



Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture



Use “The Scene” to introduce *Young Teen Bible school Lesson 8*.

All across the country, school districts want to increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school. But how can that happen when students fail to pass required courses? A growing answer for many is a shortcut to graduation called *credit recovery*.

Credit recovery can mean different things for different schools. The Cyber Oregon OnLine (COOL) School program is the electronic alternative school program for that northwestern state. “A credit recovery course,” according to the COOLSchool website, “is a shortened version of a regular education course. It teaches the same concepts, but it is limited in the amount of practice activities and student-to-student interaction.”

The Greeley-Evans School District 6 in Colorado offers credit recovery classes after school, at night, and via the Internet to help students make up their missing credits. Maria Hope Gomez believes her two sons benefited from credit recovery. At one point, one of her sons was failing five high school classes. “The programs allowed them to make up the work,” Gomez said. “I appreciate the fact they had the chance to make up the credit.”

Not everyone is a fan of credit recovery, however. In New York City, many teachers call credit recovery programs a poor substitute for classroom learning. When Dennis Bunyan failed his first-semester senior English class in that city, he was allowed to earn the credit he needed for graduation by writing three essays. His English teacher, Charan Morris, was so troubled that she boycotted Bunyan’s graduation ceremony. Morris wrote that she believed some students were “being pushed through the system regardless of whether they have done the work to earn their diploma.”

What does Bunyan have to say about being allowed to take this shortcut? “I’m grateful for it, but it also just seems kind of, you know, outrageous,” the student said. “There’s no way three essays can possibly cover a semester of work.”

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

Is there a credit recovery program in your school district? What is required for credit recovery? Do you believe this shortcut is fair? Why or why not?

What are some popular shortcuts that you have heard about? (e.g. a quick way to get a job done, a quick way to get healthy, a quick way to get rich)

What “quick fixes” or shortcuts have you been tempted to try? How did they work for you?

People disagree as to whether or not it is fair to use credit recovery as a shortcut to avoid taking a full class. After all, we all like to take shortcuts sometimes. Some would even like to believe that there are shortcuts to God. These might include meditation, rituals, or good works. But the Bible tells us that there is no shortcut. Let’s look at why Jesus said that He is the only way to Heaven.