anticipates the door to be opened. Each of these words expresses a measure of faith which is a part of effective prayer.

2. The results are receiving, finding, and having the way opened. Discuss with your students some of the following Scriptures which substantiate this promise. Ask — Zechariah 10:1; John 14:13,14; John 16:24. Seek — Isaiah 55:6; Jeremiah 29:13; Acts 17:27. Knock — Luke 13:25; Revelation 3:20. Reinforce the thought that many Scriptures encourage us to pray for the blessing of God upon our lives.

3. The factor is believing or having faith in God. As your students discuss the second question, refer to the list of heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. Note in verse six how, without faith, it is impossible to please God. Ask the class to read James 1:5-7. Discuss how faith brings the reward when used with prayer, but how the faithless receive nothing.

Prayer brings one into the presence of the highest, holiest, and most powerful Being in the universe. Prayer not accompanied by faith is an exercise in futility (Hebrews 11:6). Faith embraces God's promise by action as well as by word. True faith and prayer cause the Spirit to make intercession for the petitioner, producing results in accord with the will of God.

1. What three words did Jesus use to encourage people to pray? How does each of these words apply to faith when we pray?

2. What results can be expected when following Jesus' directions?

3. What factor or element enters into successfully seeking for God? See Matthew 21:22. Has this factor always been an essential ingredient? Explain.

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. "Have faith in God," Jesus said in Mark 11:22. Where does faith come from? See Romans 10:17.
5. In our Matthew 9 text, Jesus asked the blind men, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Why do you think Jesus asked this question?
6. Read the account of the healing recorded in John 9. Jesus told the blind man: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." What part did faith play in this healing?
7. How can Christians be sure that they will receive an answer from God?
8. How are the promises in Mark 11:24 and 1 John 5:14,15 similar?

4. Faith comes through hearing the Word of God. Discuss with your students how they obtained faith. Bring out in the discussion that through hearing the Word of God, this faith has been formed. If they had never heard about God—His eternal Being, His power, His miracles—there could be no faith in Him. Bring out that the more of God's Word we know, the greater is our potential faith. But to be really effective, faith must be put into practice, it must be exercised.
5. Jesus asked this in order to challenge their faith. Did Jesus always require a declaration of faith from those who sought His favor? Not always a vocal declaration, but discuss with your students how faith entered into the answers of the petitions that Christ fulfilled. Talk about the number of times the Syrophenician woman in Matthew 15:21-28 could have been discouraged before her persistent faith brought forth Jesus' comment of admiration: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Until then nothing had been said of her faith.
6. Faith was not directly mentioned, but obeying the command of Jesus put into action the faith in the blind man's heart which, in turn, brought sight to his blinded eyes. Ask your students what part obedience has in relation to faith and prayer. (See John 15:7.) We find that believing and obedience are practically synonymous in the Bible.
7. Discuss with your class the importance of being sure that our prayers are for things that are within God's will for us. How can we always be sure? Discuss how some benefits are stated very plainly: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). "For the promise [of the Holy Ghost] is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). For those things that are not so clearly spelled out, the seeker should ask that the Lord's will be done. Bring into the discussion the danger of contending with God for something that might not be good for us, especially for our spiritual good. Refer to Psalm 106:15.
8. Both verses promise answers to prayer. Discuss with your students how Scripture bears out the truth that God answers prayers of faith. Time may be required for God to work out all the circumstances to His honor and glory, and for the believer's full spiritual benefit. Recall how Daniel prayed three weeks. It was revealed to him later that his prayer had been heard from the first day, but the answer had been hindered by the enemy (Daniel 10:12,13). God's Word is true, and when we pray He does hear and answer our prayers. We must let Him work out the details and timing as He knows best.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is meant by "ask, and it shall be given you"?

What does "seek, and ye shall find" mean?

How would you explain the meaning of "knock, and it shall be opened unto you"?

Jesus gave a promise with ask, seek, and knock. What is the promise? See Matthew 7:8.

What do you think is the best way to pray?

How do we know God hears our prayers?

What effort did the blind men put forth before they received healing? How does this compare with our own praying?

In our ANSWER story, why was Keith given the bicycle when others had been refused?

THINGS TO DO

Show your class some pictures of a mailbox, a telephone, a radio, a cassette tape, and any other things you may think of that reflect communication. See if students can make the connection to faith in our daily use of these assorted types of equipment or services.

Ask your class for special prayer requests. Band together in prayer and form a prayer chain. Make a commitment to be more helpful at the altar services in church.

Bring to class a peanut, a walnut, or a hard-boiled egg. Tell students: "I have something in my hand that is tangible and has a color. No man has ever seen it before. That's hard to believe, isn't it? How many of you believe me? Let me prove it to you." Display the item, crack it open, and show the inside. "Some of you believed what I said even though you did not know what it was and had

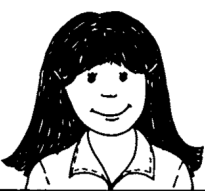

not seen it. This is an example of faith. We pray, believe, and receive an answer."

Print each letter of the word FAITH on separate sheets of notebook paper. Distribute these five sheets of paper to your students. Have them list under each letter any items (which begin with that letter) that we have faith in or know are real. Some ideas to get them started: F-father, friend; A-advice, aunt; I-idea, illustration; T-teacher, telephone; H-home, husband.

Answers for ANSWER

Faith is Believing

When you pray you can believe Jesus will do what He said He would do. Below are some of Jesus' promises. Draw a line between the two parts of Scripture that go together. If you need help, look up the Bible references that follow each verse.



1. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
2. Continue in prayer,
3. Ask, and it shall be given you;
4. If he ask a fish,
5. Men ought always to pray,
6. What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread,
7. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man
8. Then touched he their eyes, saying,
9. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire,
10. If we ask anything according to his will,

- seek, and ye shall find; (Matthew 7:7)
- will he give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9)
- According to your faith be it unto you. (Matthew 9:29)
- will he give him a serpent? (Matthew 7:10)
- he heareth us: (1 John 5:14)
- to all that call upon him in truth. (Psalm 145:18)
- when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24)
- and not to faint; (Luke 18:1)
- and watch in the same with thanksgiving; (Colossians 4:2)
- availeth much. (James 5:16)