Lesson 2: Prayer: Expecting Results

**Lessons in this series:** [1](http://www.teensundayschool.com/358/lesson/behave-yourself.php) **2**[3](http://www.teensundayschool.com/401/lesson/stand-firm-in-your-faith.php)

**Lesson Workbook (PDF)**

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To examine a case of Biblical expectation in prayer  
2. To challenge students to pray expectantly  
3. To give students an opportunity to pray expectantly for one another

Topics

Believing, Doubt, Faith, Persecution, Prayer, Quiet Time, Zealousness

Scripture Memorization

James 1:7 

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (5 minutes)

As children, we all desired Christmas gifts.  
  
**General Discussion:**• Can you remember the one gift you wanted the most? What was it?  
• Did you receive it? How did it make you feel when you finally got it (or when you didn’t get it)?  
• What is something you’ve always dreamed about for your life?  
• Has it come to pass? Why/why not?

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

All of us have great expectations for our lives.

When we ask someone else for something, such as a gift, there is often a buildup in anticipation as the date arrives for us to receive the gift. When we expect something of ourselves, as we often do in life, there is angst when those expectations don’t come true.    
 **General Discussion:**• What do you expect from God when you pray?  
• Does it feel right to you to expect anything? Why/why not?

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

**Read the following passages**. *(Select a different student to read each passage.)*

**Acts 12:1-5  
Acts 12:6-9  
Acts 12:10-14  
Acts 12:15-17**

This is an incredible passage of Scripture. Facing persecution, the early church was driven to their knees in prayer. In this case, their fervent prayer is on behalf of their imprisoned leader, Peter.

Yet, as we will discover as we talk about this passage, their reaction does not necessarily match their proactive prayer when Peter is, in fact, delivered.  
 **Discussion Questions:**1. What was Herod’s intent in dealing with the believers? *(He meant to do them harm, killed at least one disciple [James, see verse 2], and saw that it played well with the crowd.)*2. What did he then do to Peter? How specifically was Peter quieted? *(He arrested him, put him in stocks, Peter was heavily guarded in and out of his cell, etc.)*3. What was the reaction of the church, according to verse 4? *(They prayed earnestly for Peter.)*4. What do think the church expected to happen?   
5. What do you think was the intensity of their prayers?

You’ve probably never had a family member thrown in jail for being a Christian. However, you may have had a friend or family member in dire circumstances.  
  
**General Discussion:**• Could you share such an instance?   
• How was the intensity of your prayers affected by the immediacy of the need?   
• What did you expect God to do in that situation?  
• What happens in this story from Acts? *(Peter is miraculously freed by an angel, led from the prison, and to the place where the church was gathered.)*• How did the believers react? Look specifically at verses 14-16. *(They were surprised, even disbelieving.)*

Keep in mind—these are the very people praying fervently for Peter. It makes you wonder—if when their prayers were answered right before their eyes they chose disbelief, why were they praying in the first place? They were so shocked that God heard them that they tried to excuse their answered prayer on account of a delusional servant girl, an angelic manifestation, or a case of mistaken identity.

MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)

We may scoff at their naivety, but how often do we pray believing that God will answer?

**Discussion Questions:**1. When you pray, to what degree do you actually think God will act for your good?  
2. Have you ever been surprised when your prayers were answered? What caused your surprise? A lack of faith? Low expectations? Disbelief?  
3. Why do you think we are prone to disbelieve God? If we tend to think He won’t answer our prayers, why do we pray to Him at all?  
4. How do the expectations of your prayers need to change? Are you hesitant to pray with confidence? Why or why not?

Sometimes, it is easy to forget that God wants to move on our behalf. That may not always be the way we expect, but we can expect Him to move for our good. When we pray, we should pray believing that something is going to happen. James 1:6-7 says that we should **pray and not doubt**. The person who doubts should not expect anything, because doubt makes one unstable in his or her motivation. In other words, we should pray expecting God to act! He wants to be active in our lives, especially when we’re praying for ourselves and others to be close to Him.

Before you move onto the prayer exercise, have someone read Jeremiah 29:11-13

God says that when we seek Him, we will find Him. When we pray to Him, He will listen to us, and He will act according to our good. **That is a promise**.

This may be a difficult exercise, but we are going to pray expecting something today.

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| Workbook Activity (10 minutes)  **Pray Expecting Results**  **Part 1:** Using a pencil, identify some things that you know God would be in favor of doing on your behalf. Perhaps it’s that you would have a closer walk with Him. Maybe it’s that an unbelieving freind would come to know Him as you do. Maybe it’s that you would be wiser in your dealings with your parents, siblings, or friends. These are the things for which you are going to pray. Write these things down**.**  **Part 2:** Check each request above. Do you believe God can accomplish good in these things? Do you believe, without doubting, that He can work out good in each of these circumstances? If you do not believe this without doubting, erase it from your list. Be honest about your doubt.  **Part 3:** Take some time, individually, to pray for your list. Ask God to act for your good, believing that He wants to do that.  **Part 4:** Pass your journal to another person. We’re going to do this every couple of minutes until each person has prayed for each person's list. If you have an extra large group and want to split up into two smaller groups, that’s okay. Split up according to gender, etc. Designate someone to call for a switch every couple of minutes, until each list is back in the hands of its owner. |

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Pick one person in your group to pray this prayer of expectation.

*God, we fully expect that You will answer our prayers,*  
*according to Your purposes and for our good.*  
*Thank You that when we pray, we pray with confidence,*  
*knowing that You love us and want what’s best for us.*  
*To the God that rescued Peter from impossible circumstances,*  
*we entrust to You our own situations.*  
*Thank You for hearing our prayers, and for answering them. Amen.*