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## FOCUSING ON PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE

This month's study is on special people of the Bible. They have different backgrounds and lived at different times. However, there is a common thread that runs through their lives. There is something we can learn from all of them.

Dear children, you may be just a child, but you are very important in the eyes of your parents, who love you dearly. Even more important are you to God, your Heavenly Father!

Do be a good child for that will encourage your parents and give them a lot of joy. Also, if you are a child of God, you will want to be a good example to your siblings and friends, don't you?

Colour the star for the things a child of God would do –

- ☆ Do not want to go to Sunday School
- ☆ Like to fight with brother or sister or classmate
- ☆ Like to read God's Word
- ☆ Stay up late to watch TV on Saturday night  
and wake up late for church
- ☆ Pray (talk to God) every day
- ☆ Enjoy studying God's Word in Sunday School
- ☆ Want to tell others about the Lord Jesus
- ☆ Want to say "grace" (give thanks to God) before eating
- ☆ Willing to share and help others
- ☆ Be obedient and respectful to parents
- ☆ Get angry if you do not get your way
- ☆ Must always win, or else throw a tantrum

Thought: Am I a child of God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please remind me that being a child of Yours, I must trust in You to change my life so that I will bear a good testimony to others. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## JESUS CHRIST – THE HOLY CHILD

You already know this: God so loved you and me that He sent His Son to save us from our sins. His Son is Jesus, and the name means “Saviour” (the One who saves). By the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born as a babe in Bethlehem. The Lord Jesus is Immanuel (God with us).

However, how often do we not realise how much God loves us? He sent His only Son for you and me! God the Father was willing to give up His only Son to suffer, be tormented and ridiculed, and eventually die for us!

What is your most treasured possession on earth? Could be a book or teddy bear or a lovely souvenir. How will you react should you have to part with it and give it to someone who is unkind, or someone who treats you like an enemy? Surely you will protest because you would rather not do it!

However, God gave us the holy child Jesus, even when we were sinners and enemies of God. Reflect on how good a child He was and let us learn from Him. Dear reader, the Lord Jesus is the perfect example for us to follow. He already died on the cross for your sins. Repent and believe in Him today!

- a. Write out the meaning of the words in bold?

Jesus is **Saviour** - \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus is **Immanuel** - \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Is the Lord Jesus king of your life? YES / NO

Thought: Am I sorry for all the bad things I had done?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to love You and to follow Your example. I have lots to learn, please help me to be diligent and patient to learn as I read my Bible and do my quiet time with the Junior RPG daily. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## ABEL – THE OBEDIENT SON

Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. Although nothing is written about their childhood, we read that they grew up and eventually brought offerings to the Lord. One assumption we can make is that their parents must have taught them about God. Abel's offering was accepted by the Lord (Genesis 4:4). We also read in Hebrews 11:4a - "By faith offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." From this, we can see that Abel, the younger boy, must have been an obedient child. He would have heard and followed instructions on how to worship the Lord.

Dear reader, do you know the Lord Jesus loves you and can forgive all your sins if you trust Him? Be obedient like Abel and have faith in the Lord Jesus. Then you will be accepted as a child of God.

Fill in the blanks. How important is faith?

1. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing  
by the \_\_\_\_\_ of God (Romans 10:17).
2. For we \_\_\_\_\_ by faith,  
not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).
3. But without \_\_\_\_\_ it is impossible  
to please him (Hebrews 11:6a).

Thought: When was the last time I disobeyed God or my parents? Why?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to be an obedient child to my parents, for in doing so, I am obeying You. I know there have been many times I've been naughty, so please teach me to change to be a better child. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## CAIN – THE ANGRY SON

Do you remember yesterday's discussion? Cain was the first son of Adam and Eve, in fact the first child in the whole world! What an opportunity to do something for the Lord!

However, we remember him for something much less honourable. You see, his offering to the Lord was rejected by the Lord. Why? Because he did not offer by faith and his offerings were not of the type the Lord required. As the first born, you can imagine his parents would have loved him so much and would have taught him as much as they taught his younger brother, Abel. Abel turned out well, but not Cain. Eventually, we know that Cain even killed Abel, because he was jealous of him. This is just so sad, the first child of the world grew up to be the first murderer of the world.

How did Cain become a murderer? He allowed his evil thoughts to slowly fester, and become worse and worse. Instead of fighting sin, he accommodated it. And what did Cain allow to grow – his anger. Verse 5 tells us he was very wroth – or very furious.

Dear reader, learn not to be like Cain. If you have any anger that is selfish, recognise that it is wrong and you must STOP allowing sin to grow more. Every human being has been angry for the wrong reason. Even little babies get angry for wrong reasons – listen to how some of them wail because they are denied a toy or something they want.

If you're angry because someone misuses the name of Jesus or God, that's a different matter. But very often, we're angry because we think someone is not nice to us, or our pride is hurt, or we just get irritated. Dear child, recognise that anger is usually sin!

Who would  
you rather be?



Thought: When was the last time you were angry for wrong reason?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me never to be like Cain, who allowed his anger to worsen and turn into something much more terrible. I confess I've been angry for wrong reasons, and I pray for Your forgiveness. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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**ENOCH – SON OF CAIN**

Cain married and had a son named Enoch. Cain built the first city in the world, and named it after his son. The Bible tells us Cain's descendants were not godly and although not much is said of Enoch, we may guess he was prideful with the first city in the world named after him. However, please do not confuse this Enoch with another Enoch who was a good and godly man (see reading for 8th October).

Only great, wealthy or powerful people have their names remembered by roads (eg - Robinson Road), or schools (eg - Gan Eng Seng Secondary School) or buildings (eg - Tung Centre) named after them. For an entire city to be named after someone, that person must have been so thrilled and proud.

May we learn not to proud, and yearn for the things and treasures of the world. These we cannot bring to heaven!

Put the following statements under the correct column -

can be stolen by thieves	can become rusty or spoilt
safe from thieves	cannot become spoilt
can be lost	bad people may cheat me of my treasure
cannot be lost	no person can cheat me of my treasure
at death I cannot see it	after death I can see it

Treasures in Heaven

Treasures on earth


Thought: May I build on heavenly treasures so that I can bring them to heaven!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to give more of myself and my possessions to You so that I may learn to build treasures in heaven, and not on earth. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## SETH – HE WHO CHOSE GOOD OVER EVIL

Seth was the 3rd son of Adam and Eve. He was a faithful man and worshipped God like his brother Abel. God blessed Seth and his descendants, for they too believed and followed God. Through them, God's promise of the coming Messiah (the Lord Jesus Christ) would come to pass. Thus, the line of Seth is called the "royal" line.

He must have known what happened to his brothers, and chose good over evil. Dear reader, we have choices to make every day. In schools and at play, we can clearly see some acquaintances or friends that will be people who influence you in the wrong way. Keep away from them. Be like Seth, who chose good over evil.

Word Search –

You would be able to find these words...

JESUS	GOD	NOAH	SETH	CHILDREN
EVE	ABEL	CAIN	ADAM	ENOCH SAVIOR

C H I L D R E N X E H  
 N X N X X G X S V X O  
 X I X O X O L E B A S  
 X M A D A D X T X X E  
 E N O C H H X H X X A  
 J E S U S A V I O U R

Thought: Make the right choice: good over bad!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give me the wisdom to know right from wrong, and the strength to do it. I know that sometimes, it seems easier to follow the crowd and do the wrong thing, but please give me strength and courage to dare to do the right thing. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## ENOS – COURAGE TO STAND UP FOR GOD

After Enos, the son of Seth was born, men began to call upon the name of the Lord. How did they do that? They separated (went away) from people who did not follow God. Instead, they got together with others who love God and who dare to stand up for Him. We would assume that through this, others came to believe in God and they began to meet to worship God.

Dear reader, do you dare to stand up for Jesus? Do you dare to tell others about Him whom you say is your Lord and Saviour? Do you dare to give thanks for food in school? Or stand up for someone who is bullied? If you dare to do it, it may encourage a Christian in class to also do so and in turn, he will also witness for Jesus. That could have a wonderful spin-off effect on others around you! Dear reader, you may be young, but you can do a lot for Jesus.

Check the references and write down the correct statement -  
As you search the Holy Word and learn to stand up for God,  
may the Lord teach you truth from these 4 verses.

my help comes from God    joy in the Lord  
peace of the Lord Jesus    who is on the Lord's side?

Exodus 32:26 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 121:2 \_\_\_\_\_

John 14:27 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 1:8 \_\_\_\_\_

Thought: When was the last time I stood up for Jesus?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, there are many times when I could be a better Christian. But I am weak. So please strengthen me so that I will look not at my weaknesses but at Your strength as I learn to stand up for You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## ENOCH – THE GOOD SON OF JARED

Is death inevitable for all humans? Interestingly, the answer is “No”. Today’s passage tells us that Enoch did not experience death! We do not know how “God took him”, but we know that Enoch was a righteous man. In fact, he was so godly that God gave him that very rare honour of not seeing death. There is another man in the Bible who did not experience death. Do you know who that is?

Although we may not be able to experience what Enoch did as he was “taken away” by God, but we can experience his closeness with God. How? One way is to have meaningful Quiet Time, plan your time to read and understand the Bible daily. But that is not all. Knowing about God is not closeness with God. We have to know God Himself, not know about Him. We must have a personal relationship with God.

Dear reader, what kind of a child do you think Enoch had been? He was a good child who had placed his trust and faith in God. Be like Enoch.

1. Read the Bible verse and write the correct one in the blanks below:

Jude 1:14-15    Genesis 5:24    Hebrews 11:5

Enoch pleased God \_\_\_\_\_

Enoch warned the wicked people that God will judge them \_\_\_\_\_

Enoch did not die; God took him to Heaven \_\_\_\_\_

2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the strongest), how much do you love and obey Jesus Christ? How can you improve on this score?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thought: Can others see my faith in the Lord Jesus?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the example of Enoch. May I learn to be like him, to place my trust in You more and more each day. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



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## ISHMAEL – THE UNKIND CHILD

Earlier we discussed the first son of Adam. Cain was his name and he was not a good man. Likewise, the first son of Abraham, Ishmael was not a kind child. We read in Genesis 21:9 that he was mocking (making fun of someone in an unkind way) baby Isaac, the 2<sup>nd</sup> son of Abraham. Ishmael seemed to be very jealous of the baby. Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, were sent away because of his misbehaving.

Dear reader, are you a kind child? To be kind means that you will be considerate and compassionate, putting others before you. Titus 3:4 tells of God's kindness and Colossians 3:12 reminds us that as God's people, we are to be kind!

Start being kind today. If this does not come naturally to you, do not worry. The Holy Spirit will help you, if you allow him to. Always pray for guidance on how to demonstrate kindness and think of the other person before you think of yourself. Slowly but surely, kindness will become part of you!

The words have been spelt backwards.  
Rearrange to read the message below.

**dna eb ey dnik eno ot rehtona,  
detraehrednet, gnivigrof eno rehtona,  
neve sa doG rof s'tsirhC ekas htah  
nevigrof uoy.**

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Thought: I want to start being kind today!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide me how to show kindness and love to people around me, starting with my family and friends. I've not been a kind child, but I want to start being kind today. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## ISAAC - THE SON OF PROMISE

According to God's promise, Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. Isaac must have been so precious to his parents and surely Abraham would have taught his son to love and obey God. One day, God told Abraham to do something that no father would think of doing which was to take up his son, Isaac up to a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. Do you think God really wanted Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? We now know He didn't.

