
TESTING YOUR FAITH

Let's devote time to studying the book of James this month. James is a short and practical book that teaches you how to live the Christian life. James says, "Be ye doers of the word". So let us embark on this learning journey of discovering how to put our Christian faith into practice.

There are 2 types of 'temptations' –good and bad. The bad type refers to problems or sufferings due to wrongdoing. One example is when king David sinned, and his child died in infancy. The good type refers to problems or sufferings allowed by God, not because we sin, but because God wants to test us. James is referring to the good type in this passage. These problems can shake our faith in God. When a problem shakes our trust in God, can it be good?

Have you ever experienced tough times? Perhaps your parents have lost jobs, your loved ones suffered a terminal illness or have had a major operation. Maybe friends have told a terrible lie about you, or classmates named you in some wrongdoing? Or a friend whom you trusted deserted you?

Can you think of other unhappy things that you have experienced?

Answer: _____

What should we do when we face 'diverse temptations' when we have not done any wrong? God said such sufferings are to test our faith. Do we still trust God during times of temptations? When we trust God, we pass the test and God will be pleased.

Not everyone likes tests. But tests are necessary. You've tests and examinations in schools. Your teacher gives you assessments. Why? So that they and you will know how much you know or don't know about a subject. In quite the same way, this is why God tests us. God doesn't need to test us to know how we would fare – He is omniscient and knows all things. These tests are for us to know who we are, in which areas we can improve, and how we need to continue to turn to Jesus.

Thought: Are problems good for a Christian?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, when I face problems, help me to run to You and trust You with my whole heart. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

ASKING FOR WISDOM

The Bible has an account of two women. Each had a newborn. One night, the women were sleeping with their babies. The first woman awoke and realised that her baby had stopped breathing. Stealthily, she exchanged her dead baby with the second woman's baby.

The next day, when the second woman woke up, she discovered the dead child, lying next to her, was not her baby. She found out that the first woman had stolen her baby but the first woman claimed she was carrying her own baby. Their squabble was brought before the king. Patiently, he listened to their woes. Each claimed the living baby was hers.

In those days, before advanced scientific advances and DNA tests, how was the king able to know who was the real mother? God gave this king the wisdom. The king said that since both women wanted the living baby, he would have the living baby cut into 2, with each woman to take one half. The first woman was aloof but the second woman pleaded that the baby be given to the first woman as she would rather her child live with that evil woman than to have her child killed. From their responses, the king concluded that the real mother of the baby was the second woman. What a wise king!

Did you know who this wise king was? Answer: _____

Read Colossians 2:2-3 and you'll see that God is the source of knowledge and wisdom. Christ is all-knowing.

Unscramble this word: SICONMNETI. Answer: _____
It means knowing everything. God knows everything.

Like Solomon who asked for wisdom, we should also ask God to give us wisdom to live for God. When in doubt, ask God for wisdom and He will freely give it to His children.

Thought: Why do we need wisdom?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I always pray, seeking wisdom from You in all the decisions that I have to make. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

THE CROWN OF LIFE

We all love to be rewarded for our work. When Cheng Kee topped his class, his parents rewarded him with a new bike. When Lin Leng came in second in the 100-metre race, she received a medal.

In the Bible, rewards or prizes are frequently mentioned. James talks about them in his book too. A crown of life awaits a Christian when he finishes the journey on earth. A Christian's life on earth is a journey that can be filled with troubles. Life is never a bed of roses. Christians are encouraged to persevere to the end despite trials and difficulties. This is because the blessing of the crown of life, which includes eternal life in the presence of God awaits every Christian.

Learn from some men of God whose lives were under trial. There was a young man who was thrown into a pit by his own brothers, then sold as a slave. In Egypt, he was wrongly accused and put in jail.

Who was he? Answer: _____

Here is another man – he was exiled, lived in an enemy's country, and for standing up for God, put into the lion's den.

Who was he? Answer: _____

The third character was, when as a baby, put into a small floating device to escape being drowned in the Nile River. At the age of 40, he ran away from the Pharaoh who wanted to kill him. Forty years later, he was back in Egypt convincing the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, which was a most difficult task. He was _____

These men of God kept following God and did not give up. In the end, they received their reward, the crown of life.

When you are discouraged and feel like giving up because the Christian life is too hard, think about these men who remained faithful in spite of difficulties. When you feel tempted to do something wrong – such as say a nasty word, think unkind thoughts, laze instead of studying, disobey mum or dad – pray hard! Look to God for strength!

Dear child, remember that you cannot live your life with your own strength, but with the strength God gives. Isaiah 40:29-31 gives us these comforting words. When you press on to the end and depend on God's strength, you will surely receive the crown of life.

Thought: How do you get the crown of life?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me look to You when I have difficulties and not give up. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

EVERY GOOD GIFT IS FROM ABOVE

One thing we can be very sure about is that God is good. God is also the source of all good gifts which are blessings we receive from Him. These blessings may include spiritual gifts, talents, abilities etc.

What gifts have you received? Answer: _____
 (for example, ability to draw well, gift of helping people etc.). The gifts we have are not for us to boast but for good use and for the praise and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. Which means we are to help others, as we're told by God to love them.

How should a Christian make use of his gifts? A story in the Bible tells of a master giving his servants each some money. Some are given more and others given less. Most of them made good use of the money and made some profits. The master was pleased with them and rewarded them further. This is exactly what is expected of Christians. You must do good to others with what you have been given by God. However, there was one servant who simply kept the money without putting it to use and his action displeased his master. What does that mean? That means doing nothing at all with the gifts God has given you is not the right thing to do.

A Christian life is one of giving. Christ gave His life for us. We follow His example. Out of love for mankind, He sacrificed His life. We love because He first loved us. A Christian can give out of love only because God enables him. A Christian must give freely and cheerfully. A Christian must not be selfish and greedy. Let's share and be kind. We should think of others before ourselves because all the good in the world comes from God.

Think of some good things you will ask God to help you do:

(for example give to missionaries, make a card for a friend, share a toy, plan a nice surprise, and so on)

Thought: May I serve God by helping others.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me gifts and abilities to serve You. Help me not to be selfish and to use these gifts to bless others also. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

WORD OF TRUTH

The word of truth, the wonderful Bible you hold in your hands, is the Christian's 'bread and meat'. We don't literally eat the Bible, of course. What we mean is spiritual nourishment. By feeding on it, we can grow and our faith in God is built up.

Not reading the Bible regularly will stunt our growth and affect our walk with God. We will also not do the things that God wants us to do.

How we are converted is by hearing the word of truth that the Holy Spirit uses to convict us of our sins and turn us to the Savior. Hearing God's Word is the starting point to believe in Jesus. No one can be saved if the gospel is not proclaimed. God's Word is powerful. It changes attitudes and behaviour.

Long time ago, there were people who were professional Bible readers. Bible readers used to visit prisons.

There was a particular Bible reader who approached the jailor and requested to go into a cell where the worst kinds of prisoners were kept. Having been warned of their evil behavior and of the danger to be alone with them, the Bible reader told the jailor that he was 'armed'. That surprised the jailor. Does that surprise you? What do you think 'armed' means?

Answer: _____

Reluctantly, the jailor granted him permission to go into the cell alone. The door was locked behind him after he stepped into the cell. Facing these burly tough-looking men, the Bible reader took his 'weapon' out of his pocket. He just read a portion of the Bible aloud. The prisoners listened in silence. At the end, he asked them, "Would you like me to come tomorrow and read to you again?"

The daily reading continued. On the 13th day, as usual the Bible reader turned up but he was told that no one was in that cell any more. He thought that the prisoners had got into trouble. To his amazement, the jailor said that they behaved so well that they were transferred to a more lenient cell.

What does this tell us? Men with wicked ways and bad tempers were led to behave better through God's Word. God's Word can change people.

Thought: How has the Word of God changed you?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to treasure Your Word always that I will not just hear but also obey what it says. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. *(Story adapted from 'How God Used A Thunderstorm' by J R Beeke & D Kleyyn)*

SWIFT TO HEAR

Wherever you are, whether at home or in school, it is important that you are 'swift to hear or to listen'. If you are not quick to listen, you may end up literally losing your life.

The following is a true account of the massive earthquake in Japan on March 11, 2011. A man found a group of old folks in a house after strong tremors of the quake were felt. He advised them to seek shelter on higher ground but his words fell on deaf ears – the old folks did not bother with his advice. Having no other choice, the man fled, leaving them behind. The earthquake caused a huge tsunami, and the old people drowned. If only they had listened.

Listening to the words of Jesus is very important. He gives you the way to eternal life. By not listening to Jesus, you will end up in a horrible place. What is this place? Answer: _____. That's right! You really want to escape from this place. From the Bible, you will find out many wonderful things that Jesus has done and is still doing – He saves you from eternal punishment and is sitting at the right-hand side of God the Father, interceding for you. You need to listen to His instructions. What did Jesus say in Luke 8:8b? Answer: _____

What can stop us from listening to Jesus? Pride can be one cause. Some educated people in the world think the Bible has many mistakes. They don't believe God can create the world in 6 literal days and even think that the world came about through evolution. And many others think the miracles of the Bible are just stories or that Jesus was just a good man, not God. Many of these people are proud and think that they do not need a Saviour. Or they think that since they are not wicked or have not committed any crimes or done anything illegal, they don't really need any help.

Others may hear the Word, receive it joyfully initially, but the joy dwindles to naught after a while. Still, some people get too busy with other things such as families, careers, studies and so on, and so stop listening to the words in the Bible. Are you like that?

Jesus' words show us the way to eternal life. If we ignore His words, we will suffer eternal punishment. Heed his words.

Thought: May I heed God's words.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to heed Your words and obey them. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD

Don't just read or hear the Word of God. Obey it. Put it into practice. If it says, "slow to become angry", then ask God to help us to control our temper and not to act aggressively and impulsively. If it tells us to avoid "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is", then ask God to help us to make time for church, Bible study and fellowship.

Read Colossians 3:8 and unscramble the words describing the things we must get rid of:

- GRAEN - _____
- TWRHA - _____
- CILEAM - _____
- ELLBMHSPAY - _____
- HILFTY communication - _____
(meaning: vulgar language)

James uses the illustration of the mirror to describe people who disobey the words of Jesus. They who hear only and don't do what God wants are like people who just look at the mirror but don't change what's wrong. For example, they see that their hair is untidy but don't comb it. If they stop grooming themselves, they'll soon forget what they really look like.

When the words in the Bible tell you that you are doing wrong and if you carry on living as you please, you are a fool because you are then rebelling against God. However, you will be blessed if you repent and determine never to do it again with God's grace and strength.

As mentioned in the first reading of this month, the book of James is a workbook. We must carry out the activities written in the workbook. It is no good saying that you have faith, but do not put the faith into practice. The Bible says that those who do not keep and carry out His words are _____ and the _____ is not in them (1 John 2:4).

Thought: Why should we be faithful to act on God's Word?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me when I don't obey your Word. Please help me to realise the importance of your Word and to obey it always. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

BRIDLE YOUR TONGUE

While on earth, Jesus was careful about his speech. He controlled his tongue, not speaking maliciously to hurt people's feelings. He was wise and his sharp arguments stumped people or rendered them speechless. We, like Jesus, must be in control of what and how we say things. We must not let our tongue be our master.

There is a legend of a king sending out two men whom he thought were fools, to search for the world's best and worst thing. What do you think is the best and worst thing on the planet earth? They both returned from their quest and each brought before the king a small box. Opening the first box, the king found a tongue inside. And in the next box was also a tongue. The king was amazed by their find and realised that the two fools were after all very wise.

Yes, the tongue is indeed the best and worst thing on earth. Have someone's words upset you? Words can make us cry and make us angry. This explains why the tongue is a bad thing. On the other hand, how many times have you laughed at what another person has said? Words can make us happy. So, the tongue can also be a good thing.

The apostle Paul instructed us to season our speech with salt. Salt preserves what's good and adds flavour to food. When your speech is 'salted', your words can have a positive influence on others – you can comfort and encourage people when they are sad or troubled.

You have a choice as to what words are to come out of your mouth. As a Christian, what is your choice? Answer: _____

Put in the correct order these words from Matthew 12:36:

**YOU THEREOF THEY UNTO ACCOUNT THE BUT IN
OF SPEAK SHALL SPEAK THAT IDLE SHALL I SAY
JUDGMENT DAY EVERY WORD MEN THAT GIVE**

Thought: Can you remember saying something hurtful to anyone?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to control my tongue so that my speech will edify others. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS

Do you know of anyone who is fatherless or is a widow? The fatherless were children whose fathers had died and the widows were women who had lost their husbands. The Bible tells us that these groups of people were lonely and poor.

At the time when James wrote this New Testament book, the church was greatly persecuted. Many Christian men were killed for their faith in Jesus and were survived by their wives and children.

The earthquakes and tsunami in Japan killed and injured thousands, and caused many more to be homeless. Many children became fatherless, motherless or orphans. Women lost their husbands. Buildings and houses were reduced to rubble. Some areas of Japan lost electricity and water supplies. It was a long, long road to rebuild Japan. One word to describe the state that Japan was in at that time is 'devastation'. When we hear and see all these on the television, what are your feelings? Does your heart go out to them, especially the fatherless, motherless and widows? Do you pray for these suffering people? Do you help them? These people are not within your reach and you can't really do much but pray.

But, you don't really need to look far because there is very likely someone near you who needs your help or words of encouragement. He/she might be in your church or in your class. He could be that quiet child or even that naughty boy, who is not having love and attention at home. Look out for this person.

Here are some nice things you can do for those in need. Add other helpful ideas, too.

- Write a card.
- Donate your used things in good condition.
- Buy them food.
- Visit them in their homes.
- Invite them to your house for a meal
- _____
- _____

Thought: Have you helped someone in need?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me look out for the needy people and give me strength to help them and to encourage them. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

FAVOURITISM

Judging people by how they look or showing them favour above others is favouritism.

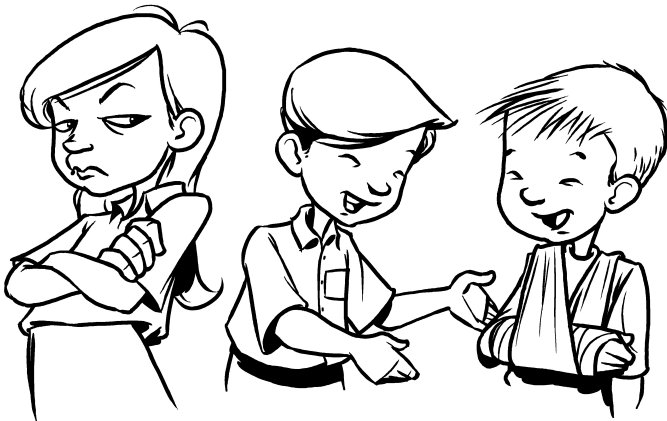
The Bible records for us that the prophet Samuel practised favoritism. When he was to anoint one of Jesse's sons as king of Israel, he saw Eliab and thought to himself that Eliab was the Lord's anointed as he looked like a king. Samuel favoured Eliab above his brothers. But God intervened and advised Samuel not to look at Eliab's height or appearance.

Take a look around you. Do pretty or handsome schoolmates attract many friends? Do you befriend them because they are better-looking?

In churches, sometimes you might see how one group of people wearing fine and expensive clothes flock together and another group wearing ordinary, plain clothes gather to talk. We tend to look at people or befriend them by their outward appearance. Should it be like that?

We judge others by their appearance. We tend to equate riches to the types of clothes people put on. This is a wrong thing to do. How does God see us? He is not interested in what clothes we wear, whether we are following the latest fashions and styles, but He is instead interested in the condition of our _____ (unscramble these letters to form the word – SATHRE).

Thought: Why should you not favour others based on their appearance? Read Matthew 7:1-2.

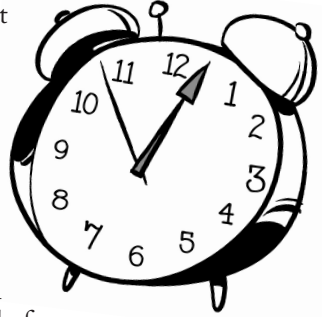


Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not to judge people by their looks. Help me treat people fairly and be their friends regardless of their looks or riches. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

Which is the first and great commandment? It is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is to love our neighbours as ourselves. In the Christian life faith and deeds go together. One without the other is useless, as James said.

Here are some day-to-day things that illustrate why one item is dependent on another. Consider a clock – you can't tell time correctly by cutting off the hour-hand of the clock. Also, you cannot ride a bicycle with one of its wheels removed. So, faith without works is like the clock without the hour-hand or the bicycle with just one wheel. They would be useless. Faith without works is also useless because such faith is dead.



What is the opposite of dead faith?

Answer: _____ faith (unscramble VIIGLN).

God says in 1 John 4:20 that if anyone says he loves God but hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he sees, cannot love God whom he has not seen. He who breaks the first commandment also breaks the second one. When you say you love others but do not love God, you will be trying to love others with your own strength.

It is now the time to seriously examine yourself. Do your classmates know you are a Christian? Do your teachers know you are a Christian? What was the last act of kindness you have shown to your parents? If you have brothers and sisters, do you look out for their interests? Whom did you last help? Has there been anyone who thanked you for your kindness recently? From these questions, you will know if you are living a life pleasing to God.

Thought: What can you do to show Christian love to your classmates?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me for my self-centredness. Please help me love the people around me and show them acts of kindness. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH



Abraham and his wife Sarah looked like what you see in the picture. They had a son at a very old age. How was it possible?

Abraham's faith described in the Bible was really extraordinary. When he was 75 years old and childless, God promised him that He would make of him a great nation. Abraham did not have any children but a nation that would come from him would be like the dust of the earth or the stars in the heaven. What does this mean?

Answer: _____

It was simply unbelievable that a nation could come from Abraham! Does God play tricks?

Abraham and Sarah did have a son. Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah, 90. Look at the picture again and imagine baby Isaac in the wrinkled arms of his parents.

After Isaac was born, God told Abraham to offer Isaac, his only son, as a burnt offering. What a shock it was to Abraham! But instead of complaining or murmuring under his breath or hiding Isaac, he took Isaac and some wood for the fire with him to the mountain the next day. When Abraham was about to kill Isaac, God stopped him. Abraham, who loved his son, was willing to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham trusted God wholly and obeyed Him. His _____ (unscramble IAFHT) and _____ (unscramble KWOSR) were working together.

While every Christian is saved by grace through faith, the faith must show itself in good deeds. Are your actions pleasing to God? There are many helpful things you can do for other the people around you. So put what you believe into practice. Love God and love others.

