

## **Week 17**

### ***The One That Didn't Get Away***

#### **Matthew 7:7–11**

This scripture is very special to my heart. In April of 1981, I (Clint) was sitting on a downed cottonwood tree that had fallen across a riverbank just outside the small town of Gage, Oklahoma, population 650. I had my fishing pole in my lap and a freshly baited hook ready to cast. I sat patiently and stared intently into the stream. The water was clear and only about three to five feet deep. I was able to see several largemouth bass swimming by. I just wanted to hook a big one that day.

Little did I know that that day was the true beginning of my life, even though I was already thirty years old at the time. You see, our Father had spent that entire year trying to tell me about Himself. He used every means He could without forcing me to do something I did not want to do. During that year, as I traveled to farmhouses, ranches, oil rig sites, and businesses in northwest Oklahoma and Texas, it seemed like every person I met told me about God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Even the elderly woman I hired to answer my phone at the office gently told me about this wonderful God of hers. She got me to start reading the Bible and one morning I stumbled upon Matthew 7:7. I really did not understand the meaning of the words, but that day fishing off the cottonwood, God let me know what they meant for my life.

After watching many fish swim by my baited line for at least an hour without even a single bite, I started reciting Matthew 7:7. I said it forward and I said it backward. I dissected the verse like a curious fisherman dissects his first fish. Then, I meditated on it. I spent an hour or so just thinking about the words I had read.

Finally, I was ready to put God to the test. "Lord, You said I should ask, seek, and knock, so here goes. If you are God, You have seen all these fish swim by. Let me catch one big ...." Before I could get the word, "fish" off my tongue, a huge bass broke the surface of the water! After a long battle, I landed him—hook, line, and sinker!

It was at that moment that I first truly believed in God. If you had seen me on that cottonwood from a distance, you would have thought that I was a crazy man. I jumped up and down, all by myself, praising God for answering my prayer. On Easter Sunday morning, I walked down the aisle of the First Baptist Church of Gage, Oklahoma, and gave my life to Christ.

I challenge you to memorize and meditate on Matthew 7:7–8. Ask God about what it means for your life. It will change your life forever. It did mine. I hooked a fish and God hooked me!

### **Questions to Consider**

- Describe a need in your life that requires the persistence of asking, seeking, and knocking.
- What keeps you from being persistent with God about this concern or problem?
- Are there doors God has opened, but you are hesitant to walk through? Why?

### **Applying the Lesson**

Share your conversion experience with someone this week. Tell them about the moment you first truly believed.

### **Prayer for the Week**

Father, never let us forget Your lessons and promises. If we humbly ask, seek, and knock daily, You will allow us to find Your open doors. Grant us the desire and courage to walk through them with You. Thank You, our Father, for Your daily guidance and for answering our prayers.