The task God commanded Abraham to do was a test to strengthen Abraham's faith and his obedience in trusting God. God is a just and loving God. He will only want the best for His children.

Sometimes, God sends difficult times and situations to us in order that we be tested and through these tests, our faith would be strengthened. How did Abraham fare? Well, he obeyed God and he was prepared to sacrifice Isaac.

Isaac was obedient like his father. He neither struggled nor tried to escape during the incident. Isaac trusted in his father and more importantly in God. What would you do if you were Isaac? Do you know that by obeying your parents you are also obeying God?

Dear children, while you are praying do remember to pray for your parents. It is our duty to obey our parents and pray for them. Pray for God to strengthen their faith so that they can continue to be godly parents and role models. If you have not done so, you can start doing today. God will bless children who love their parents.

Thought: Do I trust in God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to not lean on my own understanding but to trust in You and pray without ceasing. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**ESAU – SACRIFICING WHAT IS PRECIOUS**

Yesterday we read of Isaac as a young boy. Today and tomorrow we will read about the children of Isaac. For years, Isaac and his wife Rebekah had no children and that pained them. Isaac prayed hard that God bless them with children and after twenty years, God answered his prayer with not one, but with a pair of twin boys! Esau, being the firstborn of the twin boys, he was given the birthright (a privilege which a person is entitled by birth). In this case, it was a privilege to inherit spiritual responsibilities and duties from his father, in his father's absence. However, Esau took his birthright for granted and sold it for food (Hebrews 12:16)! He did not understand the importance of things, and valued food more than his birthright.

On hindsight, that sounds unwise. But are we like Esau? Do we lose sight of that which is really valuable and go after things that are less important? Dear children, do you crave for the approval and fun of friends than for the quiet time of reading and obeying the precious Word of God?

Dear children, do you know what your spiritual responsibilities and duties are? May we learn NOT to be like Esau, but to strive to learn each day the spiritual things of God. May we learn to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and many other things shall be added unto us!

Read Matthew 6:31-33. What can you learn from these verses?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thought: May the Lord grant us spiritual wisdom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me to treasure spiritual things over earthly things. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## JACOB – THE USURPER

Jacob was the younger twin brother of Esau. Jacob's name means "usurper" in Hebrew. After Esau was born, Jacob followed very soon after, with his hand holding onto Esau's heel.

Later in life, Jacob under the influence of his mother Rebekah, committed a sin to deceive his father, Isaac after learning that his father planned to give his spiritual and inheritance blessing to Esau. Jacob disguised himself as his brother Esau and received the blessing from his father. Isaac may have gone against God's will by wanting to bless Esau. However, it is not right for Rebekah and Jacob to take matters into their hands, to deceive Isaac for the intended blessings. We learnt later in the Bible that all three of them were punished for their sins.

God will always punish sin, sooner or later. Have your sins been forgiven? Come to the Lord Jesus now. Tomorrow may be too late!

Read the Bible verse below and answer the following questions:

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. (Proverbs 15:3).

1. If you do it in secret, no one will know?      YES/NO
2. Can you keep any secret from God?            YES/NO
3. If you sin, can you escape punishment?      YES/NO
4. You will definitely be punished for your sin YES/NO

*[NOTE: the correct answer is NO for questions 1 -3]*

Thought: God is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to repent and seek Your forgiveness, every time I sin against you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## JOSEPH – THE LORD WAS WITH HIM

We now move on to the next generation – the children of Jacob.

The second youngest son of Jacob and Rachel, Joseph was also his father's favourite. Jacob gave him a beautiful coat of many colours. In those days, a colourful coat is very expensive and rare. Because of this gift and Jacob's love towards his son, Joseph was well hated by his ten older brothers.

As a young boy, Joseph had 2 dreams, both of which were interpreted to mean that he would have dominion over all his older brothers and his parents, and they will one day bow down to him. Upon hearing this, it further angered his brothers and their hatred and jealousy grew. Joseph was eventually captured and sold off as a slave by his older brothers when he was out looking for them.

Dear reader, young Joseph loved God “and the Lord was with Joseph” (Genesis 39:2). Many years later, his dreams came true and he became the second most powerful man in Egypt! His dreams were not his own desire to be lording over others; his dreams were from God! Let us learn to be like Joseph – to trust God. And when you trust the Lord, He will protect you because God will be with you.

Break the CODE and  
write out the message:

A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L
M	N	O	P	R	S	T	U	V	W

**MCO LP VCDL HTMH MWW HTUCSG LDFV HDSPHTPF  
RDF SDDO HD HTPA HTMH WDKP SDO, HD HTPA LTD  
MFP HTP NMWWPO MNNDFOUCS HD TUG EIFEDGP”  
(FDAMCG 8:28)**

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Thought: Do I trust God only when things are going well?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to trust You in good as well as in bad times. May I learn to be like Joseph, to constantly trust in You, in whatever circumstances of life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## MOSES – CORRECT PRIORITIES IN LIFE

Most of us are familiar with the account of Moses: as a baby, he was saved by God from potential death. Pharaoh had ordered all Hebrew baby boys to be killed as soon as they were born but his mother was brave enough to hide him. She hid him for 3 months, and when she could no longer do so, she placed him in a basket made of papyrus plant which was coated with tar, and set afloat down the River Nile.

Crocodiles could have taken him for a light snack, or the waters could have easily engulfed him; but with God as protector, nothing could harm baby Moses. According to God's plan, Pharaoh's daughter found baby Moses and adopted him as her son. She then summoned Moses' mother and paid her to take care of baby Moses. How God takes care of His people!

When Moses grew up and learnt of his real identity, he refused the trappings of the wealth of Egypt and followed God (Hebrew 11:24-26). He chose to suffer affliction with God's people and gave up the wealth and status of a prince of Egypt.

Mark 8:36 teaches, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This Bible verse confirms that what Moses did was indeed wise, for it is true that the value of his soul far exceeds that of everything in this world. Why? Because everything in this world will one day perish, but the rescued soul will live forever in Heaven with God! Dear children, do you have the right priorities in life like Moses?



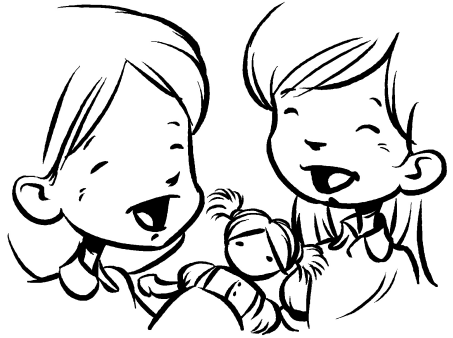
Thought: What am I willing to sacrifice for Jesus?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach me how to love You above anything on earth. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## MIRIAM – LOVE OF A SISTER

Moses had an older sister – Miriam. Remember her mother built a papyrus basket for baby Moses? Surely Miriam helped to prepare the boat. Continuing with this amazing account, the Bible tells us she stood by the River Nile to watch what would happen to her baby brother. The very act of watching her



brother is one of bravery. Why? Would danger not befall her? That is very possible as the Egyptians were not kind towards the Hebrew people. In fact, they were downright cruel, for the Pharaoh ordered the killing of all Hebrew baby boys! As a Hebrew, she must have been afraid that Pharaoh's daughter could be as cruel as him!

Despite any fear, she was ready to help, out of love for her baby brother.

Dear children, how much do you love your brother or sister? God has a special reason for placing them in your life. We often hear of stories of sisters and brothers not getting along. May this not be said of you and your siblings.

Know that your sister or brother loves you even though they may not say it. Remember the times when they were concerned for you. Although there may be also times they were inconsiderate or naughty towards you, it does not mean they do not love you. Like you, they are not perfect. They are trying to love you more. Would you try to love them more?

Thought: God has placed my sister or brother in my life for a purpose!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to love my brother and sister the way You have loved me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## SAMSON – BLESSED BUT PROUD

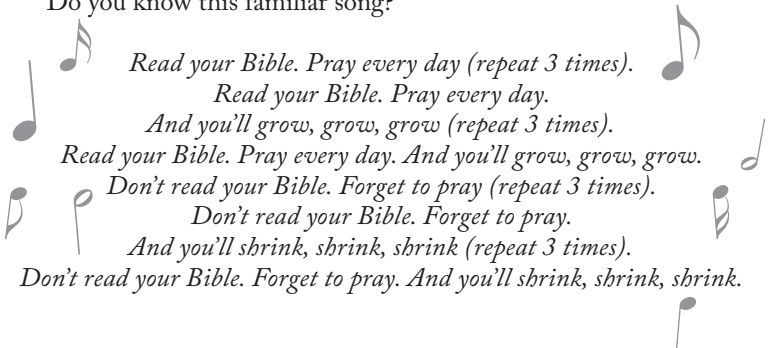
An angel of the Lord appeared and promised Manoah & his wife a son. Today's scripture reading tells us that "the child (Samson) grew, and the Lord blessed him." Samson grew up well. But as he grew up, he loved himself more than God. He was blessed by God with phenomenal strength, but eventually, trusted more in the strength than in the Giver of that strength. He wanted his own way and so sinned against the Lord many times. In the end he lost his eyesight due to his disobedience (Judges 16:20-21).

Dear children, you may claim to believe in the Lord and may even be attending Sunday School every Lord's Day. But when you grow older, would you remain faithful? When you become a teenager, would you stray from Jesus?

Are we possibly like Samson, who loved making himself happy rather than making God happy? Or are we, like Samson, trusting in the gift God gave rather than in the God who gave? Some of you may be good in your studies or play a musical instrument well; or come from a wealthy family. Whatever the Lord may have blessed you with, make sure these gifts do not replace God's place in your life.

You must learn to love God and His Word more each day. This way, you will not only start well, but end well, following the Lord all the way to Heaven. How? By reading and obeying His Word!

Do you know this familiar song?



Thought: How much time do I spend with the Lord every day?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please grant me discipline to pray without ceasing and have diligence in reading Thy Word every day. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



## LAD WHO LED BLIND SAMSON

Samson grew up to be a powerful man but eventually, he was tricked by a woman and captured by the Philistines, the enemies of the children of Israel. They were cruel, they made Samson go blind in both eyes and during their celebration party, they wanted to make fun of blind Samson. So they sent a lad (a young boy) to lead Samson from the prison. The lad could be one of the slaves and an Israelite, like Samson. Samson asked the boy to help him touch the middle pillars of the building (Judges 16:26). These pillars held up the whole building. Samson prayed, then pushed and the whole building fell down, killing the 3,000 Philistines there.



Dear children, do you realise that God used the young boy to help Samson to destroy his enemies? It may seem like an insignificant act by just leading Samson to the pillars. But with God, every act counts. Because God has a plan for every one of us. If the young boy were a believer, he would be promoted to heaven if he were to die that day, for to be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord.

You may still be young but you have a role to play wherever you are.

As a student, be diligent and study well. As a son or daughter, be filial to your parents. When you interact with your siblings and friends, be kind and considerate.

Thought: Do I live an obedient life?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for today's reminder that I must be an obedient child. Please help me to learn daily to do my best for Thee. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## SAMUEL – THE FAITHFUL PRIEST

Hannah was a godly woman who was sad as she was childless. In those days, married women who are without child were deemed to be without God's blessing. She then prayed fervently, and pledged to the Lord that should she be blessed with a son, she would dedicate her son to serve the Lord fulltime.

So, little Samuel, at around 3 years old, was brought to live and work in the temple. Though young, Samuel was faithful, and favoured by God and men (1 Samuel 2:26). He was about 12 years old, when the Lord called him 4 times, as he was sleeping.