Thought: Why is it important to show our faith by our deeds?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me put my faith into practice. I know it is not easy, but Heavenly Father, that is why I need to always turn to You for strength. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

WORDS CAN HURT

What are the strong words used by James to describe the tongue?

Answer: _____

The tongue is like fire. Have you seen or been in a fire? Fires are scary, aren't they? They can destroy houses, forests, animals and humans. In an explosion, a fire breaks out. Anyone near the fire could be burnt or killed. Like fire that destroys, the tongue destroys – our words can kill a person's reputation or destroy a person's friendships.

The tongue also 'defileth', or corrupts.

When describing the tongue as a fire, James is talking about the words that come out of the mouth. We hurt others by criticising them without love and tearing them down. We also use foul language and tell lies. We make people angry and sad. The awful thing is, we can never take our words back. We are left sometimes with regret for what we said.

Peter has this exhortation for us (fill in the blanks):

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him
 _____ his _____ from _____,
 and his lips that speak no _____. (1 Peter 3:10)

If you do not guard your words, the psalmist has this to say to you, take heed (fill in the blanks):

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life, but he
 that _____ wide his lips shall have _____.
 (Proverbs 13:3)

Thought: What unkind words have others said to you? And what unkind words have you said to others?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, sometimes I say things that hurt others. Please forgive me. Help me to think before speaking. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

OUT OF THE SAME MOUTH

When you drink from the water cooler in school, do you expect the taste to remain consistent? Or do you expect it to be sweet one day and bitter the next? Surely we'd prefer the taste to be much the same daily. What about the words from our mouth? Do our mouths sometimes sing praises to God and at other times say rude things to people?

Once again James uses some strong words to describe the tongue. What are they? Answer: (see verse 8)

- No one can _____ it;
- Unruly _____;
- _____ poison.

Today we will look at how easily we can shift from praising God to cursing others, and from cursing others to praising God. For instance, just when you are squabbling with your brother over what television programme to watch, the telephone rings. You pick it up and almost instantly you become sweet and nice when talking to your friend who called.

Or you have just sung a hymn at the end of the Sunday school lesson, and your teacher wants everyone to be in line so she can hand out some goodies. However you jump the queue and tell your friends boorishly to get behind you.

Are there other similar incidents you can think of? The apostle Paul has some advice for us. Read Ephesians 4:29 and fill in the blanks:

Let _____ corrupt communication proceed out of your _____, but that which is _____ to the use of _____, that it may minister _____ unto the _____.

Thought: When are you most likely to say hurtful and harsh things?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me speak wholesome words. I know at times I feel like saying rude or unkind things, but please help me to control myself and to submit myself to You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

CURSING AND SWEARING

Cursing is using rude or vulgar words when you are angry. Cursing is also saying evil things about someone who has made you angry. It is vital that the Christian does not curse or swear. It undermines our witness as a follower of Jesus. When other people see us curse, they won't see us as any different from non-Christians. We become a stumbling block to others. This is a bad testimony to the Christian faith and practice. Therefore, be in command of your tongue.

Would you like to hear a story? It tells of how a little girl's actions stopped a group of young men from swearing and cursing. This is how it goes: The little girl was travelling with her mother in a crowded train. She carried her Bible wherever she went.

Not far from where they sat were a group of young soldiers. They were talking loudly. Not just talking, they used swear words. One of them who seemed to be the leader swore the most. The girl noticed that her mother was disturbed. She whispered to her mother that she would give her Bible to them.

Stepping from her seat and inching her way to the man who had been cursing the loudest, she presented him the Bible. She laid the book in his hands. She then looked him in his eyes and with an earnest tone, she spoke, "Please, don't curse anymore!"

The soldiers kept quiet at once. Their loud talking and cursing stopped. For the rest of the journey not another curse was heard. When it was time for the young man who had received the Bible to disembark the train, to the little girl he said, "I thank you for the Bible, dear child. I will read it everyday. I will always keep it."

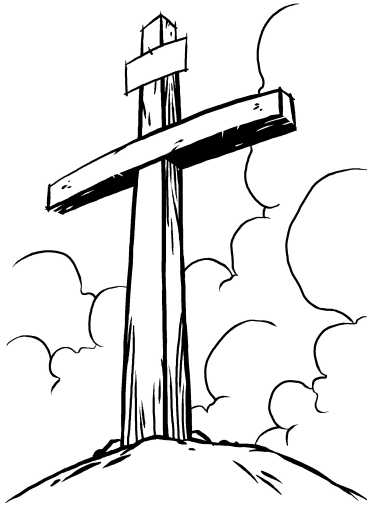
We do hear on the streets, even in schools, people cursing each other. As Christians, we must not curse or swear. We must also not watch TV programmes that contain bad language. What we do must be pleasing in the sight of God. May God help us.

Thought: Is cursing the people in our lives the right thing to do?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to praise You always. Help me to be careful with what I say, especially when I am angry. Instead, give me the strength to control myself for often when I'm angry, I say things that I regret. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

(Story adapted from 'How God Used A Thunderstorm' by J R Beeke & D Kleyn)

PEACE-MAKING (I)



What does the cross mean to you? To some, it means power – Jesus has the power to save. It also means suffering – just as Jesus carried the cross of suffering, we must carry our own cross as Christians and suffer for Christ. The cross means making peace, too.

Jesus is the greatest peace-maker. He left heaven and came to this world to reconcile God and man. Because of His love for us, He died on the cross for our sins.

Are you at peace with God? If not, you are God's enemy. God is holy and will not tolerate sin. How can you break down the wall of hostility that separates you from God? You can't. But Jesus can.

Jesus died on the cross to make peace between sinful man and a holy God. When you believe in Jesus, you become a child of God. The wall of hostility between you and God is broken down. God receives you as His child and He is now your Heavenly Father. You can now enjoy a loving relationship with God because of what the Lord Jesus has done for you on the cross.

Have you tried being a peace-maker? You may have come across situations where people quarrel. Could be your parents, your classmates, or your other siblings. The reason why God allowed you to witness such disagreements may be for you to be a peace-maker. If so, pray, and then say a kind word, or tell them, if they're Christians, to remember to do all things to please God. Often, that makes them realize they may not be pleasing God, and could help in the peace process.

Thought: Dare I be a peace-maker?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to die on the cross to give us everlasting peace with God. At the same time, may I learn to perhaps be a peace-maker myself. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

PEACE-MAKING (II)

What is the opposite of making peace? It is to cause trouble or to take revenge.

Tick the box for for any incident that you think involved a peace-loving person:

- When Su Yin is bullied, she keeps out of the bully's way.
- Chen Ho sticks his tongue out at Mee Lan, Mee Lan sticks her tongue out at him.
- Min Lee calls Lian Hua an unkind name, and Lian Hua calls her one in return.
- Kok Onn sticks his foot out and causes Soon Teck to trip over.
- Li Li gives Lee Fen a card on her birthday even though Lee Fen spreads rumours about her.

There may be some people who always cause trouble. Their hearts harbour bitter envying and strife (verse 14). James says that they possess "wisdom" which is of the devil (verse 15).

But, let's take a look at good wisdom. Good wisdom is about the right way we live our lives. It comes from God and is called heavenly wisdom. According to verse 13, one who has heavenly wisdom shows _____ (unscramble OOGD DCTONUC) and is _____ (unscramble MLHEUB).

Besides being peace-loving, what 7 other things make up heavenly wisdom? Verse 17 has the answer. Circle the 7 things.

GOOD FRUITS DEVILISH IMPARTIAL
EARTHLY EASILY OBEYING SENSUAL
SINCERE FULL OF MERCY EVIL
PURE CONFUSION GENTLE

Thought: Why is it important not to take revenge?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, sometimes I treat others unfairly because I am selfish and proud. Please forgive me. Make me a peace-maker. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD

Friends are people with whom you like to hang around, go out, talk and play. You feel comfortable with your friends and you are happy to spend a lot of time with them.

But what is a friend of the world? A friend of the world is a person who is worldly. He loves the world and follows after the ways of the world. The ways of the world promote self and greed. The ways of the world are also against the Word of God. This is not surprising as Satan is the god of this world.

To be friend of the world is to be God's enemy. You can't be a friend of the world and a friend of God at the same time. Here are some nasty things that we sometimes do. For example, we get angry for no good reason. When listening to God's Word, we get distracted. We don't love our neighbours as ourselves. We know what is right but often do what is wrong. We speak without thinking and often say hurtful things. We also cause trouble at home and in school, and even in church. Our desires and actions are often selfish. Are you guilty of these? Is there a way out? We need a Saviour!

We can never get right with God by our own efforts, because our sin keeps us from doing right in God's sight. The wall of hostility is between us and God. The wonderful news is that Jesus has broken down that wall. Once we believe that only Jesus can cleanse us of our sins, we are placed in God's kingdom. We are saved only because Jesus has opened the door to heaven to all who believe. We no longer have to face the horrors of hell. Jesus is our Saviour!

So if you are a friend of the world, you can stop. You have hope if you turn to Jesus. He can make you a friend of God. He can change your life and then you will in time stop doing all the nasty things that you used to do.

Turn to Jesus now. Live for Jesus and be his follower. Tell him how sorry you are for doing nasty and wrong things. Ask him to take away the punishment that you deserve and make you clean.

Thought: Why is Jesus our Saviour?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me for doing nasty and wrong things. Help me stop doing them. Jesus, please come into my heart and make me Your friend. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

SUBMIT TO GOD (I)

Satan is the enemy of God but God is far more powerful than Satan. We submit to God and we resist Satan.

Let's study two words from today's text. They are "submit" and "resist".

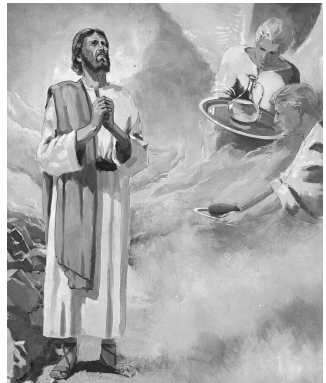
To submit is to do what God wants. How do we know what God wants? The Bible tells us what God wants us to do. To submit is to obey his Word at all times, even if we get into trouble for it or when others tell us not to obey it.

In the book of Acts, the apostles obeyed the Word even though they were told not to. Peter and John were ordered by the authorities not to preach Christ after healing the crippled beggar. Instead, they replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). They were put into prison. An angel of the Lord set them free. They were again arrested. Yet, they again told the authorities this: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

To resist means that we do not do what the devil wants. If the devil prompts you to lie to your teacher, don't do it. If a friend asks you to keep the \$2 note you have found on the ground in the school compound, you bring it to the general office. If you have a chance to peep at your classmate's answer during an examination, don't look.

What about Jesus? When He was tempted in the wilderness by Satan what did he do?

Answer: _____
Be like Jesus in resisting Satan.



Thought: Who should we resist and why?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to learn from Jesus that if we submit to You and continue to trust in Your strength, we'd be able to resist the Devil and his many tricks. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

SUBMIT TO GOD (II)

To submit to God is to obey God. What God tells us to do, we do. What He tells us not to do, we do not do. A Christian must obey God because He is the believer's loving heavenly Father and Master.

At the start, Adam and Eve obeyed God, but under the deception of Satan, they later disobeyed God's order by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their disobedience brought sin, suffering and sorrow into human history. But God has a way out. Jesus obeyed God, came into the world, suffered and died on the cross, and destroyed sin and death. So, you obey God by trusting Jesus as your only Lord and Saviour. You will then be righteous in God's sight, because Jesus took away your sins.

The author of this month's readings, as a child, gave her heart to Jesus. However, she still had to put joss sticks into the urns on the altars daily, following her parents' wishes. She knew in her heart that she should not carry on with this practice after becoming a Christian. With God's guidance, she told her older brother that she would take over his chore of washing the dishes while he would burn the joss sticks. Which was the easier task? The brother readily took over the simpler chore. From then on, she happily washed the dishes. She wanted to obey God and He gave her wisdom to overcome that obstacle.

The above are ways to submit to God. However, you must bear a good witness to your parents, especially so if they are not Christians. By bearing a good witness, you may be able to win them over to the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Christian, have you yelled at parents? Do you ignore your mum when she talks to you, or give one-word replies as you rather not talk to parents? Do you complain when your father reminds you to complete your schoolwork? Have you ever asked God for forgiveness for such poor behaviour?

Ask God for wisdom and cheerfulness to obey what the Bible teaches you.

Thought: Are you doing something in your life that is against God's commandments?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to submit to You and obey Your commandments always. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

NOT AFRAID OF DEATH

We know one day we will die. As a young child, you do not think much about death or dying. Even when death visits the home of a relative, you attend the wake dressed in white and you miss school for a few days.

Don't think that death does not hit children. Buried in a plot at the Chua Chu Kang Christian Cemetery is an infant as young as 53 days old. Death can happen to anyone at any time!

James says our life is like a mist. When the sun rises in the morning, what happens to a mist? It _____ (unscramble SPPAARIDE). Our life is exactly like that. We are here one day and gone the next. Consider the candle flickering in the wind. At any time our life can be blown out.

However, don't worry, God holds the future. We may not know what is going to happen, but God knows. He knows the end from the beginning. He has planned each day for us and has promised to look after us. Our lives and deaths are in God's hands. We can always trust God – He is faithful. Don't worry about the future but submit to God. He will not forsake you.

While death is for sure, there is no need to be afraid of death. It is said that death for the Christian is the beginning. Paul says, "Absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). When a Christian dies, he is present with the Lord. There is no more suffering and sorrow in heaven. Isn't it wonderful? This is God's promise to His children who put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour of their souls.

“Yea, though I walk through the _____ of the
 _____ of death, I will fear no _____:
 for thou art _____ me; thy rod and
 thy staff they _____ me” (Psalm 23:4).

God's presence will be with us all the way to heaven.

Thought: Why shouldn't a Christian be afraid of the future?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You that my future is in Your hands. Help me not to worry about the future and help me to live daily trusting You and committing all things to You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

WARNING TO THE RICH!

Is it wrong to be rich? No. Many Bible characters, such as Abraham and King David were rich. However, it is wrong to be greedy for riches and to rely on one's riches. Then selfishness would result. In cases like that, misery will come upon such people.

What may happen to their possessions? Find the answers from today's text and fill in the blanks:

- All their wealth will _____.
- All their expensive clothes will be eaten up by _____.
- All their gold and silver will _____.
- Their flesh will _____.

In Bible times, a rich young ruler met Jesus and asked how to have eternal life. When Jesus told him to give his money to the poor, he went away with sorrow. He had great possessions and did not want to give them away. To him, his wealth was more important than his salvation. Jesus then explained it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than



for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. What does this mean? It is impossible for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle, and so it is impossible for a rich man to enter heaven, unless he turns away from his greed and selfishness to follow God. Man tends to love money and is likely to long for more money. By doing so, he neglects to obey God's word. It would be difficult for him to truly know God and to enter heaven.

Thought: Never be greedy for money.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me for being selfish sometimes. Help me to have the right priorities and to understand that these earthly things are not important. And if I'm blessed with enough pocket money, help me to be generous (pray for how you will be generous). In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

CHEATING

In Bible times, rich farm owners hired workers to work on the farms. Some were evil and used to cheat their labourers. The owners refused to pay the workers the agreed wages and ordered them to leave the farms. The farm owners had taken advantage of the poor.

The farm owners refused to pay the workers the wages because they loved money more than anything else. They would do almost anything to get more money. As a result, cheating their labourers was the way to get more wealth.

The apostle Timothy has a warning for those people who desire to be rich the wrong way. Fill in the blanks:

But they that _____ be rich fall into _____ and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the _____ of money is the root of all _____: which while some _____ after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

Let's look at some day-to-day incidents.
Are these examples of cheating?

- Taking a friend's things without permission. YES / NO
- Peering at classmate's examination answer. YES / NO
- Not returning the extra change given by the seller. YES / NO
- Bargaining for a lower price when buying something. YES / NO
- Using the calculator in a test when told not to. YES / NO
- Looking at the UNO cards of the person next to you. YES / NO

God is displeased when we cheat. Whether in a game, competition or examination, play fairly and behave in an honest manner.

Thought: Have you cheated before?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I know cheating is wrong. (Pray for forgiveness if you have cheated.) Help me not to cheat anymore, and help me be a good Christian witness. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

DON'T GRUMBLE , BE PATIENT

When we are not patient, we tend to grumble. We all like things done immediately. We are not used to waiting.

Is it good to wait? The Bible says God has a time and purpose for everything. Let's look at one example, in which waiting for the sun to rise saved a man's life. This was how it happened – A man was walking in the street late at night when suddenly, he was thrown to the ground by an earthquake. All the lights had gone out. What should he do? In total darkness, should he get up and slowly grope his way home? Or should he stay where he was until he could see in the morning?

He chose to wait. When the sun rose he was shocked at what he saw. The road just right in front of him was ripped open by the earthquake. If he had decided to go home, he would have fallen to his death. So, PATIENCE saves.

Learn patience from a _____ (unscramble RMERFA, clue: an occupation). He plants his crops and then waits. He trusts that there will be rain and the seeds he has planted will grow. Does he rush to the fields every morning to see if the seeds grow? Answer: Yes/No. Does he start panicking when he sees nothing? Answer: Yes/No. The two answers should be no. He waits for nature to take its course.

When things go wrong, we tend to become anxious and take matters into our own hands. But the Bible teaches us to be patient and to wait on the Lord. We are to cast our cares upon God. Remember that God cares and is in control of all things. Wait patiently for God's timing and He will fulfill His purpose for you.

Sometimes, it is worth the waiting. Wait upon the Lord, echoed Isaiah. Write Isaiah 40:31 down.

Thought: Why do you grumble when you feel impatient?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I often become impatient and grumble. Please forgive me for being impatient. Help me to trust You daily. And to believe that Your timing is the best timing! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

(Story adapted from 'Readings from James' by T Shenton)

ENDURANCE

Christianity is not for weaklings. Christians are not expected to be weaklings. They are continually fighting. They are to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). They are to fight temptations, discouragement, others' accusations them and against God, etc.