Dear children, do you know how young Samuel answered the Lord? 1 Samuel 3:10 tells us he answered this way, "Speak; for thy servant heareth." Samuel was ready to listen and obey God's Word and when he grew up, he became a prophet and ruler of his people.

What was the secret to his life? Obedience. Dear child, you too may be a blessing to others. You may be just a child but you too, can serve the Lord in many ways. Do you obey God and His word?

How can I serve the Lord? Put a (+) to the correct statements below:

- ( ) Tell others about how the Lord Jesus died for their sins.
- ( ) Invite my neighbour or friend to Sunday School.
- ( ) Spend most of my free time watching TV or playing computer games.
- ( ) Some Sundays I must stay home because I like to sleep late.
- ( ) Memorise Bible verses to share with others.
- ( ) Give tracts to my classmates.
- ( ) Lazy to attend Sunday School every Sunday.

Thought: Do I want to serve the Lord now?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to learn to serve Thee diligently starting from today. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## DAVID – FAITH IN SPIRITUAL BATTLES

David was a brave shepherd boy who loved God. People thought he was “only a shepherd”, but he was more than that – he was a firm believer in God and a brave defender of the flocks under his care. He had tasted of God’s goodness as the Lord protected him and the sheep from various wild animals.

The Bible passage for today tells us of an unlikely scenario – he was bringing food for his brothers who were soldiers in King Saul’s army. When he approached their camp, he was shocked to see Israelite soldiers fearful of an enemy giant – Goliath – and he decided that with God’s help, he’d fight this giant!

To prepare David for the fight, King Saul wanted to suit David with the usual armour but as the Bible passage reminds us, David preferred not to. Instead, he went with just his sling and 5 small stones. To the military world, that must be suicidal, for Goliath was a huge, fierce, powerful and experienced warrior! And David – he was but a boy. But they forgot David’s secret weapon. Do you know what was it?

David had faith. He believed that God would be with him as he approached the towering giant. And we know how this account ended – David killed Goliath with the flinging of just one stone straight into the enemy’s forehead.



We may not be fighting giants now but we are all struggling to fight the temptation to be selfish, angry, impatient and the list goes on. Let us be like David, to trust that God will help us. And learn to face our challenges according to what God’s Word teaches us. When it seems natural to be angry for something wrong done against us, let us learn to be kind. When it seems natural to be selfish and think of ourselves before others, let us learn to remember the

song: Jesus first, then others, then you!

Thought: Faith in God changes things and more importantly, me!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to recognise the need to live an obedient and godly life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## THE BOY WHO OBEYS HIS MASTER

Jonathan was the son of King Saul, king of Israel. King Saul was very jealous of David and how it appeared that God wanted David to be the next king. King Saul refused to obey God's will for he wanted his son, Jonathan to take over and so Saul tried to kill David. Poor David had to hide. However, Jonathan and David were very good friends. Jonathan was a godly young man who despite knowing that he would NOT be the next king, he was determined to help David to take over the throne from his father! So he helped David to find out the king's plan. They arranged the place, the time and the signal. David watched from his hiding place as Jonathan shot the arrow beyond the young boy, whom Jonathan brought along. His duty was to retrieve the arrows. Then Jonathan shouted to the boy, "Make speed, haste, stay not" - it was the message for David to escape.

Dear children, that young boy didn't know why he was asked to do what he did, but he obeyed his master. Why? Because he trusted his master. Jonathan may have been a good master to him. Hence, although he did not know the purpose of his task, this young boy fulfilled his important role well.

Sometimes, we may feel that way, don't we? We are told in the Bible to obey the Lord, not to be selfish but to be kind and patient with others. We may not fully understand or even agree at times but let us continue to obey, for Jesus our Lord and Master loves us dearly and only want the best for us.

Thought: Do I obey my Master?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to always trust and obey Thee. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## JONATHAN – THE PRINCE WHO LOVED GOD

Today's Bible passage is similar to yesterday's passage but we'd learn a different lesson. God's Words are so packed with precious truths that from a single passage, many lessons can be learnt. Yesterday we focused on the young boy who obeys his master; we'd focus on Jonathan today.

Let's first learn 2 lessons from this young man. He was the son of the first king of Israel. Being the first crown prince of Israel, he lived a privileged life, surrounded with much wealth and power. Yet, he was a kind, humble and considerate young prince. Are you like Jonathan? Do you treat your friends with respect and are kind to them regardless of their family background and status? This is the first lesson we may learn from Jonathan.

The other lesson is that Jonathan was a godly young prince, who loved God and obeyed His will. As a crown prince, he was expected to succeed the throne as the king of Israel from his father King Saul. But Jonathan knew that it was God's will that David, his friend would be the next king. Instead of plotting to kill David like his father, Jonathan helped David to escaped. Will you be like Jonathan? Always obeying God's Word and doing what pleases Him? Will you take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ?

Thought: Do I obey God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to love and obey Thy will daily. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH – FAITH IN GOD’S POWER

God directed His prophet, Elijah to go to Zarephath and there he met a widow who was gathering sticks. Elijah asked the widow for some water and she promptly went to fetch some. Then Elijah asked for a morsel of bread. Because of drought (no rain) and famine (no food), the widow only had a handful of flour and a little oil left, which she planned to make a last meal for herself and her son before they both die of hunger when they run out of food. Elijah said unto her, “Fear not; go and do as thou has said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son” (1 Kings 17:13). The widow obeyed. Because of her faith and obedience, the Lord rewarded her. Her food supply never ran out until the day God sent rain upon the earth to end the drought and famine.

One day the widow’s little son fell ill and died. Elijah carried the child to his bed in the guest chamber. Elijah prayed, then stretched himself three times upon the child and cried out to the Lord God to revive him. God answered Elijah’s prayer. The widow’s son was brought back to life! How happy the widow must have been! Do you turn to God in prayer in times of trouble? Let us follow Elijah’s example to pray faithfully for God’s guidance.

Dear children, do you realise that we experience the first miracle everyday? Every day God provides food for us. Although man may think it is his own power and wealth that brings food to the table, we must remember it is God’s goodness that He continues to flourish the earth. That is why we must be thankful for the food and give thanks, or say “grace” before eating.

How about the second miracle? Know that God is able to answer our prayers according to His will. We need to have the faith to believe. The widow of Zarephath believed that God was able to raise her son back from the dead if He so willed. God through Elijah, restored her son back to life. Let us be like the widow of Zarephath and exercise faith in God’s power when we come before Him with our prayers and petitions.

Thought: God is able to answer our prayers according to His will.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to exercise faith when I come before You with my prayers and petitions. Thank You for all Thy goodness and provisions. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## ELISHA – THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Elijah the prophet had a disciple called Elisha. One day in Shunem, Elisha met a kind Shunammite woman who offered him bread to eat. Since then, the kind woman will prepare bread for Elisha whenever he passed by her house. She believed that Elisha is a holy man of God, hence she and her husband made a little chamber for Elisha to take rest whenever he came. The Shunammite woman and her old husband were without child. Upon learning this, Elisha promised the Shunammite woman a son to reward her kindness, a gift from God.

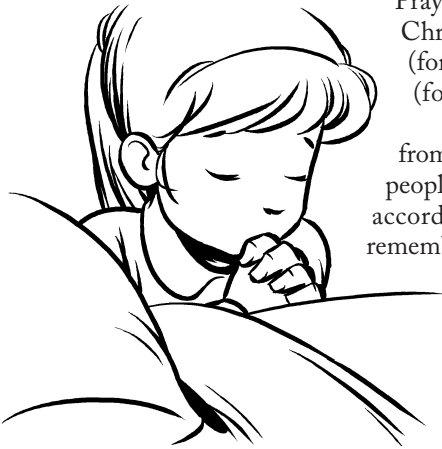
The woman conceived and bore a son at the time Elisha had promised. However, one day her grown son fell ill and died. She went to seek Elisha's help to save her son. Elisha followed her and upon entering the house, Elisha went into the chamber and saw the child lying on his bed. Elisha closed the chamber's door and prayed with great faith to God. God healed the child in response to Elisha's prayer.

Dear children, this story is almost the same as yesterday's story, where the prophet Elijah brought the widow's dead son back to life again. What was the first thing done by both the prophets? They prayed!

Prayer is such an important part of the Christian's life. Look at 1 Kings 17:20 (for Elijah's prayer) and 2 Kings 4: 33 (for Elisha's prayer).

The healing power comes from God alone. God uses different people to serve Him in different ways, according to His sovereign will. But remember God's work must be done in God's way, and God's way is that we turn to Him in prayer!

How often do you pray?  
How long do you pray? How serious are you when you pray?



Thought: Do I pray for God's guidance how to do His work, in His way and in His time?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to pray without ceasing and read Thy Word faithfully every day. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## THE FAITHFUL LITTLE SLAVE GIRL

Do you thank God for your parents and your siblings? Do you thank God that you can see them every day and spend family time together? In today's Bible passage, we read about a little girl who was captured during a war and was brought to a foreign land from Israel to Syria to be a slave. She served the wife of a great man in Syria named Naaman. He was powerful and favoured by the king, but he was sick. He had leprosy, a disease that will cause body parts and joints to rot and eventually die. We learnt from the passage that Naaman's leprosy was healed by God with the help of the young slave.

In those days, once a person becomes a slave, they will be a slave for the rest of their lives, unless someone redeemed them. Though the little girl was made a slave against her will and will never to see her family again, she remained faithful to God. She demonstrated her faith by helping her master. She informed her master's wife that Elisha the prophet could heal the master from leprosy. She was a faithful servant to her earthly master because she knew that all things that happen in her life are according to the will of God. Though in slavery, she continued to trust and obey God.

Will you be like this little slave to trust and obey God when you are faced with trouble in school or at home? Will you help those who have been unkind to you when they need help?

Dear children, you too can be like the little slave girl. You can be God's little missionary in school or at play, by being kind and helping those who have been unkind. Be a good obedient child at home and be considerate towards your brother and sister. By doing so, people will see Jesus in you and one day, they too may want to come to know Jesus Christ.

Thought: I can be a local missionary and point others to Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to trust and obey Thee increasingly each day so that I can be a good witness for Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



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## LITTLE JOASH – GOD’S PROTECTION AMIDST ADVERSITY

Joash also known as Jehoash was one year old when his father, King Ahaziah of Judah was killed. His mother Zibiah was from Beersheba. Little Joash was helpless when his evil grandmother, Athaliah took over the throne. She ordered the killing of all the king’s sons who were descendants of King David. Athaliah did not know that Little Joash was saved by his aunt, Jehosheba, who was the sister of King Ahaziah. Athaliah ruled Judah for six years and Little Joash was hiding and living in the house of the Lord all this time.

Can you imagine how tragic and sad it must have been for Joash to have such an evil and wicked grandmother? She loved money and power over kinship. When Joash was 7 years old, Jehoiada the priest, led the rulers and soldiers to overthrow Queen Athaliah and had her killed. Joash was made king at the young age of seven. He was taught by Jehoiada and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 12:2).

Dear children, as you read about the life of Joash and his evil grandmother, may you learn about God’s providential care and protection over you as you live your life. God through Jehosheba, saved Joash’s life. Through this lesson may you learn to be grateful for godly parents or guardians who love and take care of you. God has appointed them to look after you.

Write down what you could do to show your appreciation to your parents:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Thought: How I must be grateful to my parents and elders!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to always be grateful for the blessings and trials in my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## JOSIAH – THE SPIRITUAL KING

Josiah became king of Judah when he was only 8 years old. His father Amon lived a wicked life and did that which was evil in God's sight. Because of his wickedness, his life was cut short. He died at the age of 24 years old and he had only been a king for 2 years. Unlike his father, Josiah was king for 31 years

Josiah was a humble and spiritual king. He followed God's teaching through Hilkiah, the high priest. As he grew up, he continued to seek after God. He ordered Hilkiah to repair God's temple and sent men to destroy all the idol altars in Judah. When a copy of God's law was found, Josiah had it read to all his people. Josiah made a covenant before God that he would walk after the Lord, to keep his commandments, his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and soul. And all his people followed.

Dear children, sometimes we may be discouraged by what is happening around us. Sometimes, the environment we live in may not be conducive for godly living. For example, our parents may not be Christians or our Christian parents do not live a godly life at home. Or perhaps we have naughty friends in school who are a bad influence to us. But we must always look to the Lord, and follow Him.

Let us follow the wonderful example of Josiah to be a good follower of God and obey Him. May we be good examples so that others can see Jesus in us.

Thought: Am I a good example?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to live a holy and godly life for Thee. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## JOHN THE BAPTIST – GROWING UP GODLY

The priest Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth loved the Lord and obeyed His commandments. They were both very old when the Lord blessed them with a special son, and they were told by an angel to name him John. Even while John was in his mother's womb, he was filled with the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:15). His work was to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:76). "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit..." (Luke 1:80).

Would you grow up to be a godly person? Would you remain faithful to Jesus? Would you continue to attend church and other activities that would help you learn more and love more of the Bible? May you and I learn from John the Baptist. He was a faithful child and remained close to God all the days of his life.

Do you know that God already has a plan for you from the time you are in your mummy's tummy? He knows everything about you and had planned out every part of your life. Let us learn from John's life to know that God has a plan for each and everyone of us to do His work. But before you could do His work, you must first come know Jesus Christ and accept Him as your personal Lord and Saviour.

Dear children, repent of your sins today. Ask Jesus for forgiveness and He will cleanse and wash away your sins. Make a wise decision today for tomorrow may be too late.

Have you? Make a wise decision...



Thought: To be godly, I need to obey what the Bible says.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to keep close to You and to grow up to be a godly person. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## JAIRUS – FAITH IN GOD’S POWER

Jairus was one of the rulers of the Jewish place of worship. He had heard of the many miracles of healing done by the Lord Jesus. Jairus’ 12-year old daughter was very sick, to the point of dying. In faith, Jairus came to seek Jesus to heal his daughter.

And he must have been thrilled when Jesus accepted his request, and with what must be a smile, they were going to the house. Then he heard terrible news – it was too late for his beloved daughter was dead! If you were the father, how would you feel? Surely, one would be devastated. One may blame God for not giving his daughter a chance. One may wish that the daughter’s illness would turn for the better instead of for the worse. But God’s ways are not our ways...

After they were informed of the death, the Lord Jesus comforted Jairus with these wonderful words, “Be not afraid, only believe.” These 5 words changed the life of Jairus. He believed that Jesus could raise his precious girl from the dead, and together they went to the house. When they arrived, what did they see? They saw people crying and in much sorrow. Jesus told them to stop crying because the little damsel was only sleeping. After Jesus has asked all the people to leave, He raised the little damsel back to life in front of Jairus and his wife.

Sometimes God allows difficult situations in our lives to show us that He can lift us out of them. In this case, Jairus’ daughter had to die so that they may see for themselves how Jesus could raise the dead! Dear children, know that the Lord is all-powerful. He can do everything. Learn to trust Jesus and pray without ceasing daily.

Match the statement below with the correct Bible verse.

The leper healed

Matthew 9:28-30

The deaf & dumb healed

Mark 1:40-42

The blind were made to see

John 11:43-44

The lame were made to walk

Mark 7:32-35

The dead were made alive

Mark 2:8-12

Thought: I may not be sick, but I still need the Lord every day

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to have faith in You when I pray. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## BOY WITH 5 LOAVES & 2 FISH – SERVING GOD SELFLESSLY

A large crowd followed Jesus Christ after they have heard and seen of the many miracles Jesus did to heal the sick. The crowd sat and listened to Jesus' teaching for hours. Soon, it was time for lunch but they did not have food because they were at the countryside near the mountain.

However, we learnt from today's passage that Jesus performed a fantastic miracle by feeding the crowd with only 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish that the disciple took from a little boy who was there in the crowd. Jesus took the food and gave thanks to God before He distributed them to His disciples and the disciples to the people in the crowd. After everyone ate to their heart's content, Jesus told the disciples to gather all the bread that was left. The disciples then gathered twelve baskets of bread! How amazing!

What may we learn today? Be like Jesus, to give thanks to God for all that we have, even though it may seem little. Learn from the little boy who gave even though he was poor. In those days, barley was regarded as food only fit for the animals to eat. This tells us that the little boy who willingly gave up his lunch came from a poor family. Let us be like the little boy, to give cheerfully even though it may seem that what we have is very small. For we know that Jesus can use the small things we give to accomplish great things for His glory!

Dear children, are you then willing to do the following for Jesus?

- a. to be a cheerful giver
- b. to share things with others
- c. to do the above happily and willingly

Most of all, let us remember that God can use the small things we give to accomplish great things for His glory!



Thought: May I be willing to share with others.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to be kind and be a cheerful giver serving You with all my resources. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## TIMOTHY – THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

In a Jewish home, children are usually taught by their parents or grandparents about God. Timothy was blessed with a grandmother (Lois) and mother (Eunice) who loved the Lord. Both taught Timothy from the Word of God, even when he was very young. It is said of Timothy, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). Thus, Timothy grew up learning about God and His promises by the faithful teaching of both his grandmother and mother. He became Paul’s disciple and friend. He even joined Paul’s missionary journeys to tell people in other countries about the Lord Jesus Christ. Timothy later became a preacher of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear child, you too must learn and grow in the Lord. On a daily basis, do your Quiet Time and be faithful in reading the Bible. Sometimes you may wonder if it does any good. Of course it does, although it would take time for you to change slowly and be more like Jesus. Continue attending Sunday School to learn more about God and His Word. These are ways to grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Match below the mother and her son in the Bible  
(e.g. Eunice Timothy)

Jacob	Ishmael	Samuel	Isaac	John the Baptist	Joseph
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1. Elisabeth \_\_\_\_\_
2. Hagar \_\_\_\_\_
3. Hannah \_\_\_\_\_
4. Rachel \_\_\_\_\_
5. Rebekah \_\_\_\_\_
6. Sarah \_\_\_\_\_

*(Hint: all are mentioned in the previous days’ lessons)*

Thought: Do I continue to learn from my parents and Sunday School?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to be diligent in my prayers and study of Thy Word. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

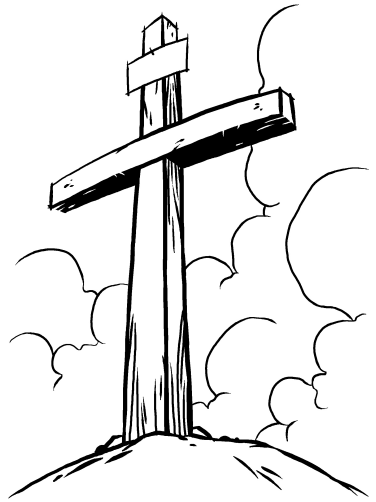
## CHILDREN BROUGHT TO JESUS – CHILD-LIKE FAITH

We read today that while at the coasts of Judaea, little children were brought to Jesus by their parents to receive blessings from Jesus. In those days, it was a custom for parents to bring their children to get blessing from the man of God. However, the disciples rebuked them and this action of the disciples made Jesus very displeased (Mark 10: 14).

Jesus said to his disciples, “Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14). And the Lord Jesus lovingly took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. What does “for of such is the kingdom of God” mean?

The Kingdom of God refers to Heaven. Here, Jesus is saying that to enter Heaven, we must have complete faith like the children. We know that little children at a young age are helpless. They do not have the ability to care for or protect themselves, hence they do not doubt but trust with all their hearts that their parents will take care of their needs and protect them. This is the image of a genuine Christian – never doubting and fully trusting in Jesus. To receive God’s kingdom, we must first realise that we are unable to do anything to buy our salvation. Salvation is by God’s grace and mercy. Hence we must have complete faith in Jesus Christ, for only He can save, and He is the only way to Heaven. My we be like little children having child-like faith.

Dear children, are you sure of your salvation? How do you know if you have a place in God’s kingdom?



Thought: May I be like these little ones, to fully trust in Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to trust Thee completely. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## WE ALL HAVE FAULTS!

It was Saturday morning. Brian and his dad were enjoying a rugby game on TV. “Watch out for that guy on your right!” yelled Brian, and Dad waved his arms as if the players could see him. But it was no use. The man they were cheering for was down. “That was silly!” exclaimed Brian in disgust. “He should have seen that guy coming at him! He wasn’t paying attention.”

Dad nodded. “The coach has pulled him out of the game, and I dare say he won’t make the same mistake again.”

By the time the game was over, Mom had the light lunch ready. “Hey! How come Brenda gets a hot chicken sandwich and the rest of us get yucky old tuna casserole?” asked Brian, glancing at his sister’s plate as he came to the table. He yanked out his chair and bumped the table hard as he sat down. “You’re just a spoiled brat,” he complained to Brenda.

Brenda began to speak, but Brian wouldn’t listen, not even when his mother tried to explain. He interrupted her and continued to grumble as he roughly gave his plate a shove, spilling his drink. “Brian, go to your room and think about what you just did,” ordered Dad. “The way you behaved and the things you said were not pleasing to us, and they certainly were not pleasing to God. When you’re ready to apologise, you may come back to the table.”

Brian knew it was no use to protest, so he went to his room, hungry and angry. He flopped down onto his bed. But he did think. In his mind, he replayed what had happened. He tried to tell himself he hadn’t been treated fairly and that Brenda was spoiled. But then he remembered that Brenda had been sick when they had chicken dinner the day before and his mother had saved some chicken for her. That’s why she’s getting it now, he thought. He knew he had made a mess of the situation and had hurt his sister’s feelings.

The rest of the family was almost finished when Brian again took his place at the table. He looked at his father. “In my mind, I... I watched an ‘instant replay’ of what happened,” said Brian. “I guess if I did that more often, I wouldn’t keep on making so many mistakes.” Turning to his mom and his sister, he added. “I’m really sorry for the way I acted.”

Thought: Do you sometimes say or do things that you later regret?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to consider my ways – to be careful of what I do and say. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



**THEORY OF EVOLUTION IS A LIE!**

What is evolution? Evolution is a theory used by man to explain the origin of the universe, the earth and all living things including human beings (man). According to the theory, the universe had always been in existence by itself billions of years ago and the earth that we lived in today was formed over 4.5 billion years ago. The theory further explained that living things existed and changed over million years ago due to mass extinction, cross breeding and evolution or mutation process. Humans too came into existence 300,000 years ago through the same process. All this had happened without any divine intervention. Do you believe in evolution?

Is this universe really self-sufficient and did it come into existence on its own without God's intervention? The Bible tells us "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). How do we know this is true? As Christians we know that the Bible is the inspired written Word of God. This means the Bible is God's Word. The God in the Bible is a true and living God. He is a perfect God who will not lie and cannot lie. The Bible clearly recorded in Genesis 1:31 that God took 6 days to complete His creation according to His sovereign will and plan.