Let's look at 3 Bible characters and learn from their Christian fight. The first is a young man who was thrown into a den of hungry lions. The Bible did not describe what exactly happened in the den. Imagine him sitting still and praying to God while the lions encircled him. When the lions were about to pounce, an invisible arm held them back. They tried to open their mouths but their mouths were shut tight. What did this young man fight against? He fought against unbelief and loss of faith in God. His faith stood firm. Who was this prophet? Answer: _____

What about the next prophet? King Ahab tried to kill him. Spurred on by his evil wife Jezebel, the king did his utmost to put him to death. He challenged 400 false prophets to prove who the true God was. He fought against civil powers and religious teachers. He never gave up following God and obeying his Word. Who was he? Answer: _____

Now, let's think about a New Testament character. His fellow countrymen accused him of things he didn't do, scourged him, spat at him, stoned him, almost tore him apart and plotted to kill him. He suffered loneliness and coldness during imprisonment. He was shipwrecked. Several times, he almost died. Against all these, he fought bravely and never gave up his faith and hope in God. Who was this apostle? Answer: _____

What made these heroes of faith do what they did? Their faith in God helped them endure hardships in life. They waited patiently for God to act on their behalf. From their lives, we learn that the Lord is full of compassion and grace. He is not far away and uncaring. He wants to rescue us from our troubles and to bless us. God, our heavenly Father, loves His children!

So Christians are fighters and they must endure to the end. They must be faithful to the end. What did the apostle Paul say in 2 Timothy 4:7? "I have _____ a good fight, I have _____ my course, I have _____ the faith". When we endure, we will surely receive a reward. What is this reward? Answer: _____ (2 Timothy 4:8)

Thought: Endure your sufferings and look to God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to worship You by singing hymns, sincerely and reverently. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

A SINGING CHURCH

Psalms were written during Old Testament times as songs of praises to God. What about hymns? When the gospel was being spread and the church revived, songs of praise were composed. Which is your favorite hymn from your church hymnal?

Answer: _____

And why? _____

Some examples of well loved hymns are ‘Amazing Grace’, ‘Be Thou My Vision’, ‘Because He lives’ and ‘Great Is Thy Faithfulness’. Children also love hymns like ‘Jesus Loves Me’ and ‘I’ll Be A Sunbeam’.

Any good hymn has a theme, and it gives glory to God meaningfully. Consider the hymn ‘Amazing Grace’, the songwriter John Newton was once a slave trader who later realised his own wickedness and cruelty in treating people. He became a Christian and wrote this wonderful hymn, still loved by Christians today.

A healthy and vibrant church is evidenced by its music and song ministry. During church services, do members sing joyfully from their hearts? What about you? During the Junior Worship services, do you sing praises to God? Or do you keep quiet, talk with your friends or let your mind stray?

Sing praises to God to express your love and gratitude to Him for taking care of you and your family. He showers many blessings on you every day. So, when you come to church every Sunday, ask God to help you to sing praises sincerely and think of the lyrics when you sing. It is no good singing without understanding what you sing. During church worship service, don’t be an observer, be a participant.

Singing the right songs is important. The song lyrics must be according to the teachings of the Bible. The apostle Paul says this in his epistle – “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).

Thought: Are you a singing, or sinning Christian?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, (if you have not sung joyfully to the Lord, ask for forgiveness and repent) please help me to sing to You and about You sincerely and gratefully. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

YOU MUST PRAY (I)

To the Christian, praying is like breathing. If we do not breathe, we suffocate and eventually die. If we do not pray, we also suffocate in the spiritual sense. And if someone who calls himself a Christian does not pray at all, he may not be one in the first place. A Christian must pray, and must like to pray!

When we pray, we talk to God. We thank God for the many blessings He has showered on us. We seek God's forgiveness when we confess our sins. We ask God to help us in times of need and sadness. We ask God to direct our ways when we are not sure of what to do. By praying to God, it shows that we cannot do anything without Him.

Did you know how a Christian's life is tied to God? Fill in the blanks to see how Jesus describes it: "I am the _____, ye are the _____; He that _____ in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much _____; for _____ me ye can do _____" (John 15:5).

There is a story of a queen of Holland who believed that the strongest army to defend the country would be a praying one. Once, she paid a visit to an army unit. The soldiers were lined up in front of her. She asked, "Which of you pray?" All eyes were on the queen; no one had expected this question. They could fight, gamble and swear, but pray? There was a long silence until 8 young soldiers raised their hands. The queen spoke again, "Such soldiers can defend our country. They are worth more than the others."

Learn from this, children – the queen had asked, "Which of you pray?" She did not ask, "Who can fight well?" or "Who is brave?"

This story reminds us that indeed, as Christian soldiers, we must pray.

Thought: How often do you pray?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the privilege of prayer and for hearing my prayers. Teach me to be a praying Christian. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



YOU MUST PRAY (II)

You must pray as often as you can. James teaches this. Whether in good times or in bad times, we must pray. When a Christian suffers, he prays for strength. When he is happy, he praises God. When he is sick, the church prays for him. When Christians squabble, they forgive and pray one for another and reconcile.

Here is an interesting story of a servant who had a good habit of praying. She worked as a servant in a church minister's house. Often the minister had other ministers coming in his house to discuss tough questions about the Bible. This time, they came together to discuss how the command to pray unceasingly could be obeyed. They shared ideas and then arranged to further discuss this topic during the next meeting.

At the time of the discussion, the servant was serving in the room. She asked why more meetings were necessary to find the meaning of the Bible text. She said, "It's one of the easiest verses in the Bible." Puzzled, her master asked, "Mary, what do you know about it? Can you pray all the time?" She said, "Yes." Her master was even more puzzled, saying that she had many things to do in the house. He wondered how she could pray all the time. In fact, she replied that the more work she did, the more she prayed.

She explained that in the morning upon waking up, she would pray, "Lord, open the eyes of my understanding." While she was doing the washing, she would pray, "Lord, please wash my sins away." As she began work, she would pray, "Lord, give me strength for all the work of the day." While she kindled the fire at the fireplace, she would pray, "Lord, rekindle me." While preparing the meals, she would pray, "Lord, feed me with the Bread of Life and the milk of the Word." As she swept the house, she would pray, "Lord, sweep away all the impurities from my heart." As she took care of the master's children, she would pray, "Lord, give me the faith of a little child."

She went on and on. Finally, the minister concluded, "Dear brothers, let us thank the Lord for this lesson."

Thought: Can you think of how you can pray in the same way as the maid?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to pray unceasingly. I know it is easy to forget to pray, especially when school starts so early and it's always a rush. But Heavenly Father, please teach me to learn from the praying maid. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

(Story adapted from 'How God Used A Thunderstorm' by J R Beeke & D Kleyn)

PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER

When someone provokes us, we often retaliate. When someone tells a lie about us, we often spread rumours about that person in return. We dislike people who do nasty things to us. Have you prayed for them? Praying for your enemies is not easy, but Jesus has told us to pray for them and others who are against you.

More than 200 years ago, slavery was allowed in America. Slaves worked on farms. Most of them were often treated badly. There was a young Christian slave who worked very hard and did his work cheerfully. Over time, his master had no money and sold him to another master who did not believe in God. When it was time to leave, the former master told the new master that the slave was a very good worker but he always prayed. The new boss boasted, "I'll soon whip that out of him."

The slave proved faithful to the new master but when he was found praying, he was sternly warned, "You must not pray around here. Never let me find you with this nonsense!"

Did the slave stop praying? No, just like _____ (unscramble IEADNL) in the Bible, he talked to God. This time, the master did not spare the flogging. Tying him to a post, he lashed many times across the slave's back with all his strength until he was exhausted. The slave was bleeding badly and was untied. Even though he was in terrible pain, he went away singing. He carried on working all that day even though blood oozed from his back where the lashes had torn his skin.

God was using this for good. That night, the master saw his own cruelty and wickedness. He could not sleep. He felt that he was going to die. He woke his wife up and asked her if anyone would pray for him. "Nobody, except the slave whom you punished this morning," answered his wife. He was not sure if the slave would. What do you think?

The faithful slave came into the master's house. He exclaimed, "I've been praying for you all night."

Thought: Do you pray for your enemies?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to pray for the needs of fellow believers as well as the unsaved so that they will come into Thy saving grace. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

(Story adapted from 'How God Used A Thunderstorm' by J R Beeke & D Kleyn)

TRUTH CONVERTS THE SINNER

Do you have any loved ones or friends who are not Christians or are Christians who have strayed away from the faith? Are you concerned for them?

Why do people not believe in Jesus Christ? James says that they do not know the truth and deviate from the correct way. They turn from God and believe in the wrong things. Paul says in 2 Cor 4:4 that “In whom the _____ of this _____ hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,” This person is Satan himself. Non-Christians are bound by Satan. Man-made ways cannot rescue them. Only Jesus can save them. God’s truth can free them.

Here is a story about Mr Smith. When he was young, he was taught the Bible by his mother. His mother had filled his memory with Bible verses. As an adult, he gave up his Christian faith and married an unbeliever. They later had a son named Tommy. Tommy had a nanny who told him a little about God.

Once, Tommy was scolded by the nanny and his parents for being naughty. While lying on the bed, he suddenly burst into tears. His father went to him quickly and asked what the matter was. The boy said that he did not want his sins in a book. The nanny said God wrote down all his sins in a big book, the boy added. Was the nanny correct? Answer: _____.

Suddenly, Mr Smith remembered the truths of the Bible that his mother had so faithfully taught him when he was a child. Comforting his son, the father said God could wipe away all their sins for Christ’s sake. Both father and son knelt down to pray. Mr Smith had never really prayed in his life before that.

After praying, happy Tommy shot another question, “Daddy, with what did God wipe away our sins? A sponge?” The Holy Spirit was applying the truth into Mr Smith’s heart and he replied, “Tommy, not with a sponge, but only with the blood of Jesus Christ who died for sinners”. Mr Smith went on to explain how God forgives our sins. Finally, Tommy was satisfied and fell asleep. Mr Smith was himself led to the truth he had long rejected.

Thought: How does God wipe away sins?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the truths recorded in the Bible and for saving us by the blood of Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.
(Story adapted from ‘How God Used a Thunderstorm’ by J R Beeke & D Kleytn)

ENCOURAGE A MISSIONARY / TEACHER?

Jamie chewed the end of her pencil as she tried to think of something to write next. “What are you doing?” asked her brother, Joshua. “Is that your homework?”

Jamie shook her head. “No, I’m writing a letter to Brother Lee,” she said. “You know... he’s the missionary who came and spoke at our church last month.”

“He probably doesn’t even remember you,” said Joshua.

“I know,” replied Jamie, “but I thought he might like to get a letter since he’s not married and works all alone in that village.”

Some days later, a missionary sighed as he sat down at a table. It was sweltering hot, and he was tired and discouraged. The work progressed so slowly, and sometimes he felt like he might just as well give up his missionary work and go back home. He looked at the mail in his hand. Letters were scarce, and he especially wondered about the long envelope addressed in a child’s unfamiliar handwriting.

He smoothed out the letter and began to read. “Dear Brother Lee,” it said, “I just wanted to tell you we’re all thinking of you and praying for you. I liked it when you came to our church last month. I hope you’re having a good time there.” The missionary smiled as he continued reading. “I remember the things you told us about having faith in God. I will try to have more faith. Because of you, I think I would like to be a missionary some day. Thank you for your help. Love, Jamie.”

Brother Lee sat for a few moments, and then he breathed a prayer of thanks for the encouragement of that simple letter. Perhaps this is God’s way of letting me know He intends to use my ministry here, he thought. Maybe I need more faith, too. He smiled as he looked out the window at the village children playing in the sand. Then he took out a piece of paper. He had to write a thank-you letter to a very important person.

Thought: Have you thought about ways you could encourage the missionaries you know? Or the teachers in your Sunday School class? Your pastor or other church leader?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to encourage someone this week. Could be my teacher or a missionary I know, just help me to pluck up my courage to write a short letter to that special someone! In Jesus’ precious name I pray – Amen.

NOW IS THE APPOINTED TIME!

Charlie pulled a brightly coloured paper from his pocket. "What's this?", he thought. "Oh! It's my coupon for a free candy bar. I forgot all about it!" He had cut the coupon out of the newspaper several days earlier. Eager now to get the candy, he hurried to the store.

After carefully considering what he should get, Charlie picked up a candy bar, and handed the coupon to the sales clerk. The clerk smiled at Charlie and looked at the coupon. "Oh, I'm sorry, but this coupon isn't good any more," she said. "It's expired, past the date printed on it." She showed him the expiration date. Disappointed, he put the candy back.

Going home, Charlie stopped at his grandmother's house and told her about the expired coupon. "Too bad you didn't cash it in before," sympathised Grandma, "but why don't you sit down and have some ice-cream with me?" As she handed him a scoop, she said, "Your experience reminds me of a story I read called 'Now Is the Time.' It's about a young man who often heard an invitation to be saved, but he always put off making a decision. At first he said he was too young, then he was too busy... and then he died in an accident. As far as anyone knows, he never did receive Christ as his Saviour."

"That's sad," said Charlie. "It certainly is," Grandma agreed solemnly. She looked intently at her grandson. "What about you, Charlie?" she asked. "You waited too long to cash in the coupon for a free candy bar. What have you done about cashing in on God's offer for salvation?"

"Well, I... I..." Charlie suddenly realised that, just like the young man in the story, he had been putting off the decision to accept Jesus, and he didn't know when God's offer might "expire" for him. That afternoon, as he and Grandma knelt beside the sofa, he asked Jesus to be his Saviour.

Thought: Have you been putting off your decision for Christ? There's no guarantee you'll be able to receive Him later. Accept God's gift of salvation before the opportunity "expires" --before it's too late. Receive Jesus today.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me so much time to consider Your gift of salvation. I know I have put off my decision to accept Jesus for too long and today, I want to humble myself before You and acknowledge that without Jesus, I will lost for eternity. Heavenly Father, I now accept Jesus to come into my life and accept Him as my personal Lord and Saviour. Please forgive me for all my sins and I ask that I will try to live a life for Jesus from today. This I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

KNOW YOUR BIBLE WELL!

“Well, Alex, what’s on your schedule for tomorrow?” asked Dad as he sat down in an easy chair.

Alex switched off the TV and picked up the paper. “Oh,” he said, “tomorrow afternoon we have a birthday party.” He quickly read through the comic page while his dad took off his shoes. Then, handing Dad the newspaper, Alex added, “We’re having a Bible quiz at the beginning of the party. Maybe I’ll just go late.”

“Oh? Why is that?” asked Dad. “You used to enjoy quizzes. Why don’t you like them now?” Alex leafed through a sports magazine. “Because Joel always wins, that’s why. They’re no fun anymore.”

“I see,” murmured Dad. “Maybe you should do a little studying. Do you know what chapters the quiz will cover?”

“Yes,” replied Alex, “but it doesn’t matter what chapters they are. Joel will know everything in them. That guy really knows his Bible! The other day in science class, Joel and our teacher got into quite a discussion about creation, and Joel did really good. He quoted verses from the Bible and talked about why he believed it was true. He really knew what he was talking about.”

“Good for Joel!” cheered Dad. “Yeah,” agreed Alex reluctantly. “I’ve heard him do the same kind of thing in history class. I wish I knew the Bible like that.” He sighed and began reading an article in his magazine.

Dad watched Alex for a moment, then he asked, “How do you suppose Joel learned so much?” Alex shrugged. “Well,” said Dad, “I don’t think it came from reading magazines or newspapers or watching TV. If you want to know the Bible, you have to study the Bible.”

Alex looked at Dad thoughtfully. He looked down at his magazine. Then, putting it down, he got to his feet. “Excuse me, please.” He grinned at his dad. “I have to go study a couple of chapters in my Bible. Joel’s going to have some competition tomorrow!”

Thought: Do you wish you had as much Bible knowledge as your pastor, your Sunday school teacher, or even a friend? It’s available to you, too, but it won’t come automatically. Listen carefully when God’s Word is taught in church and Sunday school. Study it by yourself, too. That’s the way to learn.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be diligent in the study of the Bible and grant me an understanding of what it says, so that I will be able to live a life pleasing before You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

Jon propped his chin in his hand as he watched his grandmother mix shortening and sugar. “I’m making your favorite cake--chocolate,” she said. As Jon smiled faintly, Grandma added, “Why so quiet? Is something wrong, Jon?” Jon grunted. “Everything’s wrong!” he complained. “I failed my Chinese test, badly. Mom says I cannot have the remote-control plane I wanted. And the doctor says I have to wear a brace on my leg for two years. How can I ever make new friends wearing a metal monster? If God loved me, He wouldn’t let all this happen to me.” Jon slammed his fist on the table. “It’s not fair!”

Grandma murmured sympathetically, then handed Jon a spoonful of cocoa. “Here, have a taste,” she said. “Yuk!” Jon drew back. “Then how about this?” Grandma dipped a spoon into the oil and sugar mixture. Jon frowned. “No way am I going to taste that!” he declared. Grandma raised her eyebrows. “Then how about some flour? Or maybe you’d like a little baking soda,... or this egg?” Jon grinned. “Aw-w-w, Grandma,” he said, “you’re teasing me.”

Grandma smiled. “I am teasing you a little,” she agreed, “but I wanted you to understand something. Cocoa and raw eggs aren’t good alone, but when I mix all the ingredients together...”

“Yum-m-m, yum-m-m, good!” exclaimed Jon.

“It’s like that in life, too,” said Grandma as she sifted flour into the bowl. “I know you’ve learned the Bible verse that says all things work together for good in the life of a Christian. It doesn’t say all things are good. But when God gets through mixing a Christian’s experiences together – the bitter, the sweet, the happy, the sad – life comes out good. Moving and wearing a brace are bitter experiences for you, but trust God, Jon. He’ll add some ‘sugar’ and some ‘flavoring’, and in the end it will be good.” Grandma laughed. “Even better than my cake.”

Thought: Have you had to “swallow” bitter experiences lately? Be patient. All the ingredients of your life are not in yet, but God is making something special out of you.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for today’s lesson that everything will work together for good for those who love God. Thank you for the assurance that as your child, all the difficult and bitter life experiences are permitted by You for the strengthening of my faith. This I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHARITY ENVIETH NOT

Judy put her hands over her ears and intently read the bulletin on her lap. She didn't want to hear her friend, Laura, play the piano solo. After church everyone would talk about how Laura had mastered the piano, and Judy didn't want to hear that, either. She was envious. That was all there was to it! She wished she could play in church.

That week, the annual all-school track meet was held at Judy's school. All the classes were competing in running events, and Judy had been chosen to run the cross-country race. She had always been the fastest runner in her class, and she waited confidently on the sidelines.

"You running the last event?" Hearing the question, Judy turned to see Laura standing next to her. "Probably," muttered Judy. "I wish I could run as fast as you do," said Laura. She sighed. "I probably wouldn't even beat a turtle."