God created this universe, the earth, all living things and man by just speaking the word, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). Evolution is a lie because it is a man-made theory used to deny God's existence and all His creation works. We understand from the Bible that human beings did not evolved from apes because "God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). Do you believe the Bible? Pray for God's Holy Spirit to guide you to see what is true and what is a lie

Thought: I need to know the Bible well so that I will not be confused by the teachings of Evolution.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may Thou grant me the wisdom to study the Bible diligently and to grow in faith. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## STAY AWAY FROM SIN

“That cloud looks like a ship!” said Rose as she and her brother Chung lay in the grass, looking up at the sky. “And that one,” replied Chung, pointing, “looks like an elephant with no trunk.” Rose laughed. “It’d be fun to walk on a cloud,” she said as they got up and went into the house for supper.

Hearing her, Mom smiled. “Fun?” she asked. “Or folly?” “Folly? What’s that?” asked Chung. “That means a lack of good sense, or a foolish idea,” said Mom. “A cloud wouldn’t hold you up, you know.” Chung nodded and ran to answer the phone.

“It’s Bruce,” Chung called a moment later, holding his hand over the phone. “Can I go to the arcade down the road to play video games after dinner?” “That’s not a good idea,” replied Dad. “Police have reported that thugs like that place and hang around there at night.” Chung started to protest, but Dad held up a hand. “The answer is no, Chung. It’s not a place a Christian should be.”

Chung moped around and was unhappy the evening. The family then settled down to watch TV, and a documentary on National Geographic was up. It was on fogs, and Rose mentioned, “I hope we never have to drive in that condition.”

“Now you see what it’s like to be in a cloud,” Mom told her. “Fog is like a cloud in contact with the ground.” Chung grinned at his sister. “Yeah, and trying to walk on it would be folly, not fun. Right, Mom?” he asked. “This cloud is no fun at all. It’s dangerous.”

“So even though some things look like fun, being involved in them can be dangerous, right?” asked Mom. “That’s a good thing to remember.” “Yeah, Chung. Like going to the arcade with your friends,” put in Rose. “You thought that sounded like fun, but I guess that would have been folly, too.”

“Right,” agreed Dad. “Being in that kind of environment would have been dangerous. You would have had to fight off a lot of temptation or danger. I know because I was once a kid myself.”



Thought: Are the things you do fun or folly?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me to obey my parents and stop sinning against Thee. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## GOD WILL HELP YOU!

“Hey, Eric, how come you’re not laughing?” asked Owen after another boy had told a distasteful joke. “Don’t you think that’s funny? Or are you just a baby who doesn’t understand jokes like that?”

Eric didn’t reply as he took his books and left to go home. “I guess I am a baby,” he thought. “I should have told the guys I didn’t laugh at that joke because I’m a Christian. Oh, well. I don’t think it would have done any good anyway, but the next time I get a chance, I’ll witness to them.”

The very next day, Eric had the chance he was looking for. “Let’s hide Joe’s pencil case,” said one of the boys at recess time. “He’s such a baby - I bet he’ll even cry about it. Here, Eric... put it in your desk. Nobody will look there.”

“Yeah,” agreed Owen, but Eric shook his head. He opened his mouth to tell them why he wouldn’t join in their unkind prank, but no words came. “Eric’s a wimp! Eric’s a wimp!” the boys chanted over and over when they couldn’t persuade him to join them. They walked away, laughing.

That night, Eric told his father what had happened. “I remember a day when you were very small,” Dad said thoughtfully. “You couldn’t walk by yourself on the sidewalk, and you fell several times before you finally let me hold your hand.” Dad smiled as he remembered. “I think you’re trying to ‘go it alone’ again - this time in your spiritual walk,” he added. “God says He’ll ‘hold your hand.’ In other words, He’ll help you. Ask Him, and trust Him to do that.”

The next day, Owen approached Eric. “Hey, man! Are you grown up enough to join the gang I hang out with?” asked Owen.

“Lord, please help me to be a brave witness,” Eric prayed silently. He took a deep breath. “I’m a Christian,” he said, “and God wouldn’t be proud of me if I did that.” He hesitated, and then hurried on. “Why don’t you join me instead?” he asked. “I go to church every Sunday - you’d like it.” Eric sighed. Well, at least I spoke up, even if it isn’t doing any good, he thought. Just then, Eric was startled to hear Owen say, “You really think I’d like it, Eric?” He laughed. “I doubt it, but I’ll give it a try, and it better be good!”

Thought: Trust Jesus to “hold your hand,” and then speak up for Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to be brave and do the right thing even when others ask me to join them in wrong activities. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## JESUS IS MY ROCK

“Better hurry up and build up a wall around your castle, Abby! The tide is coming in,” warned John. “One big wave, and it will be washed away.” “Will you help me? Please?” begged Abby, handing her brother a pail and shovel. Water washed around her feet and then went back toward the sea, just missing the castle.

“I told you to build it farther from the water,” said John as he added a pail of damp sand to the wall. “We won’t be able to save it. Those waves are coming up fast!”

John was right. There was no time to protect the castle. Waves washed up on shore, and a big chunk from the front of the castle washed back into the sea. A shovel Abby had dropped beside the castle was carried along with it. “My shovel!” called Abby. She chased after it into the water.

“A wash out!” declared John. “That castle is history.” Abby nodded sadly as she stood looking at the destroyed masterpiece. “Your castle looked awesome, but it was built in a place where it couldn’t stand up against a flood,” added John. He grinned. “Cheer up! At least you got your shovel back and you gave us a good example of what Jesus was talking about when He told the story about the houses built by a foolish man and a wise man.” John started singing: “The foolish man built his house upon the sand...” At first Abby continued to look mournful, but then she grinned, and together, they finished the song - “so build your life on the Lord!”

Mom smiled as she listened. “And how do you get Jesus to be the foundation upon which to build your life?” she asked them. “That’s easy,” said John. “You admit that you’re a sinner and trust Jesus to save you. When you do that, He becomes the one you build your life on.”

**Does this represent  
your life?**



Mom nodded. “Right. 1 Corinthians 10:4 refers to Jesus as the ‘Rock,’” she said. “When you build your life on Him, you’re building on rock, like the wise man did in the second verse of the song.”

Thought: Are you building your foundation on “sand” or on the “Rock”?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to be diligent in reading of the Bible and may the Lord Jesus be the foundation to build my life upon. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE

Mary took the pill her mother handed her. “Do I still have to take this medicine?” asked Mary with a frown. “My throat isn’t hurting anymore.” “That’s good, but Dr. Han said to be sure to take all of those antibiotic pills,” replied Mom. “He said if you quit too soon, you might have a relapse and your throat would be sore again.”

That afternoon, Mary stubbed her toe. “Ouch!” she exclaimed loudly. Then some nasty words slipped out of her mouth.

“Mary!” exclaimed Mom. “I’m disappointed! I thought you had overcome your... tongue problem. Have you forgotten the Bible verse you were going to recite to yourself whenever you were tempted to say nasty words?”

Mary looked ashamed. “Psalm 19:14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer,” she murmured. She sighed. “I know the verse, but I don’t say it much anymore,” she admitted. “I used to say it over and over in my mind, but lately I haven’t needed it or so I thought.”

Mom shook her head. “Looks like you quit taking your ‘antibiotic’ too soon,” she said. “My pills?” asked Mary.

“I didn’t mean your pills. I meant your Scripture verse. It’s something like spiritual antibiotic,” said Mom. “Your throat feels better, but you still need to take the antibiotic to fight against germs that remain there. In a similar way, you’ve gotten much better in controlling your tongue, but you still need to rely on the Word of God to help you fight against your habit of using bad language.”

Mary nodded slowly. “I need to use my Bible verse to keep from having a relapse, right?” she asked. “That’s right,” agreed Mom. “One or more doses of Scripture a day can help you fight against any temptation. Of course, just reciting the verse doesn’t magically keep you from using nasty words. You need to really think about what God says. As you become more and more familiar with His Word, you’d develop a desire to live for the Lord and overcome temptation.”



Thought: Do you fill your heart and mind with God’s Word?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to read and memorise more of the Bible so I may stand strong against temptation. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## TRUST GOD

Tim kicked at a stone on the pavement. “Did I tell you that I can’t go live with my dad?” he asked his friend Boon. “It’s been decided that we kids have to stay with Mom.” Tim sighed. “Dad always took time to do stuff with me. You know - guy stuff. Now I’ll get to be with him only every other weekend.” “Well, you can talk to him on the phone, too, can’t you?” asked Boon. “You still have a lot to be thankful for.”

As Boon spoke, Tim noticed that his eyes were bright. “Are those tears in Boon’s eyes?” wondered Tim. As he thought about it, he realised that, although he’d known Boon since the beginning of the school year, he’d never seen or heard anything about his friend’s father. “Does your dad live with you?” Tim asked. Boon shook his head. “My dad died,” he said softly. “Oh! I’m sorry,” said Tim, not sure what else to say.

“It’s been tough, and I miss my dad a lot,” Boon said finally, “but one day, my mom helped me understand how she deals with it. You can stretch rubber bands across a box and strum them like a guitar, so I tried it. They make different sounds, depending on how tight they are. Some of the rubber bands fit over my box easily,” continued Boon, “but others were tight and had to be stretched out thin in order to get around the cardboard. A few even snapped.” He was silent, remembering the incident.

“What does that have to do with missing your dad and getting along without him?” Tim asked.

“My mom pointed out that when I strummed my make-believe guitar, the rubber bands that fit super-tight made more music-like sounds than the ones that were loose. She said life is like that, too, that as things happen, we’re stretched like those smaller rubber bands,” explained Boon. “We may be uncomfortable, but we can choose to make music even during the hard times of our lives, or we can give up and snap and be useless.” Boon paused again, then added, “My mom and I decided to trust God to use this hard part of our lives for His good.” He looked shyly at his friend. “I... I’ll pray that you’ll be able to do that, too.”

Thought: Are you going through a difficult time in your life now?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to trust in You, even when I face adverse situations in life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## OFFERING TO JESUS

“Do you have your tithe to put in the offering?” Mom asked Joanne and Luke. Joanne nodded, but Luke shook his head. “I don’t have anything. I spent all my allowance this week,” he confessed. “Will you give me some money for the offering, Mom?”

Mom frowned, but she reached into her wallet and took out some money. “Just this once,” she agreed as she handed it to Luke.

That afternoon, Luke had a suggestion for his mother. “My birthday is next week, you know,” he said. “If you can’t think of anything to get me, I have some ideas.”

Mom looked thoughtful a moment. “Well, actually, when Grandpa and Grandma were here last week, they left a birthday present for you. Maybe I’ll just give you that.” She smiled brightly at Luke.

“Mom!” exclaimed Luke. “I’m serious. I’m talking about what you might get for me, not what they’re giving me. I have some ideas.” “What’s wrong with my idea?” asked Mom, pretending to be surprised. “I’m sure the package they left holds something very nice.”

Luke frowned. “You’re just kidding, right?” he asked. “I mean... it won’t really be from you if you give me something they bought me.”

“You’re absolutely right, Luke,” agreed Mom. “I’m not truly giving if I give you something that doesn’t belong to me - something to which I didn’t give any thought or effort or money. You wouldn’t be happy about that, would you?” Luke shook his head. “But at church this morning, you were satisfied to give God a gift that wasn’t really from you,” Mom pointed out gently.

“Well... you used to always give us money for church,” protested Luke.

“When you were too young to have your own money, I gave you some so you’d get into the habit of giving to God,” replied Mom. “Now that you have an allowance, you should willingly give some of your own money to the Lord. Then you’ll be giving a real offering, right?” Thoughtfully, Luke nodded.

Thought: Do you give offerings to the Lord?

Prayer: Father in heaven, please remind me that everything I have is from You. Teach me to give my tithe willingly and cheerfully for the work of the Gospel and furtherance of Thy Kingdom. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## POWER FROM GOD

“I hate homework,” complained Suat as she and her brother sat at the kitchen table. She jabbed the sharp tip of her pencil at a long division problem. Tom lifted his nose out of his science book. “I don’t mind doing science homework,” he said. “These magnets are interesting. Watch this.” He took a nail and rubbed it across a magnet several times. Then he held the nail close to a straight pin. “See? It picked up the pin just as if it were a real magnet,” he said.

“Wow!” exclaimed Suat. “Why does it do that?” “Some magnetism got rubbed off onto the nail,” explained Tom.

“Can I try it?” asked Suat. She took the nail and held it over a few paper clips. She giggled as one sprang up toward the nail. Next, she took a clip from her hair and held the nail over that. This time, nothing happened. “My book says the nail soon loses its power to attract things if it isn’t rubbed against the magnet again,” said Tom. “That’s why it didn’t pick up that clip. To keep it working, it has to be rubbed over the magnet quite often.”

Suat reluctantly returned the nail and went back to her math paper while he continued to tinker with the magnet. A little later, he spoke again. “This nail is just like a Christian,” he said. “Like a Christian!” exclaimed Suat. “That doesn’t make sense. What are you talking about?”

Tom illustrated by rubbing the nail against the magnet as he continued to explain. “Just like the nail gets power from the magnet, we receive power from God to bear a good testimony for the Lord Jesus and attract other people to Him as we witness.”

Suat nodded. “And if we don’t stay close to the Lord by obeying Him and reading the Bible and praying, we begin to lose our power to attract others to Jesus,” she suggested. “Then we’re like a plain old nail again.” She grinned at her brother. “You’re pretty smart to think of that illustration. I’m impressed!”

Tom grinned too. “Good! Keep thinking like that,” he said. “Of course, my Bible teacher used a magnet like this for an object lesson last week, but that doesn’t mean I wouldn’t have thought of it myself.”

Thought: Does your life cause others to be attracted to the Gospel?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may Thou grant me the strength and power to live a life obedient to You and to be a good witness for You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



**DO NOT BE PROUD!**

One cool breezy Saturday morning, Dad took Siew Ling and Kok Seng to the park to try out their new kites. “My kite will fly higher than yours,” declared Kok Seng, looking proudly at his bright yellow kite with its dark blue borders and perky red bows.

“We’ll see about that!” said Siew Ling, tossing her red and white kite into the air. Kok Seng quickly tossed his kite into the air too, and soon both kites were aloft.

For a few minutes the kites sailed merrily across the sky, flying higher and higher. “Go, kite! Go!” called Kok Seng, squealing with delight. “Show them that you’re the best.” He grinned and yelled in glee when Siew Ling’s kite suddenly plunged to the ground. “See! My kite’s the King of Kites!” boasted Kok Seng. But a few moments later, his kite joined his sister’s on the ground.

“Some king you have there!” Siew Ling teased her brother. “A fallen king, I guess.” “Aha!” said Dad. “What do you mean... ‘aha?’” grumbled Kok Seng as they went to pick up the fallen kites. “What happened? Why isn’t my kite flying any more?”

“You were so proud of your kite that you forgot what makes it fly,” said Dad. “The wind does,” said Siew Ling. “The air is very still now - there’s almost no breeze at all. That’s why our kites won’t fly.” She grinned at Kok Seng. “You forgot about the breeze, didn’t you?”

“I guess so,” admitted Kok Seng. “I thought a super-good kite was all I needed, but a super-good breeze is needed, too.” Dad nodded. “Lots of people make the same mistake you did, Kok Seng,” he said after a moment.

“They do?” Siew Ling was surprised. “I thought everybody knew you needed wind to fly a kite.” She looked at her brother. “Except Kok Seng, of course,” she teased. Dad smiled. “Kok Seng forgot that the wind is needed. Actually, God provides us with the wind,” explained Dad. “People often forget that God enables them in everything they do. They forget that He’s the one who gives them power to do even the simplest of things.” Kok Seng nodded thoughtfully.

Thought: God provides me with the ability and skills to accomplish things that I set out to do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me never to be proud and forget that it is You who enables me to accomplish the things I set out to do. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## IS YOUR SPEECH EDIFYING?

BANG! Hearing Kadie's bedroom door slam, Mom sighed. "It seems like Kadie is angry so often lately," she said. "The house is peaceful until she comes home. Within five minutes, she can have everybody upset-especially Jeremy. Kadie has to learn to control herself."

"I'll go handle it," said Dad, folding his newspaper. As Dad left, five-year-old Jeremy came into the kitchen. "I'm hungry," he said. Mom smiled. "Dinner's almost ready," she replied. "Would you like to watch for Grandpa? He's coming for dinner. He should be here any minute now."

"Grandpa is coming? Oh, goody!" Jeremy went jumping down the hall.

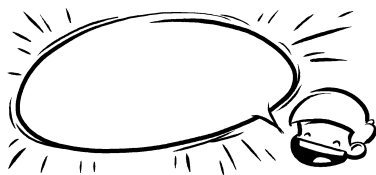
During dinner, everyone - even Kadie - laughed and talked and listened to the stories and bits of news Grandpa told them. "I'm so glad you're here, Grandpa," said Kadie with a smile. "You make us all feel so good." "That's because he says funny, happy things," stated Jeremy.

The elderly gentleman winked at the little boy. "Let's have a little quiz. Let's see... who knows how God created the world?" Kadie answered quickly. "God just spoke, and whatever He said should be there was there."

Grandpa nodded. "Right. Hebrews 11:3 says the worlds were formed by the word of God," he said. "Now... let's see if you can answer this question. What can we create with our words?"

Kadie frowned. "Nothing!" she said. "Only God can create things." Grandpa smiled. "Strictly speaking, you're right. We can't create things," he replied, "but in a way, we can create feelings-bright, happy feelings or stormy, gloomy feelings."

"Kadie makes black storms with her words," Jeremy declared, "but you make sunshine, Grandpa. That's why we like to have you come to our house." For once, Kadie did not argue. She could not think of anything to say.



Thought: What do you "create" with your words, sunshine or storms? Are people glad to see you come? Or are they glad to see you leave?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may my speech be edifying so that it may minister grace to hearers. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE FROM YOUR PARENTS

“Mom, you’re always scolding and punishing me,” complained Alicia as she sat on the “time-out” chair. “You never get mad at Sarah.” “Oh, yeah? Think again!” The challenge came from Sarah, who had come into the room and overheard the remark. “I used to get punished a lot, and I still do sometimes. So quit pouting and learn your lesson, sis.”

That afternoon, the family went to the zoo. A special feature was the elephant rides. After watching for a while, Sarah chose to have a ride on the larger elephant, and Alicia wanted to ride the smaller one.

“Want to see how you looked?” asked Dad when the rides were over. He held out his digital camera, and they all gathered around to see the pictures he’d taken. “Did you notice that the trainer just spoke to the bigger elephant while you were riding?” asked Mom. “He sometimes used his stick with the smaller one.”

Alicia nodded. “At first, I thought it was mean of him to do that,” she said, “but he said it was a young elephant and was just learning to obey. He only tapped it, he didn’t hurt it.” “I’m sure the older elephant also gets disciplined from time to time,” said Dad, “but it probably learned from its earlier training and doesn’t need to be corrected so often.”

Mom nodded. “I guess Dad and I are ‘trainers,’ too,” she said. “We give you instructions, and sometimes we need to correct or discipline you so you’ll learn.” “Yeah,” said Sarah, “and I’ve already learned a lot from having had more years of training than you’ve had, Alicia.”

Dad smiled. “The Bible instructs parents to correct their children,” he said. “That’s the purpose of occasional scoldings and things like the ‘time-out’ chair or ‘naughty corners’.”

Sarah pointed to a booth next to the elephant rides. “Hey, Dad, maybe you should buy one of the elephant saddles they’re selling over there,” she said. “We could use it for the time-out chair!” “Yeah,” agreed Alicia. “That would make the ‘time-outs’ more fun!”

Dad laughed. “A time-out isn’t supposed to be fun, so no elephant saddle time-out chair,” he said. They all laughed with him.

Thought: When your parents discipline you, it is out of their love, care and concern for you.

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for today’s lesson that although at times my parents appear strict, they’re doing it for my good. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## BE FOCUSED ON SPIRITUAL THINGS

“Uh-oh! I’ve gotta get home, Brad!” exclaimed Boon Tat. “It’s dinner time. I was having so much fun that I didn’t watch the clock.” He reached toward the bowl of potato chips on the table. “Thanks for the snacks. Bye!” Brad grinned. “Bye,” he said. “See you tomorrow.” Boon Tat nodded and stuffed the chips into his mouth as he dashed out of the door.

At the dinner table, Boon Tat put down his fork when his plate was still half full. “I’m just not very hungry - I had potato chips and cookies at Brad’s house,” he explained.

“Boon Tat! You know you’re not supposed to eat when it’s almost dinner time,” scolded Mom. “Besides, you know we don’t want you to eat a lot of junk food. It can dull your appetite for the good food you need.” “Sorry, but it tastes so good,” mumbled Boon Tat.

Mom frowned. “And this chicken dinner I fixed doesn’t?” she asked. “I thought fried chicken and sweet sour pork were your favourites.”

Boon Tat looked at the dishes of chicken and sweet sour pork. “They are,” he said, “but I’m just not hungry. Can I go watch TV?”

Dad frowned slightly. “I hope you’re not also getting too much ‘junk food’ in another area,” he said. “Too much time spent on things like TV and video games is like taking in mental junk food. Those things don’t help you grow strong spiritually, and too much of them may dull your appetite for good, spiritual food.”

“The comic books and TV shows are all ones you’ve approved,” protested Boon Tat, “and there’s nothing wrong with my video games, is there?” “No,” said Dad, “unless they dull your desire for the things of God or take time you should use for other things.”

Slowly Boon Tat nodded. “Well... I got a book at the church library last Sunday. I’ll go read that, okay?” he asked.

“That would be better,” agreed Dad, “but no, you can’t be excused yet. Mealtime is family time here, so even if you’re not hungry, we want you to stay and talk with us.”

Thought: How much “junk food” are you getting?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me not to spend time doing worldly things but rather to focus on spiritual things. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

“I want to ask you something, Mom,” said Emily hesitantly as her mother tucked her into bed one evening. “I gave my life to Jesus last month, but it seems like I’m still always doing something wrong – like getting so mad at Jason tonight. When I do stuff like that, I ask God to forgive me, but... what if I forget to ask Him? Or what if I don’t even think about the fact that I’ve sinned?” She paused. “Then am I still saved?”

Mom sat down on the bed. “Jesus’ death paid for all your sins,” she said. “God will never disown you if you’ve put your trust in Him.” “You’re sure?” asked Emily.

“I’m sure,” said Mom. She pointed to a porcelain doll on Emily’s dresser. “I see that you’ve cleaned up that doll,” she said. “Tell me again where it came from.”

“You know where I got it, Mom,” replied Emily. “We bought it at a flea market at Ang Mo Kio. It looked quite yucky then, but we put on new clothes for it.” Emily grinned. “It looks great now, don’t you think?” “Yes, it does.” Mom nodded. “It’s beautiful, so enjoy it while you can. Your room sometimes gets pretty dusty, you know. Before long, your doll will be covered with dust, and then I suppose you’ll throw it out.”