Judy looked at Laura in surprise. After a moment, she laughed. "That's funny," she said. "I always wish I could play the piano as well as you do, and at the same time you wish you could run as fast as me." Laura grinned. "I guess we're both pretty silly."

"I even tried not to listen to you play last Sunday," confessed Judy, "but I heard you anyway. You did a great job."

"Thanks," said Laura, just as Judy's teacher came to get her for the next race. "Hope you win your race."

When Judy got home that afternoon, she told her mother about her conversation with Laura. Mother smiled. "Our job is to use the abilities God has given us to serve Him," she said. "We shouldn't waste our time envying others' abilities. The Bible teaches us that charity envieth not. Charity means love shown by action. This means if we love someone, we must not be envious of them and their abilities."

Thought: Have you ever wished you could write, play an instrument, or draw as well as someone else could? Have you even disliked someone because of his or her abilities? Today's Scripture gives an example of terrible sin that resulted from envy. Remember, God made each person unique and gave each one different abilities. Don't be envious of someone else's talent or the attention they may be getting. Instead, be happy with the talent God gave you, and remember to serve Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for today's lesson. Sometimes I do get envious of others. Help me to remember that Christian love does not involve envying others. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD

“Let’s stop for some ice cream,” suggested Kathy as she and her friend Jenny walked home from school. Jenny shook her head as she looked at her chubby friend. “I thought you said your doctor wanted you to cut out sweet stuff,” she said.

“Well, I’m hungry,” said Kathy as she waved Jenny on and turned to go into the ice cream store. But she felt a bit guilty as she ordered a banana split. The doctor had said she should lose weight, and Kathy knew she had the tendency to overeat.

When Kathy arrived home, her mother had good news. “I’ve decided to quit smoking, Kathy,” she said. “I went to a Bible study at church this morning, and the group discussed how our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Kathy was delighted. Her mother had been a Christian only a short time, and Kathy had been praying that she would give up smoking before it harmed her permanently. “Great, Mom,” cheered Kathy. “I’ll help you all I can.”

“Good” Mother smiled. “Will you go for a walk with me every day?” Inwardly, Kathy groaned. It sounded like such a lot of effort! “One of my excuses for smoking has always been that it kept me from gaining weight,” Mother continued, “so I’m going to eat a well-balanced diet and get lots of exercise.” She paused a moment before adding, “After all, having a healthy body not only involves getting rid of the habit of smoking, but also not putting on excess weight, I should think.”

Kathy sighed. “All right. I can take a hint. I’ll walk with you and try to improve my diet, too. But don’t expect any miracles,” she warned.

“We’ll do our best,” said Mother.

Thought: Do you take good care of your body? Do you eat properly? Get enough rest? Exercise? Maintaining a healthy body means staying away from things that harm your body (such as cigarettes, alcohol, too much food, etc.). Ask the Lord to help you take good care of your body which is the Temple of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am so privileged that as a believer, the Holy Spirit dwells in me and I am the temple of God. Help me to take care of this body and especially not to sin with my body. This I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

GOD WILL FORGIVE

Christopher buried his face deep into his pillow and cried. He did not hear someone slip quietly into his room, but a gentle touch caused him to look up from his bed. Mom was looking down. “Why, Christopher?” she asked as she sat down beside him. “Is there some problem I can help you with?”

Christopher felt a warm blush colour his face. He didn’t really want to share with his mother. “Something happened at school,” he stammered finally. “I... lied to Aaron, and now he won’t talk to me. He knows I lied.” “Why did you do that?” Mom asked gently. “I... I don’t know,” mumbled Christopher. He sniffed. “I told him I was sorry, but I don’t think he believes me. I don’t blame him.”

“Are you really sorry?” asked Mom. Christopher nodded. “Then give your friend time to learn to trust you again,” advised Mom. “I don’t think he’ll ever believe me again,” said Christopher sadly.

“Christopher, do you remember when your Dad and I used to give you piggyback rides?” asked Mom. Christopher nodded, wondering why Mom had brought that up. “You thought it was so much fun until you slipped off one day and hit your head on a chair,” said Mom. “After that it took you a while to trust us enough to try it again.”

“But I finally did!” Christopher said eagerly. He thought he knew what Mom was getting at.

“Yes, and I’m sure Aaron will trust you again, too,” said Mom. She patted Christopher. “It takes time for people to trust one another again,” she said, “but let me tell you something wonderful. When you’re truly sorry for the wrong you’ve done and confess it to God, He forgives you right away. There may still be sad consequences for what you’ve done—like a friend who won’t speak to you for a while. But you need to believe God when He says He forgives you. He wants you to be a good friend to Aaron again. Do you think you can do that?” Christopher nodded. “I’ll be a great friend!” he promised.

Thought: Have you ever done anything that made you feel you might never be forgiven? If your heart is right, God knows you are really sorry. He will forgive you right away and help you to make things right with others, too. Trust Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the assurance that You will forgive me of my sins when I repent and confess my sins before You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

BE CONTENTED!

Meng Leng and Matt sat together with their mother and studied a new catalogue. Meng Leng pointed to a picture. “Mom,” she whined, “I want an outfit like this one. All my friends would just love it!”

“And I want one of these talking robots,” said Matt, turning several pages. “See? It’s voice-activated and everything! Couldn’t you get one for me? It’s not all that expensive!”

Just then, they heard a noise coming from the window. “Meowr-r-r!” whined Fluffy, their cat. “Look at him!” Meng Leng laughed. “He’s watching those birds out in the front yard again.”

“That dumb cat,” said Matt. “By this time he ought to know that he can’t get them through the window.”

Mother looked at Fluffy. The cat’s tail was twitching in frustration as he stared intently at the birds he couldn’t reach. “Fluffy is silly, isn’t he,” she agreed. “Almost as silly as two children I know.”

“Us?” asked Matt. “What do you mean?”

“Fluffy is making himself miserable by longing for something he can’t have,” explained Mother. “You and Meng Leng have the same problem. You both know we’re not going to be buying anything new right now, yet you persist in thinking about the things you can’t have instead of enjoying all the things God has allowed you to have. I’d say you were at least as silly as Fluffy.”

The children were silent for a moment. Then Matt put the catalog down. “Sorry, Mom,” he said. “Come on, Meng Leng. Let’s go play that new game we got for Christmas.”

Thought: Are there things you would like, but you know you can’t have them right now? Don’t allow your mind to dwell on those things. Instead, enjoy and be content with what God gives you. Be a grateful child for the things you already have.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your many blessings. Help me to be content with what I have, and to be grateful to You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

ACCEPT AND HELP ONE ANOTHER!

Kai Leng winced when her friends made cutting remarks about Michelle, another classmate. Michelle's clothes were often dirty and mismatched. Her skin and hair didn't look clean, either. Many of the girls at school teased her, but Kai Leng had never joined in. She was a Christian and she knew God wouldn't be pleased with that.

After school, Kai Leng told her mother about Michelle. "I've prayed about it—I've asked God to make the teasing stop, but it doesn't seem to do any good," said Kai Leng. "I feel so sorry for Michelle."

"Well, maybe you need to put 'legs' on your prayers," suggested Mother. "Are you willing to be her friend?" Kai Leng thought about it and then nodded slowly. She would do it.

Kai Leng began by saying a few friendly words to Michelle whenever they met in the hall. Next, she invited Michelle to sit with her at lunch time. A few weeks later, Kai Leng asked her friends, including Michelle, to have a gathering at her house.

Kai Leng was glad to see that Michelle was wearing a clean shirt when she arrived at her home. During the evening the girls talked about hair styles, choosing suitable clothes, cleanliness, and other good grooming habits. Michelle listened intently. After a while, she asked, "Will you help me fix my hair so it looks better?" Soon the girls were all giggling together as they tried fixing Michelle's hair different ways.

After that evening, Michelle's appearance slowly improved. She was clean and neat, and as the others teased her less, she lost some of her shyness. She also went to Sunday school with Kai Leng.

Kai Leng was delighted. God had answered her prayer—using Kai Leng herself to bring about the changes. She was glad she had pleased the Lord and brought glory to Him by being kind to Michelle.

Thought: Do you refuse to join in teasing others? That's good, but sometimes there's even more you can do. Are you willing to help someone who has a problem? Start out with just a friendly word or two. As time goes by, you may have a chance to do other things. Be ready to help in any way God shows you.

Prayer: Although it is easy to just follow the majority and tease someone different, Heavenly Father, help me to have the strength to say "No!" Help me to dare to stand up and be different. As Jesus has accepted me, help me to accept others who may be different from me. And to help them should such opportunities arise. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

OBEY THEM THAT HAVE RULE OVER YOU!

Rain splashed hard against the windshield. Gina watched the windshield wipers working hard. Soon the car slowed to a stop. Dad eased his window down just enough to talk with a man standing in the road, waving a flashlight. “The bridge ahead is washed out,” shouted the man above the roar of the rain. “You’ll need to take a different route.” He showed Dad where he could turn around.

Dad thanked the man and closed the window. “Well,” he said with a sigh, “we won’t be home quite as soon as we hoped, but it shouldn’t take too much longer.” He carefully turned the car around, and headed in the other direction. “Dad,” Gina said the next morning at breakfast, “I just heard on the news that some people were hurt last night during the storm. They didn’t know the bridge was washed out and drove right off a big drop-off into the river.” Dad placed a box of cereal on the table. “I heard the news, too,” he said. “I’m sure glad that man was there to warn us of danger ahead.” He smiled. “You know,” she added, “God often warns us when danger is ahead, too, and tells us to turn around.”

“What do you mean?” Gina asked curiously. “Well, we often face choices in life—who to be close friends with, whether or not to cheat on a test in school, whether or not to tell a lie—things like that. When we’re tempted to make the wrong choice, God always warns us to turn around. Sometimes He shows us something in the Bible to warn us of danger. Sometimes He uses parents or other Christians. If we obey Him, we’ll be kept safe. If we ignore his warning, we’ll end up hurt or in trouble.”

Gina sat at the table and looked out the kitchen window. Finally she said, “So instead of getting mad that we can’t do something the way we want to, we should be glad when we’re warned about it, right?” “Right!” agreed Dad. “That’s exactly right!”

Thought: Do you pay attention when parents warn you against doing something wrong? Do you listen to warnings given by your pastor, teachers, or other Christian friends? Sometimes they may tell you things you don’t want to hear, but God has given them to you to help and protect you. He also uses His Word, the Bible, to instruct you and show you what things please Him. Read and obey what He says.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the reminder today that I must obey people whom You have placed over me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

GOD, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

“I hope you don’t get upset with me, Dad,” said Teck Leong, “but... well, I really like my science teacher, and he believes what Darwin says about evolution. Sometimes it sounds pretty logical.”

Dad smiled. “I’m not at all upset with you, son,” he said. “I gave that a lot of thought when I was young, too.” As he talked, he walked over to the bookshelves and pulled out a book. “Most kids your age don’t get to see this book,” he said as he held it out to Teck Leong. “It’s about evolution, and it’s pretty hard to understand. But, I’d like you to look through it and see how many times you can find such words as ‘let us assume,’ ‘perhaps,’ or ‘probably’—words indicating uncertainty. I’ll come back in about ten minutes to see what you’ve found.”

Teck Leong opened the book as he sat down in a nearby chair. Soon he was busily reading. He looked up as his dad walked into the room some time later. “Nine times so far, Dad,” Teck Leong said, even before his dad could ask a question. “Nine times in ten minutes.”

Dad took the book. “Imagine how often you’d find such words if you read this from cover to cover,” he said. “To ‘assume’ means to think or suppose that something is true. Teck Leong, wouldn’t you rather know with certainty?” Dad handed him another book. “Here’s the world’s best textbook, the Bible! It tells how the world was created and how we can know our Creator. We can know where we came from and where we’re going. Doesn’t that sound a lot better?”

Thought: Do you know the God who created you? You can learn about Him through His book, the Bible. It proves itself true through fulfilled prophecy and changed lives. It has stood the test of time. It tells how you can have a personal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Help me Heavenly Father to know that out of nothing, You created heaven and earth. It has been clearly and faithfully recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, and I thank You for it. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

CONTROL YOUR TONGUE

“Oh, how I love Jesus,” sang Raymond. “Oh, how I love... Stop it! Leave him alone. He’s my pet, not yours!” Raymond stopped singing to yell at his little sister. She was wriggling her fingers around in the chameleon’s home. Raymond reached over to pull Tara’s chubby hand from the bowl. “Don’t ever play with my pet again!” Then... CRASH! The bowl plunged to the floor. “Now look what you’ve done!” yelled Raymond hatefully. “Tara! Why do I have to have such a stupid sister?” Dad, who saw and heard what happened, spoke sternly to Raymond, but Tara ran toward her bedroom, sobbing.

That afternoon, Raymond’s friend Josef came to play. Raymond proudly showed Josef his new chameleon. “He eats bugs,” said Raymond, dropping a few into the bowl.

Josef watched. “Hey!” he said after a few minutes. “Where did those bugs go? One minute I saw them, and the next... they’re gone!” “He’s probably eaten them,” said Raymond.

“Really? I didn’t see him,” Josef replied. “I was watching, too.” “Dad says a chameleon’s tongue is as fast as lightning,” explained Raymond. “Photographers use slow motion cameras to watch their eating habits.”

Just then Dad entered the room. “That’s right,” he said. “A chameleon’s tongue is longer than its body, shaped like a tube, and is sticky on the end. God made their tongues like weapons so they could easily lash out and capture their prey.” “Tara is still upset about the way you yelled at her this morning.” He pointed to the pet. “Your tongue attacked your sister like your chameleon’s tongue attacks his lunch. His tongue sticks to the bugs, and I’m afraid your hateful words have stuck to Tara like glue. One minute you were singing about how you love Jesus and the next you were spitting out hateful words. How do you think Jesus feels about that? If you really love Him, don’t you think it should show in your speech?” Raymond lowered his eyes. “I... I’m sorry,” he said. “I’ll... I’ll go apologise.”

Thought: Do you say hurtful things to others? Do you call your brother, sister, or friends names? What we say does hurt others—sometimes for a long time. Be careful to always speak kindly to others. Be careful to say things God is pleased to hear.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to control my tongue. Help me to remember that my tongue can be like fire. It can hurt others around me if I use it in the wrong way. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

PRAY AND TRUST IN GOD

When Jared slammed his bedroom door so hard that the walls shook, Mother knew something was wrong. She found him sitting on the edge of his bed crying. “What’s the trouble, son?” she asked gently as she sat down beside him.

Jared sniffed. “Well... I had a rotten day,” he told her. “I got a ‘D’ on my English test—the one I spent an hour studying for. And I did not get selected for the school basketball team. Not even as a reserve!

“Well, honey, I’m sorry you’ve had a tough time,” said Mother putting her hand on his shoulder. “Tell you what... I’ll help you study for your next test. English was my favourite subject, so we’ll see if we can bring that grade up. As for your basketball, you practise hard and try your best again the next time.”

As Mother sat there, Jared told her about other problems he was having at school, especially in gym class. “I’m just not good at that stuff,” he said. Mother encouraged him to do his best, and he felt better after talking with her.

Before climbing into bed, Jared began to say the little rhyme prayer he had learned when he was small, but it seemed so empty—he was too big for that. But what should I say instead? he wondered. As he thought over the events of the day, he remembered his mother’s concern for him. She really loved him and was interested in what went on, and she had reminded him that God cared for him, too. *I guess I can talk to God just like I talk to Mom!* Thought Jared.

Before he knew it, Jared was talking to God—telling Him about the day. He told God about his bad grade, the basketball, and the guys in gym. He asked God to help him do better in basketball and with his schoolwork. He thanked God for parents who loved and cared for him, and he thanked God for His care, too. After Jared finished praying, he felt much better. He decided to talk to God more often!

Thought: Are there times when you’re not sure what to pray about? Do you ever feel as though praying won’t help anything? Just remember that God cares for you, and you can talk to Him as you would to your parents or to your closest friend. God has the power to help you in all areas of your life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to pray and to trust in You always. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

HOW PRECIOUS IS THY WORD!

“Oh, Mom, what smells so good?” asked Christy as she put her school books on the kitchen table.

Mother smiled. “You’re right, Christy. A friend at work gave me a bottle of perfume for my birthday. It’s called Lilac Love. Her husband works at the cosmetic company where it’s made, so she gets perfume at a discount.”

Christy picked up the bottle. “Can I try some?”

“Sure,” agreed Mother.

Every now and then during the next few weeks, Christy would smell lilacs and know her mother had been using the new perfume. It really did have a pleasing fragrance.

One day Christy and her mother were at a department store, looking for a new dress for Christy. “Mom, look.” Christy pulled on her mother’s sleeve as they were passing the perfume counter. “There’s a bottle of Lilac Love.”

“Sure enough!” Mother stopped to look at the display. “Look at this!” Christy exclaimed. “It’s expensive! I bet you didn’t know it cost this much.”

“Wow, I certainly didn’t!” exclaimed Mother in dismay. “Here I’ve been using it just about every day, and it’s almost gone! If I had known how expensive it was, I would have saved it for special occasions.”

Christy smiled. “It’s just like my Sunday school teacher said about the Bible,” she said. “Most people have a Bible, but they don’t understand how valuable it is.”

“You’re so right, Christy,” agreed Mother. “The Bible is even more valuable than a bottle of expensive perfume! But the wonderful thing about the Bible is that even though we can and should use it every day, we’ll never run out of its treasure!”

Thought: Do you realise how valuable the Bible is? Do you realize that it explains how you can have eternal life? Do you know that it gives you guidelines for living your life? Some people have a Bible just because they think it’s a good book. They don’t know it’s the inspired Word of God. Thank the Lord for giving you the Bible. Study it and find the hidden treasures inside.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You so much for Thy word. May I learn more of it bit by bit that I may be able to appreciate how wonderful and true the Bible is. And may I indeed follow the formula for the RPG – Read, Pray and Grow! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

Chris was very nervous. It was his very first day at the new school, and he didn't know anyone! "Lord, help me make a friend!" he prayed silently as he walked down the unfamiliar hallway to his class.

Some of the boys and girls in Chris' class smiled at him, but hardly anyone talked to him. By recess time, he was very discouraged. The teacher showed him where to pay for his food and pointed out the section of tables reserved for students his age. Chris sat down and looked around at the other boys and girls. They all seemed to know one another. Laughter and conversation went on all around him.

Then Chris noticed something. One boy was praying! Right there in the cafeteria, he had bowed his head and closed his eyes and was praying. He must be a Christian, thought Chris. Getting up, he took his tray and went to sit next to the other boy. "Hi. I'm Chris," he said. "I... ah... I'm new here, but I thought maybe... ah... were you praying just now?"