“Throw it out?!” exclaimed Emily. “Are you kidding? It could never look any worse than when I got it! It was covered with dust, but I didn’t throw it away. And I sure wouldn’t ever throw it away after all the work I did to make it look good! I’ll just clean it whenever it needs it. I want this doll.”

Mom smiled. “I thought you’d say that,” she said. “Dear girl, don’t you see that God loves you much more than you love that doll? Your life was full of sin, but Jesus died to save you from it. When you put your trust in Him, He made you part of His family. He’s not going to just ‘throw you away’ now-not after all He’s done for you.”

Thought: Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour from sin? God says that if you have received Jesus into your life, nothing can ever separate you from His love and all your sins will be washed away. You will not lose your salvation!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the assurance that once I am saved, I am always saved. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## THE BIBLE – OUR GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

The contents of Noah's model airplane kit lay scattered on the desktop in front of him. A frown creased his forehead as he looked at the part he held in his hand. He was so engrossed he didn't notice his dad come into the room. "How's the plane coming along?" asked Dad.

"Oh... hi, Dad," said Noah. "I'm having trouble with the wing assembly on this plane. I just can't get it right." "Maybe I can help you," offered Dad. He picked up the instruction sheet and began reading, step by step. As he read, Noah checked to see that each step was done right.

At step number four, Noah stopped him. "This piece is on upside down!" exclaimed Noah. He quickly fixed the problem. "This isn't so hard when you follow the instructions," he said with a grin. He set the plane aside. "I hate to stop now, but I've got to get to my JW class lesson or Mom will come after me! My teacher gave us some questions to answer, and Mom said I had to have them finished before dinner."

Dad smiled. "Well, good," he said. "After all, the Bible is God's instruction manual for us, so it's important to learn all we can from it." "Yeah," said Noah. "I have step by step instructions for my model plane. It would be nice if the Bible gave step by step instructions for living."

"Well," said Dad, "it does, and it explains the first step we need to take - one of faith in Jesus for salvation. It also tells many specific commands, or instructions, and many principles God wants us to follow after we're saved." Dad pointed toward the plane. "Remember what happened when you didn't follow one part of your airplane instructions?" "Yeah," said Noah. "The other pieces didn't go together right."

"You need to follow all the instructions given by the manufacturer," said Dad. "And in daily living, we need to follow all the instructions God shows us in His Word. We can't just pick and choose the ones that appeal to us." "But there's an awful lot to learn in the Bible," said Noah.

"Another good reason to get to your Bible lesson," replied Dad with a smile. "Learn a little more each day, and with God's help obey what He shows you."

Thought: Are you reading and studying God's Word every day?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the Bible - a complete set of instructions for Christian living. Help me to study and obey what Your Word says every day. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## WORK HARD FOR JESUS!

Plink! Plink! Plink! One by one, Tabby slowly played out the notes of the music for her piano recital. “This is so hard, I’m not sure I’ll ever be good enough to play in front of a bunch of people!” Tabby struggled on for a few minutes. Suddenly, she closed the music book, tossed it on the floor, and began to play a song from memory. This is much more fun, she told herself.

Later that day, Tabby helped her mother plant seeds in the flower garden. “You always have such pretty flowers, Mom,” said Tabby. “Grandma says you have a green thumb - whatever that means.”

Mom laughed. “She means I have a talent for growing things,” she replied. “That may be true, but I have to do a lot of work, too. Thomas Edison, the great inventor, once said, ‘Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.’ I think he’s right.”

“You do work hard in the yard,” agreed Tabby. She grinned. “What’s worse,” she added teasingly, “is that you make me work hard, too. I don’t mind gardening, but I don’t have a green thumb like you do.” “Which activity do you like best of all?” asked Mom. “What’s your favourite thing to do?”

“Oh... let’s see... play the piano,” decided Tabby. Then she frowned. “But I’m already tired of practicing my recital piece,” she added, “and I just got it. I wish I didn’t have to practice so much.”

“So I guess music is your ‘green thumb’ area,” said Mom. “You definitely have a talent for playing the piano. But if you want to develop that into something worthwhile, you’ll have to work hard at it - just like I have to work hard at gardening even though I have a ‘green thumb.’ God wants us to use our talents for Him, and He deserves the very best we can do. That takes work.”

“I guess so,” agreed Tabby. After a moment, she grinned, “But I don’t think it’s fair,” she added. “I can help you in the garden, but you can’t help me play the piano.” “That’s true,” said Mom, “but I’ll tell you what. When we’re done here, I’ll use another of my talents while you practise the recital piece. I’ll work on your new outfit. How’s that?” Smiling, Tabby agreed.

Thought: What talents has God given you? Use your talents to serve Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thanks for the reminder that there are many ways that I can serve You. May I start by being a nice and kind person, and use whatever talent You have given me to serve people around me! In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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**BE KIND TO OTHERS!**

“See my picture!” Little Emily proudly showed Samantha a page of scribbled lines. Streaks of different colours crisscrossed the picture of balloons. “That’s no good! Mom likes my pictures better than yours,” said Samantha. “Yours are always a mess! You just can’t draw or colour! You don’t stay in the lines.” Emily’s lips puckered, and big tear drops rolled. “Mommy!” she wailed and ran to find her mother.

“Don’t be a tattle-tale,” Samantha called after her. She sighed as she took an orange crayon from the box and began to carefully colour the stained glass window in a picture of a church. “Now I suppose Mom will come and fuss at me just because I told Emily the truth. My pictures are much neater and prettier than hers, so why shouldn’t I say so?” Samantha looked critically at her colouring and chose another crayon to use. The picture was nearly finished when Mom walked into the room, holding Emily’s hand.

“I came to see some pictures,” said Mom. “Let me see what you coloured today, Emily.” She found her picture and handed it to her mother. She beamed when Mom complimented her on the colours chosen.

Then Mom looked at Samantha’s picture. “This is very nicely done,” said Mom. “The outlines in your colouring book are boundaries, and you stayed in the lines very well as you coloured. Like you told Emily, a picture is prettier when you stay inside the lines.” Samantha smiled and nodded as she glanced at Emily. “But I’m concerned about some other boundaries that we have in life - God’s boundaries or rules,” added Mom. “When we obey His rules-like ‘Be kind to one another’ - it’s as though we’re making a pretty picture of our lives. When we go outside His boundaries, our ‘life-pictures’ don’t look very pretty to others or to God.” Mom looked at Samantha. “Do you think your words to Emily were within God’s boundaries?”

“I... I guess not,” Samantha mumbled, knowing she was wrong. “I don’t think so, either,” said Mom. “What can you do about it?” “Well, I... I’m sorry, Emily,” said Samantha. She smiled at her little sister. “Would you like me to help you colour another picture?” Emily nodded happily.

Thought: Have I showed kindness to people around me?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be a kind Christian, and to bear a good testimony for the Lord Jesus. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



## DON'T DISCRIMINATE AGAINST OTHERS!

“This is fun,” said Kelly as she helped her teacher decorate for a Sunday school celebration. After Mrs. Tan filled balloons with helium, Kelly tied a string on each one. “Do you suppose those new kids will come to the party?” Kelly wondered out loud. “You know - the kids who came last Sunday? They’re kind of different.” “All people are different,” Mrs. Tan pointed out.

“I guess so,” admitted Kelly, “but...” She frowned as she pictured the new children. She wondered if Mrs. Tan wouldn’t agree that they wore funny old clothes, but she didn’t dare ask.

Mrs. Tan looked thoughtful as she handed another balloon to Kelly. “We’ll do two more balloons,” she said. “Let’s each choose a colour, and when they’re filled, we’ll see which one will rise fastest.”

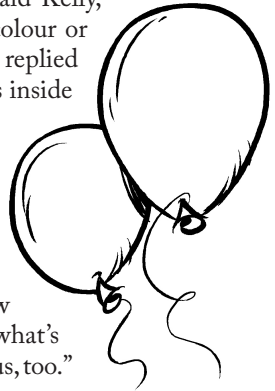
“I’ll have a blue one,” said Kelly. “My favourite colour is blue.” “And I’ll take this purple one,” said Mrs. Tan. “I think a purple balloon will go up to the ceiling faster than a blue one.”

“Not if you fill them up the same,” objected Kelly. She waited eagerly until both balloons were ready, and then watched the two balloons rise side by side. “See - it’s the helium in the balloon that makes them rise,” said Kelly with a grin, “not the colour of the balloon.”

“So it’s what’s inside that counts?” asked Mrs. Tan. When Kelly nodded, Mrs. Tan added, “You’re right, of course, and that same principle should apply to people, shouldn’t it?” “Well... sure,” said Kelly, glancing at Mrs. Tan. “I know that a person’s colour or background isn’t the important thing.” “Good,” replied Mrs. Tan, “but outside appearance versus what’s inside can apply to more than colour.”

“You... you’re thinking about the kind of clothes kids wear, aren’t you?” asked Kelly slowly.

“Exactly,” said Mrs. Tan. “We should welcome all kids to our class, no matter what colour they are or what hair style they have or how they dress. What’s inside is what matters. It’s what’s important to God, and it should be important to us, too.”



Thought: What’s important to you? Expensive new clothes? Good looks?

Prayer: Father in heaven, please help me to be kind to everyone, regardless of their appearance, race or family background. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## EVERY SIN IS BAD

“Mary, please come out and play with me,” pleaded little Amy. Mary frowned. She did not want to play with her little sister. “I can’t,” she said. “I have to do my homework now.”

As Amy walked away sadly, the phone rang. “I’ll get it, Mom,” called Mary. She picked up the phone. “Oh, hi, Audrey,” she said. “What? No, I don’t have anything else to do, and making cookies sounds like fun. I’ll ask Mom if I can come over, and I’ll call you back.”

As Mary turned from the phone, she saw her mother standing in the doorway, shaking her head. “Why did you tell Audrey you had nothing to do after telling Amy you had to do your homework?” asked Mom.

Mary looked uncomfortable. “Well, I... I don’t feel like playing Amy’s games,” she said. “They’re for little kids. But I didn’t want to hurt her feelings, so I needed an excuse.” Mom frowned. “That wasn’t an excuse, Mary,” she said. “It was a lie. If you don’t want to play with Amy, simply say so. Don’t lie about it and say you can’t.”

“It was just a little lie,” protested Mary. “Besides, I do have homework—but it can wait a while.”

Mom sighed. “Girl,” she said, “in God’s sight, sins are not big or little. He says if we break His law in just one point, we’re guilty of breaking it all. We should hate sins, not make excuses for them.” After a moment, Mom added, “We’ve told you about a scary experience when you were a baby and swallowed an open safety pin, remember? It got stuck in your throat.” Mary nodded. She had heard the story often.

“When the doctor successfully retrieved the pin, he asked me if I wanted it for a souvenir,” said Mom. “It made me shudder. I certainly didn’t want it! It didn’t matter that it was just a ‘little’ pin, I figured it could have killed you, and I never wanted to see it again! And, honey, our sins did bring Jesus to the cross! Do you think we should want to hold on to any of them, big or small?”

Mary slowly shook her head. “I never thought about it like that,” she said. “I’ll apologise to Amy and play with her a little while before I go over to Audrey’s.”

Thought: Do you excuse some of your sins, calling them “little” or “not very bad”?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the reminder that no sin can be called “little” or “not very bad”. Help me to be repentant and seek Your forgiveness whenever I fall into sin. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## GOD'S WAYS ARE ALWAYS THE BEST!