The boy nodded. "Yes, I was," he said. He looked at Chris, then added hesitantly, "I was giving thanks for my food. I'm a Christian."

"So am I!" exclaimed Chris. "We just moved to town, and I don't really know any kids yet. I... I've been praying that the Lord would help me meet a new friend."

"Wow! That's great!" The boy grinned at Chris. "My name is Jason, and there are some other Christian kids around, too. You'll like it here."

Silently, Chris prayed, "Thank You, Lord. Thank You for helping me meet Jason."

Thought: Are you thankful to God for the many blessings that He has bestowed upon you? If you are, you should acknowledge God by giving thanks to Him. There are many things you ought to thank God for. You can thank God for His protection and provision of all your needs. You can especially thank God for saving you and giving you a place in heaven.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for saving me and giving me a hope and a future. Help me remember to give thanks to You for the many blessings that you have brought into my life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

THE LORD SHALL PROTECT YOU AGAINST TEMPTATIONS!

Courtney hurried to tie her sneakers. It was a Saturday morning, and she was going to go with Dad on his morning walk.

Dad smiled as Courtney skipped along beside him. "I enjoy having you along when I go for a walk," said Dad. "Why don't you come with me more often?"

"I think I will," agreed Courtney. "Maybe not every Saturday." She grinned. "I have to sleep in once in a while, you know. But I do like to come with you too. I like to look at all the flowers blooming in the yards and..." Courtney broke off her sentence as two large dogs ran barking toward her across their fenced backyard. She shrank against Dad.

Her father smiled down at her and said, "don't worry. That's a strong fence. I walk this way every morning, and I've never seen those dogs manage to get out. "I walk this way every morning, and I've never seen those dogs get out."

Courtney shuddered as she hurried past the dogs. "I don't like dogs." "I know," said Dad, "but you can trust the fence to hold them."

That evening, Courtney's friend Sara called. After hanging up the phone, Courtney talked with Dad. "Sara wanted me to go with her to a movie that I knew I shouldn't see, but I said no," she reported.

"Good," said Father, giving her a hug. "As you get older, honey, you'll face many temptations. You need to build strong fences to keep from giving in to things you shouldn't do."

Courtney looked puzzled, and Dad explained. "There are several things we can do to build fences that hold back temptation," he said. "Paying attention in church and Sunday school, reading the Bible and obeying it, talking to God in prayer, and spending time with Christian friends are all ways to help strengthen our fences of resistance. Then, even though temptation can come at us like those dogs you saw today, all it can do is bark at the fence. If you build a strong fence, it will be sure to hold."

Thought: There are many temptations that are hard to resist. Are you building "fences" against them? You need to do that now so that you don't give in, even to the strongest temptation.

Prayer: Thank you, Heavenly Father, that in the time of trouble, I can run to Thee. Thank You for the promise that You are able to deliver me from temptations. This I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen

DO NOT LET SIN CONTROL YOU!

Cindy tried to slow her bike when one of the neighborhood kids turned right in front of her, but her front wheel skidded and she toppled onto the hard gravel. After a moment of stunned fright, she stood up. Her bike was okay, but her right knee was not. Small pieces of gravel had pierced her and were imbedded in the cut. Slowly, she wheeled her bike home. She told mother, “Look at my knee, Mom,” said Cindy. “It hurts! That Jason makes me so mad! He cut right in front of me, and I fell.”

“I’m sure he didn’t mean to make you fall,” said Mom as she examined Cindy’s knee. “I’m afraid we’ll have to do more than wash this. We’ll have to get all the bits of gravel out of the cut. Otherwise it may fester, and the sore spot might get infected.” Mom sterilized some tweezers and carefully dislodged each tiny piece of gravel. Cindy winced and felt her eyes fill with tears, but she clenched her teeth and didn’t complain. She was glad when Mom finished and the cut was bandaged. “Your knee may be sore for a few days,” said Mom, “but it should heal just fine.” Cindy studied her bandaged knee. “Well, I’m never going to play with Jason again,” she declared. “It’s all his fault.”

“Whoa!” cautioned Mom. “Be careful! Don’t let anger or bitterness fester. They’re like gravel.” “Like gravel? What do you mean?” asked Cindy. “Sins such as bitterness and anger, even so-called little sins, the gravel in your cut,” Mom told her. “If we don’t do anything about our sin, it can lead to more sin... like germs lead to an infection. So when you sin, what should you do about it?”

“Ask God for forgiveness,” said Cindy promptly. “We should also ask forgiveness of anyone hurt by our sin.” She looked thoughtful. “Last Saturday, I... ah... I said I felt sick because I didn’t feel like helping Dad wash his car,” she confessed. “I wasn’t really sick, and it’s bothered me all week.”

“How can you get rid of that ‘gravel’?” Mom asked gently. “Well... I did tell God I was sorry, and I guess... oh, I know! I’ll tell Dad I’m sorry for not helping,” said Cindy. “And first thing Saturday morning, I’ll go help him.”

Thought: Have you checked for sin in your life that needs attention? It may be painful to examine your sin and ask for forgiveness, but if you ignore, it will be even more painful later.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not to harbour sin in my life but to repent and seek Your forgiveness always. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

KEEP TRYING AND WORKING HARD!

David's mom came into his room to check on his homework. "How's your report coming along?" she asked. "Its not coming along well," grumbled David, "and I don't want to do it anyway."

"You sound upset, David. Are you still fretting about yesterday?" asked Mom. David's eyes got misty. "I wanted so badly to be the class reporter for the school paper," he said. "And what did Mrs. Lim say? 'You have a good imagination, but you don't check facts. A reporter must be accurate. Work on it, David. Maybe you can be a reporter next year.'"

"I know you're disappointed, David, but don't give up," encouraged Mom. "Now—what school report are you working on?"

"I have to write about some famous person," David muttered. "It can be anybody."

David's mother pulled out some books. "Try writing about a famous American president like Abraham Lincoln – he was a Christian too!" she suggested. "I think he'll be a real help to you!" Then she left to fold clothes.

When his mother returned, David looked up. "I can't believe it, Mom," he said. "Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest presidents in the US, but this book says he lost several important political races and even failed in business!"

"That's right." Mom nodded. "But he's remembered for his successes, not for his failures. Often it's easy to give up when we fail, but that doesn't help us grow. It's not what God would have us do, either. He wants us to learn from our experiences and try harder the next time. We must learn to depend on Him to help us turn failure into success."

David gave his mom a big hug. "Thanks, Mom," he said. "I see what you've been trying to tell me. I won't give up. I'll make this report so accurate that even Mrs. Lim would be proud of it."

Thought: What happens when you fail at something? Do you give up and quit trying? Don't get discouraged. Learn from your mistakes and realise that it takes time to learn to do things well. Depend on God to help you.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the lesson today. I have not done well in certain things, sometimes in my studies, sometimes in other duties. Help me to learn that even when I fail, I must pick myself up and try even harder! Help me to be prayerful and depend on You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

BE A “HOME” MISSIONARY

“The missionary speaker we had in JW today was so interesting!” Cheryl told her mother as they arrived home from church one Sunday. “I think missionaries have such an exciting life—traveling far away and seeing new places and different people. And they get to tell the Gospel to people who’ve never heard it before. That would be special! Maybe I’ll be a missionary some day. I hope God calls me to Brazil.” Mom smiled and went to answer the phone.

After a moment, Mom returned. “Cheryl,” she said, holding her hand over the mouthpiece, “Aunty Peck Suan would like you to go with her tomorrow afternoon to visit the new girl who just moved to our block last month.”

“Tomorrow? Do I have to?” asked Cheryl with a frown. “Ella and I want to go roller-blading tomorrow. Besides, I wouldn’t know what to say to the new girl.” Mom spoke into the phone. “Cheryl will call you later, Aunty Peck Suan,” she said. After hanging up the phone, she turned to her daughter. “Do you remember what the optometrist said when you had your eye examination a week ago?”

“Sure.” Cheryl nodded, wondering why Mom was asking about that. “He said I have 20/20 vision, and that means I have perfect eyesight. At twenty feet I can see exactly what our eyes are supposed to see from that distance.”

“Right,” said Mom, “and I’m glad you have 20/20 vision in your eyes. But when it comes to your ‘missionary vision,’ it seems to me that you’re quite longsighted. A person whose eyes are longsighted can see things in the distance, but they can’t see objects up close very well. You’re apparently excited at the idea of going far away to tell people about Jesus, but you don’t seem to be interested in the girl nearby. If you don’t want to witness here, what makes you think you’d want to witness if you went far away?” Cheryl was startled. “I... I... You’re right,” she admitted. “I should go with Aunty Peck Suan to see the new girl. I’ll call her right now.”

Thought: Are you interested in taking the Gospel to a faraway place someday? That’s great! But are you also concerned about the people nearby—people all around you who are facing an eternity in hell if they don’t accept Jesus as Savior?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, grant me a burden for lost souls. Help me to share the Gospel first with people closest to me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

GOD CARES FOR YOU!

As Becky nibbled at her breakfast, she thought about the big maths test she would be taking later that day. Even though she had studied hard, there were butterflies in her stomach! Tests made her nervous! “Not hungry this morning, dear?” asked Mother as she noticed Becky’s nearly full cereal bowl.

“I keep thinking about that horrible maths test,” Becky replied with a worried look. “But you seemed to know how to work all of the problems when you were studying last night,” said Mother.

“Yes, but it’s different when I have to do them on a test,” said Becky with sigh. “I’m comfortable when I’m at home with you and Daddy, but I get scared at school, and everything seems to get jumbled up in my mind.”

Mother sat down next to Becky and gently reached for her hands. “You know, Daddy and I can’t be with you at school, but your heavenly Father will be with you all through your test,” she said reassuringly. “He doesn’t want you to worry. He tells us to give all of our worries and anxieties to Him, because He cares for us so very much.”

“I know.” Becky sighed. “But I still get so nervous,” she said.

Mother smiled understandingly. “Why don’t you tell God how you feel,” she suggested, “and really give Him your worries by believing He will help you. He wants to give you His peace in place of the worries that are there. Shall we pray about it together?”

Slowly Becky nodded and bowed her head. Mother prayed first, and then Becky prayed, too. “Heavenly Father,” she said, “I’m really nervous about my test today. Please give me Your peace so I can think clearly during my test. If I start to worry today, remind me that You are with me. Thank You so much. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”

“Amen,” said Mother as she gave Becky a hug. “Now how about eating some of your breakfast? It’s hard to take a test on an empty stomach.”

Thought: Is there something in particular that makes you nervous? Do you get “butterflies in your stomach” when you have to take a test or finish an assignment? God wants you to give your worries to Him. Let Him give you His peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, being a student, I feel overwhelmed by assignments and exams at times. Help me to cast all my cares upon You for I know that You care for me. This I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

NEVER DESPISE GOD'S BLESSINGS

I sure wish Dad had come to my basketball game," complained Beng Teck to his older brother, Beng Lee. "Last year I sat on the bench all the time, and he never missed a game. But this year I've played in every game, and he's had to work every Friday night. It's not fair!" Beng Lee tried to cheer him up. "Mom and I have been there, Beng Teck, and you've been doing great!" "But it's not the same," Beng Teck replied. "Before you were in college, Dad came to all your games." Just then Mother called them to dinner, and the discussion ended. "Mmmmm – these dishes are delicious!" exclaimed Beng Lee. "Remember how often we wished for nice full meals when Dad was out of work?"

"I sure do," replied Mother, "and I'm glad you reminded me. I've been grumbling lately about Dad working the second shift, and I'm afraid I forgot that no work means potential problems." She glanced at Beng Teck, but he refused to smile. All evening he remained gloomy, even after he scored the winning two points at the basketball game.

The next evening, the family lingered over dinner, glad to have Dad with them. "Since I'm only here on Saturday and Sunday evenings," said Dad, "I really miss our family devotions. Beng Lee, you were going to choose something for tonight, weren't you?" Beng Lee grinned, "I've got it planned, Dad." He took the Bible and read from the book of Exodus and the book of Numbers. Then he looked up and grinned. "Today is sort of an anniversary," he announced. "Anybody know what for?" "I do," responded Dad promptly. "It's just three months ago that I got called back to work."

"Oh, that's right!" said Mom. "I remember how thrilled we were." She paused, then exclaimed, "Oh, I see your point, Beng Lee! We've been like the Israelites. At first they were thrilled with manna, just like we were with Dad's job. But then they began to loathe it. I'm afraid we did that, too, and I confess that I was probably the first to complain. I hope you'll all forgive me. May God forgive us, too!" Beng Teck smiled in spite of how he felt earlier. He realised that Mom was right.

Thought: Is there some wonderful blessing in your life that you've begun to despise? Be careful, never despise God's blessings.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me never to despise thy blessings but to be thankful instead. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

GOD'S PLAN IS ALWAYS PERFECT

Alex never forgot the day his new baby sister, Allison, came home from the hospital. Father and Mother had told him that her spinal cord was damaged before she was born, and she would never be able to walk. Todd couldn't quite believe it. Maybe if we all take real good care of Allison, her legs will become well, he thought.

When Alex mentioned this to Mother, she shook her head sadly. "No, the doctor said that unless God performs a miracle, her legs will never work," she said gently. "We don't understand why God has allowed this to happen, but we need to accept the fact that it's part of His plan for Allison and our family. We need to trust Him because He knows what's best."

Mother put down the potato peeler, wiped her hands on her apron, and sat down next to Alex at the table. "Allison is going to need special care because her legs have no feeling," she said. "She won't know whether they're hot or cold, or whether they have been cut or bruised."

"No feeling at all?" Alex blurted out. "She could really hurt herself, and not even know it!" Mother nodded. "That's where you and I fit into God's plan for her," she said. "It's going to take time and love to protect her from getting hurt, and to help her learn about her handicap as she grows up."

"Oh," murmured Alex thoughtfully.

"Will you be part of God's plan for our family by helping us care for Allison?" asked Mother. Alex was quiet for a long time before answering. "I'm still going to pray that Allison will walk someday," he said finally, "but whether she walks or not, I want to help her as much as I can."

"Great!" said Mother. "God knew Allison would need a big brother like you. Remember, God's plan is always the best."

Thought: Do you have a brother or sister who is handicapped or disadvantaged in any way? God has placed that person in your family as part of His plan for you. Or perhaps someone in church or school needs special attention and constant care. As you show love and encouragement, God is using you to be a blessing. It will help both of you to grow in Him. Or perhaps you have a handicap yourself. You may not realise it, but God wants to use you, too—to be a blessing to other members of your family. Cheerfully accept God's plan for you.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to believe and trust that Your will and plan in my life is always perfect. This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

TRUST IN GOD

Scott came into the living room, carrying his white kitten, Snowflake, who purred and snuggled comfortably in his arms. "I'm so glad you let me keep this kitten, even though we already have two cats," he told his parents. "Snowflake is the only one that will let me pick her up and carry her anywhere I go." He sat down on the sofa, and Snowflake curled beside him. "See, she'll just peacefully rest here beside me as long as I want her to."

Mom smiled at them. "Well, Scott, you've been so gentle with her ever since she was tiny," she said.

"I know," answered Scott, "but I'm just the same with Jemimah, and she howls and cries the whole time I hold her. She's so nervous and jittery. She just waits for a chance to run off." Dad nodded. "She's that way with all of us," he said.

"Maybe that's because she had a deprived 'kittenhood' before we got her," suggested Mother. "We've taken good care of her for all these years, and yet she's never learned to trust us completely."

"And that Tangerine!" added Scott. "I never even try to pick him up, because I don't want to be scratched!" Dad put his newspaper down. "These three cats remind me of the ways people react to God's 'picking them up' and placing them where He wants them," he said slowly. "Think about it—which one do you think you're like?"

Scott looked at Snowflake, still lying peacefully beside him, and grinned. "I hope I'm like Snowflake," he decided, "content to be wherever God puts me." Mother nodded. "But I'm afraid that, once in a while, we're more like Jemimah—nervous about everything that happens, or like Tangerine—too full of our own plans."

"We can all pray for grace to be content where God has placed us," said Dad with a smile. "We're happy as we trust Him."

Thought: Has God placed you in a difficult spot—such as a broken home, a tough school, or a class you don't enjoy? Don't be nervous and jittery about your circumstances, waiting for a chance to go a different way. And don't be so full of your own plans that you fail to trust God and be content with His plan. God loves you, and He knows best. Trust Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, if I do not have faith in You, I would be wasting my time in planning for my own things to happen. You have promised that I can rest in You and trust in You. Help me to go on believing in You and to cast my cares on You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Danny spoke into the telephone. "We're still at the shopping mall, Mom," he said. "The car won't start, and a serviceman from a garage across the street is working on it now. Dad says to tell you we'll be there as soon as we can, but it'll be a while. He says to tell you the 'show must go on.' I don't know what he means by that."

Mother knew what Dad meant. He was talking about the surprise birthday party they had planned for Danny. Dad had taken Danny shopping just to get him out of the house while his mother got things ready. The guests were in the living room now, waiting for him to come home. Mother knew that Dad was telling her to go ahead with the games and last minute planning.

When Danny finally burst into the house, he was greeted with cries of "Surprise! Surprise!" His friends were wearing party hats and licking the last bit of frosting from their lips. He was surprised indeed!

"About time you got here," teased one of the children. "We were about to take the gifts and give them to somebody else."

"Uh-uh!" Danny's sister, Kelly, slipped her little hand into her big brother's. "They're Danny's. It's his birthday." Amid a lot of laughing and teasing, Danny opened the gifts his friends had brought.

Soon it was time for the children to leave. "Glad you finally made it," some told Danny as they went out the door. "Your birthday party just wasn't right without you."

After all his guests were gone, Danny sat down to eat another piece of his birthday cake. "I wish I hadn't missed the games," he said, "but at least the car was fixed in time for me to see all the kids and open my presents. I'm glad for that!"

"I'm glad, too," said Mother. "As Kelly says, it's your 'birthday,' and a birthday party without the birthday person just isn't worth much."

Thought: Did you know that Christmas is celebrated in honour of Jesus' birthday? Do you remember this as you celebrate Christmas? Does your behaviour show that Jesus is with you? Christmas without Him isn't worth anything. The birth of Christ is special to all of us. God sent Him to this earth to die on the cross and to save us from our sins.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as I remember the great event of Christmas, help me to be willing in my heart to obey and serve the Lord Jesus Christ for he gave His life on the cross for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

GIVING OURSELVES TO JESUS

Very early on a Christmas morning, Mark jumped out of bed, slipped on some clothes, and went out into the hall where he tapped lightly on his sister's door. Betsy quickly opened it, took a huge decorated cardboard box from her closet, and together they went down the stairs. "Are you sure this isn't a dumb idea?" whispered Mark as they went out the front door.

"Mom and Dad will love it," Betsy assured him. She lifted the cover off the box, and Mark stepped inside. Then Betsy handed him an assortment of signs. "I'm your errand boy," read one. "I'll clean Timmy's room this month besides my own," read another. "I'll clean the kitchen," read a third. Mark put these, with several others, in a corner of the box. Betsy put the cover on the box, and she put a large red bow on the top.

"Sure hope the neighbours aren't up yet." Mark's muffled voice came through the air holes as Betsy rang the doorbell. He heard the loud, persistent ring as she pushed the button again and again. Then he heard the door close as Betsy disappeared inside the house.

Soon the door opened again, and Mark heard Dad's surprised voice. "Well! What have we here? Mother!" he called. "Come quickly! I believe a present has arrived for us." In no time, Mother was there and the box was opened.

"Here I am... Blessed Christmas!" called Mark when they saw him. He handed them the signs. "I... ah... well, I decided to give you myself this Christmas," he said. "These are just some of the things I can do for you. I... I hope you like your present."

There were tears in Mother's eyes as she hugged him. Dad spoke for them both. "We love it!" he said. "We really, really love it."

Thought: Do you think about the fact that God gave His very best for you? What have you given Him in return? What He wants most of all is the gift of yourself. Will you give that gift to Him? Only then can He use your talents, time and service.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as I remember Your love for me in sending the Lord Jesus to die for my sins, help me to give of myself in service to You. This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU GAVE THANKS TO GOD?

Jared sighed as he pushed the door open, pulled the key out, and put it in his pocket. He swung the door shut and turned the lock. “Tony’s mom is home baking cookies, but I have to cook my own Maggi noodles,” he said out loud. He talked to himself a lot when he was alone. That way the apartment didn’t seem so empty. “I wish I had a pet.” Jared continued to mumble as he did his chores. Soon he heard his mother at the door. “Hi, honey, how was school?” she asked as she entered the room.

“Okay.” Jared didn’t look up. “Thanks for getting the noodles done. It smells good, and I guess you must have added eggs and chicken slices.” There was no reply from Jared. She looked at Jared closely. “Is something wrong?” she asked. Jared shook his head. “Are you sure?” asked Mom. She paused on her way toward the stove. “I can tell something’s bothering you. Let’s talk about it, okay?” She put down a dish and hugged Jared.

Soon Jared was telling Mom all his troubles—especially how he hated coming home to an empty house. Mom sighed. “We talked about this before, and you know I have to work,” she said. “I’d rather be home, but I have no choice. I wish you could have a pet, but the landlord won’t allow it. Jared, you have something many of your friends don’t have. You have Jesus,” she reminded him. “That’s more important than anything else in the world. When we have to do without things we want, I think it helps to remind ourselves of what we do have.” Mom picked up a pen and paper. “Let’s make a list of good things we enjoy,” she suggested. “I’ll start. Let’s see... we have a place to live.” “And clothes,” Jared added. Mom wrote it down. “You can go to school, and I have a job,” she said. “What else?”

“Friends.” Jared started to smile. “We have a church where we can worship God,” added Mom. “We can go to the doctor when we’re sick,” suggested Jared. Mom nodded. “And right now we’re both healthy,” she said. “I’ll write that down, too.” Jared sniffed the air. He grinned. “We have our Maggi noodles,” he said. “Let’s set the table. I’m hungry!”

Thought: Do your friends have something you wish you had? Instead of thinking of those things, make a list of what you have. Learn to be content in your circumstances, and thank God for them.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be thankful in every circumstance of my life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

BELIEVE IN WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS BY FAITH

“What’s on your mind, son?” asked Adam’s father. “You look so serious!”

Adam sighed. “Tom, one of our neighbourhood kids, told me that his Sunday school teacher, Mrs Lee, taught him about the Trinity, that God is three persons in one. There is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and they’re all one person,” said Adam. “How can that be?” added Adam, in disbelief.

“I know it seems difficult for you to understand,” said Adam’s father, “but that is what the Bible teaches.” Adam’s father reached for his Bible. “Now,” he said, “let’s see if I can find some verses to help you understand the doctrine of the Trinity.”

“1 John 5:7, says “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” This is the clearest proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. In Matthew 3:16-17, the Bible also clearly describes the three distinct persons of the Trinity in action at the baptism of Jesus: God the Son on earth, going through the waters of baptism, God the Father in heaven, commending His beloved Son, and God the Holy Spirit descending from heaven to earth in the form of a dove” said Adam’s father.

Adam’s father continued to explain “The Bible also tells us that there is only one God in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Thus, in this oneness, there is a threeness. There are three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are not divided but distinguished; the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father; but the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God (i.e., the same living and true God who is only One). One God in Three Persons.”

“Thanks dad, for helping me to understand this difficult doctrine in the Bible.” said Adam. Adam’s father then added “There are also other doctrines in the Bible that we may not fully understand fully but it is important for us to believe by faith everything the Bible says.

Thought: Do you doubt what the Bible teaches because it doesn’t seem possible? The Bible is the Word of God, and what it says is true.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, there are many things in the Bible that I may not fully understand, but this I know, that it is Thy word and I must trust in it. Help me then to put my faith in You and Your Word always. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

MAY THE LORD HAVE MERCY ON YOU!

“The milk tasted terrible!” As Sarah thought about it, she remembered that as Mother left for the grocery store, she had mentioned that the milk was turning sour. “Well, now what?” thought Sarah. Then she had an idea. If I add some chocolate, it will cover the sour taste, she thought. She got out a can of powdered chocolate drink and spooned some of the sweet mixture into the milk. She licked her finger where a little of it had stuck. “Mmmm, good!” she thought. But after taking a big gulp of the chocolate milk, she groaned. It still tasted awful!

Later that morning, Sarah skipped off to her bible class. She listened carefully as Mrs. Lin shared a story Jesus had told “Two men went into the temple to pray,” began Mrs. Lin. “One a Pharisee – a man who did many good deeds and went to the temple often. The other a dishonest tax collector. The Pharisee prayed first, telling God that he was glad he was good and not bad like the other man. He reminded God of all the good he did.” Mrs. Lin paused and looked around at the kids. “Now let me tell you about the tax collector. He didn’t even lift up his head. He just cried out to God, pleading for forgiveness from his sins. Guess what Jesus said? Jesus said that the tax collector, and not the Pharisee, went home ‘justified’ or forgiven. The tax collector knew that only God could take away his sins, but the Pharisee was trying to cover up his sins with good deeds. He was really not a good man at all. He was proud and haughty – a sinner just like the tax collector. His good deeds didn’t change his sinful heart.”

As Sarah listened, she smiled and nodded. She remembered the sour milk, and she understood that good things don’t necessarily cover up the bad. Good chocolate hadn’t covered the bad taste of the sour milk, and good deeds wouldn’t cover up sin. “Only Jesus can forgive sin,” she thought, “I’m going to remember that.”

Thought: Do you: Obey your parents? Behave politely? Help with the chores? Go to church? But even if you do these things, without accepting the Lord Jesus, God says you are still a sinner. You can only be saved and your sins forgiven, if you accept the Lord Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am an undeserving sinner saved only by the grace. Thank You for grace and mercy shown towards me. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

BEING THANKFUL TO GOD AND TO OTHERS

Every morning Michael read a chapter of the Bible and prayed. One morning he read Romans 16. This is kind of a different chapter, he thought to himself. It's mostly a list of the people Paul appreciated. He looked at the verses again. Maybe one reason this chapter is in the Bible is to show us how important it is to let others know how much we appreciate them, he thought. I think I'll do that today!

So at breakfast Michael said to his mother, "Thanks for cooking these eggs for me, Mom." Then when his brother, Steve, came into the kitchen, Michael said, "Thanks, Steve, for letting me use your colour markers for my report." Both Mom and Steve gave Michael such big smiles that he decided to keep on telling people how much they were appreciated.

At school, Michael found his friend Ben. "Thanks for sticking up for me when those guys teased me yesterday," said Michael. "I appreciate that."

After class he approached his teacher. "It's neat the way you've been telling us about how things work," he said. "It makes studying so much more interesting." He could see that his teacher was pleased.

On the way home from school, Michael walked past his neighbour, Mr Lim who was at his doorstep. "Mr Lim," Michael called, "I want you to know again I appreciate the nice cakes you bought for our family yesterday." Michael received one more big smile.

That night as Michael was getting ready for bed, he thought once again about appreciation. I can tell that people appreciate being appreciated. Michael grinned at the silly sound of that, but he was glad he had learned that lesson from the Apostle Paul.

Thought: You probably do appreciate all the people who do things for you, but do you let them know it? Make a list of five people whom you appreciate, and then tell them. You'll feel good because you will be helping others feel good. And don't forget to include Jesus on your list. He deserves the most appreciation of all.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the people that you have brought into my life who have been a blessing to me. Help me to appreciate them and encourage them. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

Mark and his mother were at the hospital to visit Aunt Lillian. Now, “Aunt” Lillian wasn’t really anyone’s aunt. It was just an affectionate nickname given to her by the many, many children she had taught in Sunday school in the past years. “How good to see you,” Aunt Lillian greeted her visitors. “How are you doing?” Mark’s mother asked.

“Oh, just fine! I’ve been able to witness to the man across the hall and had a good opportunity to share my faith with some of the nurses, too,” replied Aunt Lillian excitedly. “I know the Lord put me here for a purpose, and I figure that purpose is to be cheerful and share His love with others. But, oh, how I wish He’d come back! Wouldn’t it be glorious if He came today?” Several times during their conversation, Aunt Lillian referred to her desire for Jesus to return.

“Aunt Lillian is surely ‘fighting a good fight of faith’” observed Mother as she and Mark left.

“Fighting?” asked Mark, puzzled. “You always tell me not to fight.”

“She isn’t getting into any fist fights,” Mother assured Mark. “What I mean is that she’s working hard at serving the Lord, even in the hospital. She’s doing all she can to be a witness for Him.”

“She sure is cheerful about everything,” observed Mark.

Mother nodded. “Even her cheerful attitude is a testimony,” she said. “No wonder she’s looking forward to the Lord’s return—she’s living a life pleasing to Him.” Mother paused. “She puts me to shame sometimes. I’m often so busy that I don’t even think about His return for long periods at a time.” Mark was listening carefully to Mother. “Me, neither,” he confessed.”

Thought: Are you living in such a way that you would be happy to have the Lord return today? Are you obedient, helpful, and witnessing for the Lord? Are you developing love, patience, kindness? In other words, are you ‘fighting a good fight’ for the Lord? Maybe you’d like to make a poster to hang in your room as a reminder that He is coming. You could use the simple motto “Perhaps today...” As you think about His coming, examine your life and your attitude, and make up your mind to live a life that is pleasing to Him in every way.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I learn how to be like the Apostle Paul in today’s verse, to fight the good fight of faith. In Jesus’ name I pray – amen.

BE YE SEPARATE

Amy slumped with a sour look. “Why can’t I go see the movie with Angie?” she asked. “Everybody says it’s really funny.” However, Amy knew the movie was reported to have some very bad language. From reviews, it was obvious that it was slightly “immoral”. But it was also reported to have many very comical lines. “I just don’t see what the big deal is,” added Amy. “That stuff won’t affect me. Besides, I promise I’ll close my eyes if the scenes are really bad!”

After a moment, her father rolled up the sleeve of his shirt, and Amy saw the big, ugly scar close the elbow. He asked, “Do you remember how I got this? It was caused several years ago by a bite from a poisonous spider,” continued Dad. “A spider bite is a small thing—so small that I didn’t pay attention to it when it happened. After a short while, it started to swell, and the flesh around the bite literally rotted and fell away. Now I have this big scar, and you know something else? I don’t have any feeling there at all. The spider’s poison killed the nerves around the bite.”

“But what does that have to do with going to a movie?” asked Amy, still pouting. “Amy, you already know that movie is not pleasing to God,” replied Dad. “We’ve read that it has bad language. And there are scenes of immoral behavior and other sinful actions. In general, it’s dishonoring to God.”

“But I wouldn’t look at those scenes or pay attention to the language,” said Amy. “I’d just close my eyes...” She stopped, knowing she couldn’t close her ears. “Choosing to expose yourself to those things would be wrong,” insisted Dad. “You think you can shut it out so it wouldn’t affect you, but you can’t. Sin is like a spider’s poison. It may not seem like much of anything at first, but in the end it’s like a dreadful scar on your life and often destroys your sensitivity toward the things of God. Is it what you want, dear?” Slowly Amy shook her head. She hated to admit it, but she knew her dad was right.

Thought: Do you avoid sinful activities? Or do you think you can indulge in them? Stop fooling yourself! All sinful activities are dangerous and harmful to you. If you have been engaging in sinful activities, stop immediately and repent. Seek God’s forgiveness for your sins.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to shun sin and stay away from situations or places that will tempt me to sin. This I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

WATCH WHERE WE WALK, STAND OR SIT!

Have you ever passed a construction site and noticed the different sign boards put up along the area? What are these signs all about?

Well, some common ones are: “Danger, Keep Out”, “Slow Down”, and “Protective Helmet Zone”. They are often there to warn people of the possible dangers at the construction site and how to avoid them.



The Bible has many passages that act like these signs at a construction site, warning us of spiritual dangers that abound in our lives. Do your parents, siblings, or good friends warn you about evil men? Solomon, the wisest king, wrote in Proverbs 1:10, “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

Psalm 1:1 tells us exactly how to avoid sinners. Firstly, we don’t walk according to their advice. If they say: “Come with us. Don’t tell your parents; they won’t know”, immediately you must realise that they are up to no good. So, do not listen to them.

Secondly, don’t stand or hang around with them and join in their sinful activities. Often they may start meeting at the void decks, playgrounds, or shopping malls. You don’t want to be seen as their friend, so be careful. Also, you don’t want to get in trouble just because you are standing nearby when they are causing trouble.

Thirdly, do not sit with them – that is don’t make yourself at home with them. In other words, don’t be buddies with them. For if you do, sooner or later, you will follow their evil ways!

Draw a Christian walking on a different road from the ungodly. Add streets to each of these two roads, and think of some suitable names for them.



Thought: “Be ye holy, as I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me not to follow the bad worldly habits of others but always seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ instead. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

THE FRUITFULNESS OF A BELIEVER

Practice makes perfect. The best pianists practise for hours every day on the piano. The best basketball players are those who are agile and are sharpshooters – again a result mainly from hours of practice on the basketball court. Christians are similarly to think and obey God’s law day and night if they desire to grow strong in the faith.

Constant reading of God’s Word will result in Christians being fruitful. Of course, you must read with obedience in your heart. Then you will be like a tree that is growing by the river, well watered, and bearing many fruits for all to enjoy. Our faith needs to be “watered” by God’s Word. A healthy mango tree will produce sweet and juicy mangoes. A faithful and obedient Christian will also produce Christ-like works of kindness to others and goodness of the heart.

What is your favourite fruit, and what do you like most about it? Can you draw a picture of the actual plant that bears this favourite fruit of yours? Now think of one spiritual quality you would like to bless others with. Write this below your drawing: “My Favourite Fruit”

Thought: Blessings await those who delight in God’s Word.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please make me enjoy reading Your word each day, that I may grow strong in faith and be fruitful for You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

COMPARISON WITH THE UNGODLY

The ungodly are those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not want to obey God’s Word. Naturally, they produce no spiritual fruit. They will receive no blessing.

In verse 4, God says they are like the worthless brown chaff that is blown away when the farmer winnows his grain. In the past, when the farmer gathered the wheat, at some stage he would throw up the crop into a strong wind in an open field. This would cause the lighter chaff, which was worthless, to be scattered by the wind. Meanwhile, the useful grain, which was heavier, would fall back to the ground and thus be separated.

On Judgment Day, God will gather believers into their heavenly home, just as a farmer gathers the good grain into his barn. But the ungodly will be blown away from God’s presence like chaff. They will not pass God’s judgment. They will not join His saints in heaven. Be very sure that you are in the right group. Which group are you in?

Use these as helping words:

removed value light



The chaff is _____
and is of no _____.

Therefore it is sieved and _____ by the wind. Unbelievers are like the chaff in God’s sight

Thought: There are only two roads in this life – one leads to heaven and the other to hell.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I be found among the godly who love Your word and be able to stand before You on Judgment Day. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

POWER ON EARTH? – GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

Have you ever attended our country’s National Day Parade? During such an event, it is often common to see all sorts of military weapons on display. They would range from sophisticated guns and aircraft to powerful warships and tanks.



Naturally, if a country’s ruler was surrounded with numerous weapons like such, it would be tempting for him to feel powerful. What more if he had several powerful countries as his allies.

In this psalm, David describes evil kings of the earth fighting against God’s kingdom. They, being unbelievers, rage and show their anger towards God. They join hands and fight against the Lord. They say proud words and boast of their strength.

However, God says they are most foolish. They are like ants fighting against a lion. God can destroy them easily with simply a word, a breath from Him. When Christ, the Son of God, returns to judge the world with almighty power, every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue would confess that He is Lord of all.

So come to Christ while there still is time. Only those who trust in Him are blessed.

Q. How will God deal with the proud heathen kings of the earth?

A. God will _____ them with a rod of iron and

God will _____ them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.

Thought: What a day it will be when Christ comes to rule as king! Will I be ready then?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I only want to be on Your side always. May I be faithful, serve You and rejoice in You daily. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

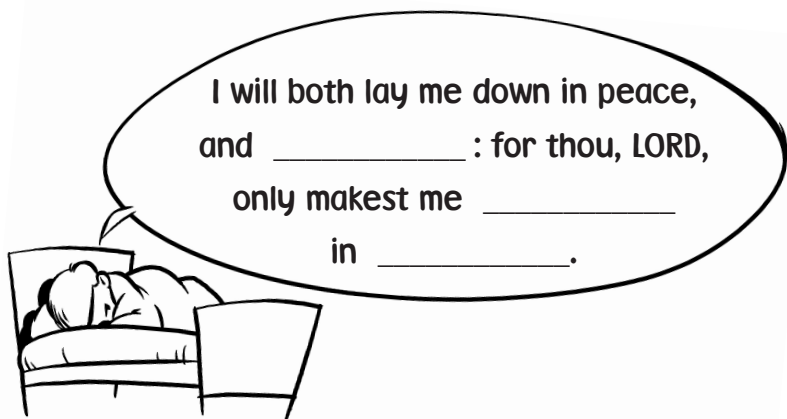
THE LORD MAKES ME DWELL IN SAFETY

King David had enemies who wanted to kill him. Here, he calls upon God to hear his prayer and have mercy upon him so that his enemies would realise how foolish they are to attack those who belong to God, for God protects them.

At the same time, David wanted his loyal followers not to become bitter and sin against the Lord. They should remain patient during this time of hardship as God will deliver in His good time.

Some of King David's followers asked, "Who will show us any good?" Perhaps they were losing heart and concluding that their cause was lost. But David encourages them not to give up. The Lord will show them good. He will let the light of His face shine upon them. David was fully confident in the Lord.

When you feel sad, remember this beautiful prayer of David and wait upon the LORD. Even in the darkest of nights, the light of God's face will shine upon us.



(Use these words to pray when you are afraid, worried or tired).

Thought: What is the first thing I normally do when faced with difficulty?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to run to You in prayer first whenever I am troubled. Please continue to make Your face to shine upon us. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

HOW EXCELLENT IS THY NAME!

Our LORD's name is excellent. It is above the glory of the heavens, the sun, the moon and the stars. Even the infants and tiny babies know how to praise God.

When Jesus was on earth, He loved children and had urged the disciples to bring the children to Him. In Matthew 21:16, Jesus also quoted this psalm to show the faith that little children had in Him. You see, after Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, little children continued singing their hosannas to Him in the temple. The religious leaders of Israel were angry and demanded that Jesus put a stop to these songs. But Jesus refused. Those leaders didn't believe that Jesus was the only Saviour.

The leaders of Israel refused to honour Him, but God gave Jesus the glory He deserved through the lips of children instead. Today, many government leaders and learned people also refuse to give glory to God. However, God still receives praise from the lips of His children.

Are you a child of God? If so, do your words and conduct glorify the LORD or shame Christ?

Read verses 7 and 8 for clues. Then draw a small picture in the blanks below.

Man has dominion over and and the beasts of the field; The of the air and the of the sea and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.

It is God who designed and made all these.
How wonderful are His creations!

Thought: More precious than the testimony of creation are the simple praises of a little child.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me for the times that I do not glorify You in my speech or actions. Help me to ever praise Your name for Your glory and Your love towards me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

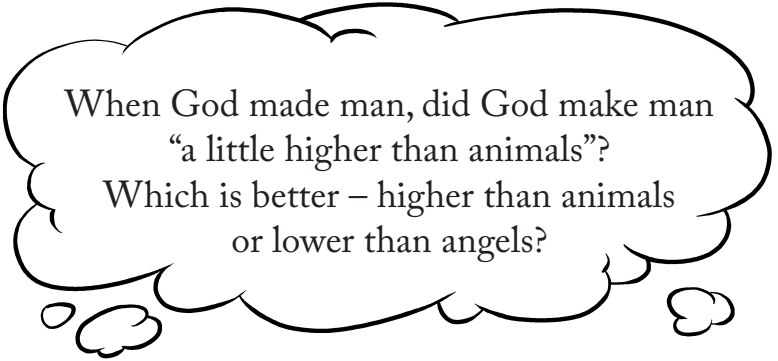
WHAT AM I, THAT THOU ART MINDFUL?

Even while creating the immense galaxies of the universe, God created man with special attention and honour. He created man to have dominion over all the earth. He created the sun, moon and stars to serve man. He created only man and woman in His own image so that they could be righteous and holy and live in happy fellowship with Him. No other creature has the same privilege. However, after the fall into sin in the garden of Eden, peace was broken and joy disappeared.

Yet, God still cared deeply enough for man by sending His son Jesus to earth. When Christ came down to earth, he was born as a man. Humans are “made a little lower than the angels”. Jesus led a perfect, sinless life, then suffered, bled and died for our sins.

However, Jesus did not stay in this humble condition. When He had finished defeating sin, death and the devil, He ascended to heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God. He was crowned with glory and honour. He now rules the world for the benefit of His people. One day He will return to earth to set up His kingdom and all things will be under His feet.

What a truly wonderful God we have! No wonder David who wrote this psalm could not help but repeat “O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!”



When God made man, did God make man
“a little higher than animals”?
Which is better – higher than animals
or lower than angels?

Think and discuss with your parents and friends.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to worship and love You more meaningfully each day. I thank You for the lesson today and hope that I'd remember how great a Creator You are. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

THE UPRIGHT MAN

How should a child of God live? Can a child of God know that he or she will receive God's richest blessings?

Yes indeed! Firstly, a child of God will think, do and say what God will be pleased with. An upright man is one that will not join others in sinful ways or ideas. He will not talk and laugh with people who see nothing wrong about sinning. He keeps his distance from them. This is because God has told Christians to hold themselves from any kind of evil.

Secondly, a child of God will work righteousness. That which is good and right he will do. That which is wrong or greedy or selfish, he will not do. Why? The reason is that a Christian wants to be like Christ, who helps us to obey the commandments of God.

In practical terms, what do the above 2 points mean? It means you and I should not do or say things just because "we feel like it". This is very difficult as we are so used to doing things we like, and often, we don't consider what God likes. So dear child – try your best!

Thirdly, a child of God also speaks the truth at all times. He does not lie as he fears no man, but only God. Sometimes we may lie for we don't want mum or dad to know we didn't finish homework before we watched television. Or that we played computer games before we did QT. Dear child, if you face such situations, you are not alone! But do commit them to God, and ask Him to help you to dare to tell the truth at all times.

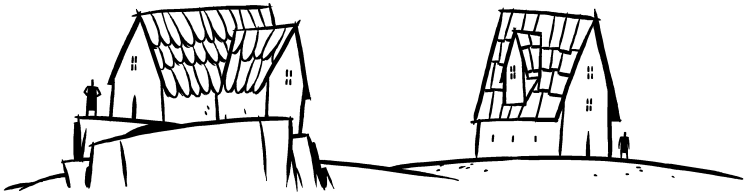
Thought: Who shall abide in the LORD's holiness?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I walk uprightly, well-pleasing in Your sight. Help me to steer clear from sin and keep to the paths of righteousness and truth. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

HE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

Do you remember the song about ‘the wise man and the foolish man’? Why was one house unmoved while the other was destroyed?

Answer: _____



Did you know what kind of people in this world cannot be destroyed? These are the people of God. They shall not be moved by the troubles of this world because of the right things the children of God do.

What are some of these right things? Firstly, a child of God will not do evil to his neighbour. Who is your neighbour? Anyone really, not just the person who lives next to you. A child of God will not say unkind things, or spread gossip. That is just not what Jesus would do, and that is what we should not do, too!

A child of God also behaves honourably. That is a big word and by that, we mean he acts in a right way, dares to stand against evil. He also keeps his promises.

Dear child, on what foundation are you building your life? Is it the foundation of the solid Rock that Jesus is, or is it the shifting sand and weak foundation of personal dreams and ambition?



Thought: Do I have a sure foundation in the LORD?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may You help me to resist doing evil against others, and to live for You. It is not easy to live a good Christian life. Sometimes I fail but Heavenly Father, please help me when I stumble. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

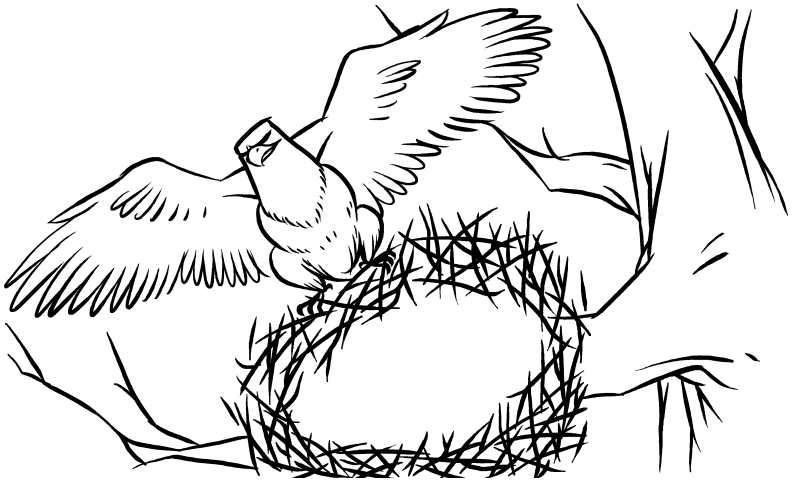
TOTAL PROTECTION

God, our all-wise Creator has made our body and also the eye. It is a very precious, tender and carefully guarded part of our body. The eyelashes and eyelids are important to protect our eyes from dirt and dust. The tear ducts help to nourish and prevent dryness of the eye. Different nerves and muscles surround the eyeball to enable it to rotate about.

One important part of the eye is the pupil. This part of the eye allows light rays to pass through in order to form an image. David, the psalmist, calls it the “apple of the eye”. So, we call upon God to keep and protect us as much as one guards his sight, which is so valuable, as if we are the apple of His eye.

We also pray that God will hide us “under the shadow of His wings”. Just as the parent bird completely shields its brood from danger, and cherishes the babies by covering them with its wings, God will likewise protect us.

Draw a baby eagle under the mother’s wings.



UNDER THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS

Thought: What is the best way in which a Christian can protect himself/herself?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, keep me ever in Your love and care while I walk as a pilgrim on Earth. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THY GLORY

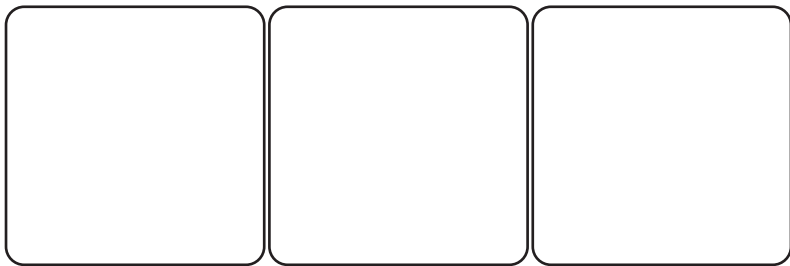
If you look at the sky on a cloudy day, you will see countless puffy shapes and forms up high that will delight. You might even see the shape of a dinosaur up in the sky!

Do you notice that clouds move? Do you notice that their colours also change? Clouds are not always white. Sometimes they have a pinkish glow, and other times they are greyish-black. You can tell whether it is going to be hot and sunny or whether there is going to be a storm. Sometimes you may also see other things such as a rainbow in the sky, and rarely, even an eclipse of the sun by the moon.

Try also to find a clear sky that you can admire at night. It is tough in Singapore but if it is dark enough, you can see twinkling stars. Most of these bright stars also form a pattern. There is the Orion constellation as well as the Taurus constellation. Yes, God makes the starry heavens with all the marvels of the night. As you look at the full moon on certain days, you will also admire the glowing beauty that its reflected light gives, and even its roundness. Occasionally, you may also be able to see some of our neighbouring planets such as Venus and Mars.

These are just some of the glories of heaven that we can see. Imagine the glories of the distant heavens that we cannot see. Our LORD God made them all!

Draw your favourite shape for the moon and cloud in these boxes.

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes arranged horizontally, intended for drawing a favourite shape for the moon and cloud.

Thought: Which of God's creation did I notice and appreciate recently?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, let me see more of Your beauty. Let me delight in the wonders of heaven that You have made. Most of all, let me delight in Your love for me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

LIKE A BRIDEGROOM

Do you like sunny or rainy days? Most of us probably prefer sunny days, as there is more warmth, brightness, and colour for us to enjoy. We also need not fear getting wet, chilled, or even slipping on wet grounds.

In this portion of Psalm 19, David compares the sun to a princely bridegroom who sets out of his chamber in the morning, and marches across the sky during the day. Like a bridegroom who is handsomely clothed, so the sun too seems to be beaming with joy and splendour as it starts its journey each new day.

The sun shines forth from one end of the earth to another. Above, beneath and around, the heat of the sun brings life.

In a sunny place like Singapore, perhaps we don't appreciate the sun that much. But in cold places, the sun is much loved and in the winter months, much missed. And when the sun comes out, it ushers warmth and life and growth again.

In a limited way, Jesus, is like the sun. He came down from heaven to dwell among us, and His love is for all who will come to Him. The Son of God is just like the warmth of the sun – whosoever seeks Him will find life (eternal life!). Jesus is also the Light of the world – His truth shines so brightly, revealing our deepest and darkest sins.

Read Psalm 84:11 and fill in the blanks with the correct helping words.

glory	star	sun	quietly	son	hero
uprightly	good	happy	grace	shield	

For the LORD God is a _____ and _____:

The LORD will give _____ and _____:

no _____ thing will he withhold from them that

walk _____.

Thought: Is Jesus the Light in my life?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to see You in all Your glory and let me constantly rejoice in Your love, power and strength. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

What is the law of the LORD? What is the testimony of the LORD? What are the statutes of the LORD? These all mean the Word of God. When the Bible says, “the commandment of the LORD” or “the judgments of the LORD”, it is also referring to the Word of God – the Bible.

In these verses in Psalm 19, we read of how wonderful the word of God is. It is perfect. This means it has no mistakes and everything written in it is all good, wise and true. It is also perfect in that it is pure. No error defiles it. No stain of sin pollutes it. It is enduring so it lasts forever. In fact, nothing on this earth lasts forever except God’s word. All things will corrupt and decay and pass away. However, the word of the LORD abides forever.

Therefore, the Word of God is priceless.

Treasure it. Be faithful in doing your RPG and bible-reading, even if you’re tired and there is a lot of homework to do each day.

Obey it. It is useless if we know but don’t obey the lessons learnt.

Live according to what is written there. Use it to point your unsaved friends and relatives to Jesus as their Saviour. Have you shared any Bible verse with them? If not, do so today. Share why those verse or verses are meaningful to you.

The Word of God is known by 5 names in Psalm 19:7-9.

What are they?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Thought: How do I regard the perfect Bible that I possess?

Prayer: Help me, Heavenly Father, to love and read Your Word. Help me also not to sin against You by going against all the things in the Bible that You desire me to do. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD, SWEETER THAN HONEY

The psalmist says that when choosing between gold and the word of God, we should choose the word of God. It is better than gold. Even a big amount of fine gold is inferior to the word of God. The Bible is spiritual treasure – more noble and precious than the wealth of this world.

God's word is also sweet. When we read and understand God's word, the pleasure that we get from it is so wonderful that the psalmist describes it as sweet. The honey dropping from the comb of the honeybees is sweet. But the joys that God's truth brings to our hearts is so great that it is far sweeter than the honey from the honeycomb!

Another quality of the Bible is that it has the power to warn the Christian of his or her duty and of danger. God gives us the warnings so that you can protect yourself from trouble as a result of your sin.

For example, if we become greedy for things and steal, the 10th commandment, "Thou shalt not covet", will help stop us from stealing. When we heed God's word and not sin, God will be pleased. We will also avoid being punished for doing wrong.

Read Psalm 19:7.

Then fill in the blanks of the beautiful chorus below:

The _____ of the LORD is _____ ,
_____ the soul.

The _____ of the LORD is _____ ,
making _____ the _____ .

More to be desired are they than gold

Yea, than much fine gold

Sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.

Thought: Solid truth is better than solid gold.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me learn to treasure Your word more than my games, TV shows and books, by reading it faithfully and diligently every day. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

A GODLY PRAYER

What are some of the things you usually pray for? For example, do you pray that you'll do better than your friends in the science or English test? Or do you pray that your sick parent, sibling or friend will get well soon?

We must be careful that all prayers are according to God's will. When we ask for things for our selfish wants, we actually pray wrongly. For example, if we only pray to ask for things for our birthdays or to enjoy holidays, without even thanking God for His many blessings and without thinking of our family or our friends, then we are praying wrongly. Why? Such prayer is not according to God's will. Do you think God will hear your prayer in this case?

What is godly prayer then? One example is found in our reading today. The psalmist (David) humbly asked God to wash away his sins – both known (“presumptuous”) and unknown (“secret”). One of the first things we should pray about is to ask God to forgive our sins, and not to sin further against Him.

When we honestly examine our hearts and actions, God will reveal to us that we indeed have many sins to confess to Him. God can also see sins that are hidden from ourselves!

In the psalm, David also asked the Lord to keep his words and thoughts acceptable in His sight. The thoughts and words are useless if they are accepted only by man. The Christian should not live just to please man, because God is his or her Creator, Father and Judge.

What sins have you yet to confess to God? Also, what can you pray for the people around you?

Thought: How much time have I spent praying for others?

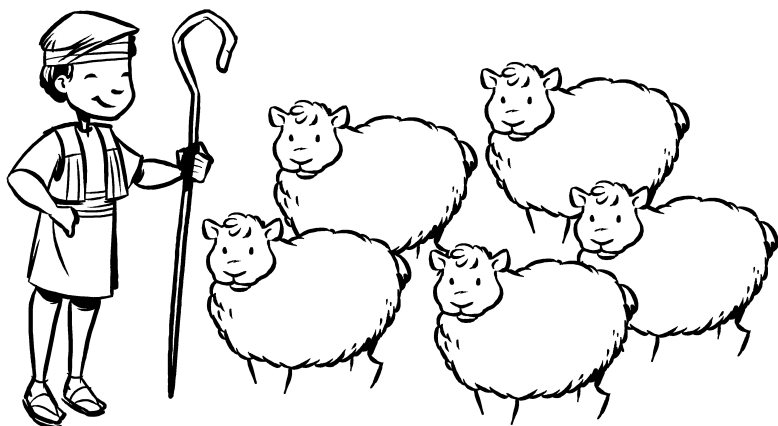
Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to pray according to Your will. Help me to know more of Your will as I read the Bible. Forgive me of the times when I pray amiss. May I also always watch my heart and mouth that they are pure and holy for You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

This is perhaps the sweetest of all the psalms. King David wrote this when he was a young shepherd boy.

Imagine David playing the flute as he sits under a spreading tree. The sheep listen quietly and peacefully as they feed on the green grass, with the calm waters of a little brook flowing by. Then little David sings sweetly, for his heart is full of gladness – just as his own sheep belong safely in his care, he too belongs to the Lord.

What a great thing it is to belong to the Lord and have Him as our Shepherd. The Creator of heaven and earth, the King of kings comes to His people as a loving Shepherd. As David looks after the needs of his sheep, he is full of thanks and grateful admiration that he has a God who will also take care of his needs, his life, his future. All his needs are in God's care. So David can confidently say: "I shall not want" as he knows he will not lack anything.



On each sheep, write one word from this phrase,
"The Lord is my Shepherd".

Thought: No one is God's sheep unless he comes to believe in Jesus Christ as his or her only Saviour and Lord.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank You for being my Good Shepherd. For loving me and taking care of my life and future, may I always thank to You and trust in You for all my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD

David says in verse 2, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.” Sheep cannot find pasture on their own. The shepherd has to lead them and they have to follow. The sheep’s food is taken care of by the shepherd. “Green” gives an idea of fresh tender shoots, the very best for nourishment. “Green pastures” mean pastures of young grass. Sheep cannot discern between good green grass and poisonous weeds. They depend on the shepherd to lead them to good pastures and eat whatever the shepherd gives to them.

The word “leadeth” gives an idea of gently leading and protecting. The shepherd will lead the sheep to “still waters.” Sheep are easily frightened by fast rushing water as in torrential streams. They will not drink from it. They are easily frightened by the loud sounds. The shepherd leads them instead to still waters. This is a description of gentle flowing streams where there is good clean fresh water.

So, we see the gentle care of the shepherd in providing for the sheep’s needs. Believers are like sheep. They have to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in Him only. They must only hear His voice. He will provide for all their spiritual and temporal needs. Through His Word taught to us by our pastors, preachers, and Junior Worship teachers, He will feed us spiritually. This will enable us to grow spiritually. God will also provide for our temporal needs: food, shelter and clothing.

David says in verse 3, “He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” Sometimes sheep do go astray. They wander off on their own especially those that lag behind in the flock. When they do that, they become vulnerable to wild animals. There are wolves, lions, other wild animals in Israel. Sheep are not able to run fast. They don’t know how to hide and can be eaten up by wild animals. It is the duty of the shepherd to find them and bring them back to safety. When David says, “He restoreth my soul:”, he means the Lord will restore His children who have sinned and strayed away. The Lord will bring chastisement upon His children to restore them because He loves them.

Thought: God is always there to shepherd us. He is a very present help in the day of trouble.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You providing for all me with both spiritual and physical needs and for restoring me when I repent of my sins. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

I WILL FEAR NO EVIL

David says in verse 4, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” David describes himself like a sheep “going through the valley of the shadow of death”. As the shepherd leads the sheep to pasture, they may have to pass mountain passes, through areas where dangers lurk, where the wild animals are. This gives us a picture of sheep being lead through a dark valley perhaps forested where danger lurks. The danger could come from wild animals hiding in the thickets. All these may cause the sheep to be frightened, yet notice here that David says, the shepherd is there with them. So, they need not fear. The shepherd has equipment with him to protect the flock. The rod is a short stick like a baton. It can be thrown at wild animals to strike them or frighten them away. It is also used to frighten sheep that stray way to danger, so that move back in the direction of the flock. The staff is longer and hooked at one end. It can be used to strike at wild animals. It is also used to rescue sheep fallen into a hole or ravine. The Shepherd uses the hooked end to lift the animal out. So, the sheep need not fear. The shepherd is there to protect them.

Our lives as Christians are also fraught with problems and difficulties. We may also experience “valleys of the shadow of death.” The moment we become a Christian, Satan targets us to cause us to fall into sin. He uses two ways, the soft approach and the hard approach. The soft approach, to entice us with temptations, the lust of eyes, the lust of flesh and the pride of life. The hard approach, by persecution, to cause us to yield and to compromise. We need to realise that God is always with us despite the dangers we face. We need to keep close to Him. If we don’t, we will fall. The only way is by prayer and constant study of His Word. We need to know His Word well so that we will not be deceived and fall into sin.

Thought: God is always present to help me in my troubles.

Prayer: Thank you, Heavenly Father, for Your presence with me when I pass through difficult times. I will fear no evil because You comfort and strengthen me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

GOD PROVIDES FOR ME

In the first part of verse 5 David says, “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:”. David now presents a situation where sheep are grazing in the pasture, even with wild animals watching. The shepherd continues to feed the flock regardless of the external danger. The shepherd will not abandon the sheep. He is still there to care for them and to protect them. With such close attention and assurance, the sheep feel safe and have nothing to fear. In the same way, all believers can rest confidently in the care and protection of God Almighty. This is the peace that passes all understanding that God gives to those who belong to Him.

David in the second part of verse 5 then says, “thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.” Flies often rest upon the sheep’s head and nostrils, lay their eggs on them. This causes infection in the sheep. The shepherd tends to the sheep by applying oil on the vital areas to ward off the flies. The good shepherd always cares for His sheep. In the same way, God cares for every believer. “My cup runneth over”, refers to the abundant provision of care that the shepherd shows for the sheep. God will make sure that as believers we will not lack anything. As believers, God will meet all our needs, spiritual or temporal, even in the face of great danger. Be it spiritual, like when we need grace for undergoing a trial, or physical when we lack physical needs, God will provide. When enemies abound, God will still be there for His people.

Does God provide for us physically? Yes, He does. Daily, He gives you and me blessings, food on the table, a place to rest our heads, clothes to wear, etc.

Thought: God always gives so abundantly that blessings overflow. But am I grateful each day?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your bountiful blessings. Help me to be thankful and grateful for what You have given to me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

GOD'S GOODNESS AND MERCY

God's goodness and mercy are sure, He will supply our needs.

Guess where the word "good" first appeared in the Bible?

It's in the first book of the bible – Genesis 1:31a, where it's written, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Was it physical beauty that God called good? No, it was moral beauty, or the beauty that is much more precious than the mere outward looks. So when we talk about God's goodness, we are talking about the moral and spiritual beauty God has, and He will also help us achieve things that are morally and spiritually right.

What about mercy – what is that? Mercy is God not punishing us or giving us what we deserve – the penalty we should get for the many sins committed.

We need God's mercy to blot out our sins. You may have been disobedient and might have shouted at your siblings or even our parents. However, when you are sorry, God's mercy will apply the blood of the Lord Jesus to wash away your sins.

Finally, God's children will live in the house of the Lord (Heaven) forever. Not everyone will have this privilege. Only those who have confessed Jesus as their Saviour will get to go to heaven to live in the heavenly mansion above. Have you confessed that you are a sinful person, that you cannot save yourself, and trusted in Jesus as your only Saviour and Lord? If not, do so today. Jesus is waiting for you.

Thought: In Thy presence is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11b).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your goodness and mercy that You promise to all that belong to You. I know that in Your presence is joy forevermore. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT

Before we know the Lord, we live in the darkness of sin, and we live as enemies of God. After we know the Lord, we are taken out of the darkness and made to walk in the light. This is because the Lord Jesus Christ is the Light! He brings us understanding, joy, comfort and protection.

When we walk in the light, the powers of darkness fall away and we do not fear Satan and hell anymore. Jesus, our light, has destroyed the powers of darkness. The Lord has become our salvation.

Are you living in sin and without Christ? If you are, repent and believe in the Lord as your only Saviour and Lord. When you are saved, God will make you grow in His image. This means God will teach you the good qualities that He has – humility, faith, kindness, wisdom and selflessness, to name a few. Once you are His child, God will watch over you every day. With God, you need not fear the future.

Complete one of the statements with a word beginning with “s”.

The Lord is my

(Unscramble - TASNAILOV)



Thought: Am I walking in the light today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are my light and my salvation. Help me to be more like You day by day. It is very tough for daily, I face temptation to get angry for the wrong reason, to get jealous, to be who I want to be instead of being who You want me to be. But Heavenly Father, please help me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

WAIT ON THE LORD

God wants His children to patiently rely on Him in all things. Sometimes, even after praying to God about something, the answer may not seem very clear to you right away. Sometimes you may have to wait for a month, a year or even several years.

Be patient. Being demanding is not only being self-centred, but unwise as well. God, in His goodness and wisdom, knows when is the best time to supply your needs.

When we wait for a long time, we might become weak and discouraged. We think that God does not hear us or does not care. That is not true. Perhaps He thinks you are not ready to receive what you asked for. For example, you ask to become the class monitor next year. Let's say God plans to let you be one. However, God makes you the class monitor the following year instead, after you have had more time to grow into a good leader.

God simply wants us to be strong and have good courage as you wait. God will also strengthen your heart. Have you grown tired of asking the Lord for some things in your life? The psalmist says, "Wait, I say, on the Lord."

Write down 3 things you've had to wait some time for, even after praying to God about them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Did you eventually get them?

If not, what do you think could be the reason?

Thought: Do I pray according to God's will or my will?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me the lesson of patience. Your timetable is the best, so please help me learn to trust in You and follow Your time, not mine. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

BLESSEDNESS OF SINS FORGIVEN

Here we see a sinner praying before the throne of God. He is like the publican mentioned in Luke 18:10-14. He is burdened by the knowledge of unconfessed sin within his heart, and comes very sorry and sad for what he had done, to ask God for forgiveness. He is very humble for he knows that he has offended and grieved the thrice-holy God who also loves him.

When he knows that the Lord hears and forgives him, his joy is great. He counts himself most blessed. He knows that God has shown him great mercy which he does not deserve.

Another man prayed, but he is different from the publican. In Luke 18:10-14, the self-righteous Pharisee thought he followed the law diligently. He thought he never sinned. So he came to God proudly, never confessing his sins. He never experienced the joy of sins forgiven. Instead, his sins remained with him and the anger of the Lord was upon him.

Have you confessed your sins to the Lord?

Colour the following pictures.

Put a tick against the man whose sins will be forgiven.



Thought: To keep silent about our sins is wrong.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, make me aware and come to You to confess my sins every day, for You are faithful and just to forgive my sins. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

FRET NOT BECAUSE OF EVILDOERS

If you were falsely accused of copying during a test, how would you feel? Of course, the answer is “terrible”. What if the accuser was the one who actually copied? That would make you feel worse! There are people like that, whether children or adults. These are what the bible calls “evildoers”, those who live their lives without regard for others and God.

Sometimes we see evildoers enjoying prosperity. They seem to be happy and enjoy luxuries. God says we are not to fret over it, thinking that it is very unfair. We are not to be envious or jealous of them. Although we are poorer or suffer more, the Lord is righteous in all His acts.

God’s Word says that the wicked will soon be cut down. The destruction of the ungodly will be speedy, sudden, sure and complete. Like wild grass, they are soon cut down and withered. Their glory and power is only for a moment, but those who trust in the Lord and delight in living righteously, will live with God forever.

We will enjoy the Lord’s blessings here on earth, and are also promised eternal life with Him. With this knowledge, why should we envy those whose glory is merely like wild grass?

Circle the right words.

Evildoers will pass away as quickly as...

Flowers
Grass Vapour
Herbs Rocks

Thought: God will never leave or forsake His children (Hebrews 13:5).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, feed me with more of Your truth and I shall increase in my faith. Teach me to be contented, for You have blessed and promised me so much. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

THE RIGHTEOUS IS RICHER

If you became really poor, how do you think you would be living your life each day? Would you still be having at least three meals a day? Would you buy food, books and toys less often? Would you stop using the air-conditioner at home?

Now in contrast, what if you became really wealthy? How do you think you would be living your life each day? Do you think you prefer such a lifestyle or the previous one?

Here again in this psalm, the Lord reminds us that the little a righteous man has is much better than abundant riches of the wicked. This is a good reminder for us – the world has many temptations that might make us envious. Let's say your family can afford a video game set such as Wii. Video games cost more than card games such as Uno. If your friends have the latest game versions and consoles, you'll also likely want to buy them to enjoy the same thrill as they. You'll likely want to keep up with your friends. Are you able to feel no envy if your family can't afford the new versions? Will having the latest game or toy make you feel you're better than your friends? If yes, isn't this pride?

The riches of the wicked will be their undoing. Like the breaking of one's arms from a high fall, God will render them weak. In time, their power to do evil things shall be taken away. At the same time, God always remembers the righteous and strengthens them.

Read Psalm 37 verses 16 and 17 again. When would a man who has little be better than a man who has much?

Answer: _____

Thought: What will make me truly rich?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me love You and wisely use what You have blessed me with. Help me not to crave physical things and to know contentment for whatever You have given me through my parents. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

THE STEPS OF A GOOD MAN

Only when one believes in Jesus Christ would God see us as righteous. Otherwise, even all the good deeds that you do will be counted dung because you are not in Christ. Once a person believes and trusts in the Lord, not only is he a good man in God's eyes, but the Lord will also guide his steps.

When God orders our steps, it means that wherever we go and whatever we do are known and fixed for our good by the almighty and gracious God. Nothing happens by chance. God is in charge and in control of our lives. In fact, God takes delight in all that we do as we become the object of His divine favour. He is concerned for us, in all the trials and joys of our lives.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. So, we trust the goodness of the Lord even though we:

- 1. fail in our test or examination, because failure makes us lean on God's wisdom and not on our own.
- 2. get sick, because in this sinful world there are a lot of germs and bacteria.

3. _____

because _____

4. _____

because _____



Thought: God knows and guides each step that you take.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please order my steps and let me not think that I am wiser or smarter than You in making good decisions in my life. Remind me, Heavenly Father, that the way to peace and happiness is to follow You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

SORRY FOR MY SINS

Some of you probably know by now that “iniquity” is sin. All of us are guilty of iniquity. We are often selfish and do not care whether our parents, siblings or friends are hurt by our selfish demands. We are only interested in play and do not care enough for those who are sick or lonely. We are greedy and fight with our brothers and sisters over food, clothes and toys. Are you sorry for your sins?

The psalmist here says he is ready to declare and admit his sins. Such open confession is good for the soul. When the Word of God tells us that it is wrong to be selfish, greedy and lazy, we should quickly go to God to confess, ask for forgiveness and cleansing from God.

God will not hear our prayers if we hide sin in our hearts. How do we know this? Psalm 66:18 says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”.

God will hear and forgive you if you come to Him with a penitent heart. He will hear and forgive you if you don’t want to sin anymore.

We should be sorry for our sins even though nobody knows it because:

1. _____ knows.
2. Sin hinders our _____ to God and He will not answer.
3. Sin breaks our friendship and _____ with others.

Unscramble these helping words:

raprey shifplowel ogd



SIN

Thought: God, who is holy, hates sin.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please search me and know my heart. If there be any wickedness in me. Please show it to me so that I can confess and seek forgiveness. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

“OUT OF AN HORRIBLE PIT”

Have you ever been in a physical pit? It must have been terrible, dirty and scary.

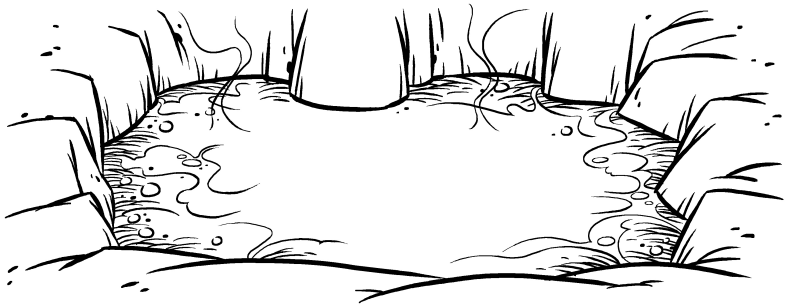
David shares a distressing and troubling situation that he was in. David describes his situation in verse 2 like being in a horrible pit of miry clay. How can David get out of such a situation? David must have felt helpless and very discouraged. He must have been very depressed. David could not deliver himself and neither could any man help David.

David realised that only God could deliver him out of his predicament. So, in verse 1, David cried out to the Lord in prayer and waited patiently for Him. David committed his situation before the Lord. He had confidence that God was able to deliver him.

What was the outcome of David’s prayer? God heard and answered David’s prayer. Verse 2 tells us that God brought David out of the distressing situation was in.

Have you been in a difficult situation like David? Perhaps it could be anxiety over school exams or anxiety over one of you family members who fallen seriously ill. Pray to the Lord and trust in Him for His help.

Write appropriate words in the pit to describe the horrible pit.



Helping words: stinking bright torturous dark rotten
muddy cosy bare hot painful deep

Thought: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the assurance that I can turn to you whenever I face difficult situations in life. Thank You for Your providence and protection in my life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

A NEW SONG IN MY HEART

The Lord Jesus Christ is our solid rock who will hold us up fast in this life. Not only that, He has also given us a new song in our hearts. It means you will praise God with new zeal and meaning, which you weren't able to do before you became a believer. Your praise and what you say about God will be about how wonderful and gracious God is. Because of Him, you have escaped the horrible punishment for your sins in hell. Because of Him, you will enjoy worshipping and serving God in heaven forever.

Singing lifts up the discouraged, lightens the load of the weary, and good Christian hymns and songs bring us closer to God. I'm sure you've been blessed by wonderful words and tunes in hymns or choruses.

What is your favourite hymn or song?

Answer: _____

Heaven will be filled with music and song (Revelation 5:9).
We will sing a new song there too!

(Use these helping words to fill in the blanks: good, better, best.)

WORSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS _____

WORSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS _____

WORSHIP IN HEAVEN WILL BE THE _____

Thought: Good Christian songs help me in my Christian life!

Prayer: Thank you, Heavenly Father, for the joy of being one of Your redeemed. Please help me share about Your goodness and love to the people around me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

MANY ARE GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS

The Lord has done so many wonderful things that David the psalmist says it is impossible for him to number, arrange in order, or even speak of.

One of the wonderful works of the Lord of course is His work of creation. You can read about His handiwork in Genesis 1 and 2.

God also does the wonderful work of providence when He shows His care and love for you and me, and to the people who make up the nation of Israel. The song, "He is Able", tells us "He healed the broken-hearted and set the captive free, He made the lame to walk again, caused the blind to see".

We must also never forget God's wonderful work of redemption. The work that Jesus Christ has done on the cross, living a perfect life on earth and laying down His life for sinners such as you and me, is a wonder of wonders. It is a wonder of grace that God even chooses us and awakens us from our lost condition. It is a wonder that He makes us to know that Jesus is the only One who can save and rescue us. By ourselves, we can never know God. It is certainly the wonderful work of God.

Every animal is a wonderful creation of God. Fill in the blanks by unscrambling the helping words:

1. The strength of the _____
– that turned not its back from the sword. (esorh)
2. The majesty of the _____
– making her nest on high. (geale)
3. The freedom of the wild _____
– ranging the wilderness and mountains. (sas)
4. The beauty of the _____
– with its goodly wings. (keapcoc)

Thought: Can I count the wonderful works the Lord has done for me today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may I always remember, give praise for and joyfully tell about the many wonderful works You have done in my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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