"That's going to be so cool when it's finished," said Angie as she watched her mother sewing some pieces of a patchwork quilt. Mom smiled. "I hope so," she replied. "This project is very special to me." She picked up a few of the fabric squares. "Do you recognise these pieces of material?" she asked.

"They're scraps from dresses I used to wear, aren't they?" asked Angie.

Mom nodded. "Yes. And they remind me that God's way is best," she said as she began sewing again. "I used to become very disappointed and angry when I didn't get my way," added Mom. "I would get quite upset with God when He didn't answer my prayers the way I wanted."

"Really?" asked Angie. She was eager to hear her mother's story. "But... why do these quilt pieces remind you of that?"

"Well," said Mom, "before you came to live with us, I wanted a little baby very much. I prayed that we'd be able to adopt one right away. That didn't happen. Your father and I prayed and prayed, and we waited and waited. I sometimes felt angry at God for not giving me my way."

"But then you got me," Angie said.

"That's just the point," said Mom with a smile. "I didn't get my way. God had His way and it was much better. He taught us so much during those years we were waiting. We learned a lot about patience and about trusting God to work out His best for us. And then, as you said, we adopted you." "If you had gotten a baby as soon as you wanted one, wouldn't you have gotten me, too?" asked Angie.

"We can't know for sure, but possibly not," replied Mom. "That's why this quilt is such a special project to me. I'm sewing together little remembrances from your life. As I do that, I'm reminded of how wonderful God's way was, and is, for me." "And for me!" said Angie as she gave her mother a big smile.

Thought: Are you patient when you don't get your own way?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for this lesson – that sometimes what I want may not be good for me! Help me to trust in You and submit to Your will. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## PRECIOUS PROMISES

Need a drink of water? Just turn on the tap! It is so easily available in Singapore, isn't it? That is why we don't really bother about how much water costs. Let's look at another scenario. Imagine a man, perspiring and thirsty, staggering in the hot and dry desert. How much do you think he would give in exchange for just a sip of water? To this suffering man who is in great need of water to survive, water is precious as he needs it desperately. Separately as sinners, we are in great need of the Saviour that God has promised. Because the reward for sin is death, we need Jesus to save us from sin. Is Jesus precious to you?

The Bible says God's promises are precious. We must all know John 3:16 very well by now. Because God loved mankind, He promised to save whoever believes and receives Jesus as his Saviour. Salvation is free for us because we do not pay anything for it. It is a gift. But it is the most expensive gift for it cost Jesus His precious life. Is God's promise of salvation precious to you?

When you become a Christian, you are no more condemned. Not only do you have eternal life, God has promised to make us more and more like Jesus. Jesus is sinless but Christians are not yet so. God now looks at us as though we are sinless only because we are in Jesus. In this corrupt world, we still sin for it is so easy to give in to our own selfish desires or weaknesses. But God is merciful and gracious. He has promised to forgive our sins when we confess. He will also give us faith to overcome temptations in this world.

Sometimes it is easy to slide away from the path God wants. It can be so easy to be worried about problems in our life. But what does the Bible promise in 1 Peter 5:7?

Thought: Escape temptation through God's promises and strength!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to keep Your precious promises in my heart so that I will not yield to the temptations of this corrupt world. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## DO YOUR THOUGHTS WANDER...

On the way home from church, Beng and Yifen told their parents about the missionary who had spoken in their Sunday School department. "I thought idols were things people worshiped long ago, but Mr. Ong said a lot of them still exist," said Beng. "The people he works with have all kinds of strange practices and ways of worshipping their idols. Idols are man-made gods."

"We are thankful that we worship the true God when we go to church." "Maybe we do, and maybe we don't," replied Dad. "We don't?" asked Yifen in surprise. "Then why do we go to church?"

"We should worship God there," said Dad, "but, well... take this morning, for instance. While Pastor was preaching, I noticed some girls writing notes to each other." Yifen blushed. She was one of the girls who had been writing notes. She slowly shook her head. "As for me," added Dad, "I have to confess that at one point, I was thinking about a problem at work instead of thinking about God. That wasn't worship, either."

"I'm sometimes guilty, too," admitted Beng. "In Sunday School last week, I whispered to Laurie during prayer time. After class, Brother Milton talked to me about it. I was really embarrassed."

Mom said. "I'm glad you realise that was wrong. And now I guess it's my turn to confess," she said. "There are numerous verses in the Psalms that say we are to 'sing unto the Lord' - or to sing 'praise to God'. To do that, we need to think about the words we're using. Otherwise we're not singing to Him at all. Well, while singing familiar songs, I sometimes catch myself thinking about something else."

"We all could improve our worship, couldn't we?" asked Dad. "Let's make up our minds that each time we go to church, we'll really worship God. If we don't, I can't see that we're much better than people who think ceremonies and rituals are worship. In fact, we're worse, because we know better."

Thought: What's going on in your mind when you attend Junior Worship (JW) class?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to understand and think about the message of the songs I sing, or JW lessons I attend. I pray I won't allow my thoughts to wander! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## GUIDANCE FROM THE WORD OF GOD

How many of you have experienced a blackout in your home at night? Was it very dark? Were you afraid? What was the first thing you did? Look for a torch or for candles? Why? So that you can have light to see what is in front of you, and you will not bump into things, trip over things and hurt yourself. So light is something important to us especially when we are in a dark place.

The Bible tells us that the Word of God is like a lamp and light to us. Psalm 119:105 says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” What does this verse mean?

First, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, ...”. During biblical times, the people of Israel did not have electricity like us. When night came, it would be total darkness. Few people travelled at night. In the home, they had oil lamps. These were vessels made out of clay, filled with olive oil, with a wick which was lit. They used these lamps to light their homes and to move around at home. They also carried these lamps with them if they had to leave their home in the night. The lamp guided them as they walked in the home or outside so that they would not stumble knock into objects or trip over something. Second, “...and a light unto my path.” This has a similar meaning. Light was also needed so that they could walk along a path safely, and not stumble or trip over something.

God’s Word, the Bible is like a lamp and a light to us. The Bible is able to guide us so that we can live lives without falling into sin and disobeying God. But for the Bible to be a light to us, we need to study the Bible. We need to hear the Word of God and obey. So, this means that when you read the Bible at home or when your teachers teach you the Word of God, you must pay attention, take note and obey what it says.

Thought: Is the Word of God a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for providing us with the Bible, a guide to our everyday living. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## HAVE YOU ACCEPTED THE LORD JESUS?

“I had fun today,” said Tommy happily when his mother came to tuck him into bed. He had spent the afternoon at a birthday party for Jeff, a friend in his Sunday school class. “I really like the truck I gave Jeff,” added Tommy with a grin, “and he likes it, too.”

Mom smiled. “Good,” she said. “Now you need to settle down. It’s time to pray and then go to sleep.” After they prayed together, Tommy looked up with a puzzled expression. “Mom, how do you know for sure if you’re really saved?” he asked as he climbed into bed.

“Do you understand that Jesus died for your sins, and that you can’t save yourself?” asked Mom. Tommy nodded. “Sure, I know all about that, and I asked Jesus to be my Saviour last year. But sometimes I still sin, and that makes me wonder about it.”

Mom nodded. “Tommy, think about that truck you took to Jeff’s party today,” she said. “You really liked it, so did you bring it home again when the party was over?”

Tommy shook his head. “No,” he said. “It’s Jeff’s. I gave it to him.” “What if he’s mean to you tomorrow?” asked Mom. “Then will you take the truck back?” “Of course not!” said Tommy. “It belongs to Jeff now, not to me.”

Mom nodded. “That’s right, Son,” she said. “You gave it to him as a gift, so it’s his. And when you trusted Jesus to forgive your sins and save you, God gave you a gift - the gift of eternal life. You didn’t earn it, just like Jeff didn’t earn the truck you gave him. And just like you gave it to him to keep, God gave you eternal life to keep. He doesn’t take back His gift, either.”

“Whew!” Tommy sighed with relief. “I’m glad I don’t have to worry about that anymore.” He yawned. “Night, Mom,” he added, snuggling down in his bed.

Thought: Have you accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour? If Yes, go to prayer 1. If not, and you want to accept Jesus, go to prayer 2, and look for your parent or Pastor so that they can pray with you.

Prayer 1: Father in heaven, thank You for saving me and providing a place in heaven for me. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

Prayer 2: Heavenly Father, I confess that I’m a sinner and cannot save myself. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and I want to accept Him as my Lord and Saviour. Please forgive all my sins. Thank You Heavenly Father for giving me salvation and a new life in Jesus! In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## BE DILIGENT

Ants are remarkable creatures. They live in colonies. You have the queen ant which lays eggs, the soldier ant which guards the nest, and the worker ant which scavenges for food and brings the food back to the nest. Ants are also social creatures. They move about in swarms. When one ant finds food, it lays a trail of chemicals that enables other ants to follow. They are also very cooperative, together, they can lift huge pieces of food. Ants store their food in the nests to keep them dry. Ants go about their work most efficiently and do not procrastinate. God has put instinct into the ant to do so. Has anyone seen a lazy ant? What can we learn from the example of the ant in Proverbs 6:6-8?

Proverbs 6:6 says ‘Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.’ The word ‘sluggard’ refers to a person who is habitually lazy. Such a person who is a sluggard is told to go to the ant and learn its ways in order to be wise. Now what are the ways of the ant?

Proverbs 6:7-8 says “Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.” Notice that the Bible says that the ant has no guide, overseer and ruler. A guide is someone who teaches you or guides you in your work. An overseer is someone who oversees your work, i.e., to make sure you do the work and a ruler is a person who issues orders and expects your obedience. The Bible says that the ant does not have these three persons who guide, oversee and rule over them. Yet they are able to provide their meat or food in the summer and gather food in the harvest. Summer is a time when the weather is dry and it is easy to move about and when food is plentiful. The ants busy themselves all summer collecting food. Then during the harvest, which is autumn, they do the same. In winter, when the weather is cold and the ground is covered with ice, they will not be able to move about freely, neither is there any food to be found. Ants will hibernate and having eaten enough food, it will enable them to last the winter. Such is their diligence through instinct given by God.

Thought: Are you diligent like the ant?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for providing us with the example of diligence seen in one of your creatures, the ant. May Thou help me overcome my laziness. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.



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## “LITTLE” PRAYERS?

“A-vee-air-ee,” read Paul, looking at the sign above the door of one of the buildings at the zoo. He was visiting the zoo with his Uncle Mike. “What does that mean?” asked Paul.

“An aviary is a place where birds are kept,” answered Uncle Mike. “Let’s see what kinds of bird they have here.” They opened the door and heard a lot of chirping and squawking, and as they walked through the building, they saw many different kinds of birds. “Look over there,” said Uncle Mike. He pointed toward a flamingo standing on one leg with its head on its back. “That one is asleep.”

“What a funny way to sleep,” said Paul. “How can that skinny little leg hold up such a big bird?” “Well, all I can tell you is that God made it that way,” answered Uncle Mike. “It’s amazing, isn’t it?” Paul grinned and nodded.

After leaving the aviary, Uncle Mike bought them each a snack. As they sat on a bench and munched their snacks, Paul was very quiet. “Thinking about your examinations again?” asked Uncle Mike. “Yeah,” Paul answered. “I just know I didn’t do well.”

“Now you don’t know for sure, Paul,” replied Uncle Mike. “Important thing is – we’ve got to commit this area to God.” Paul looked unconvinced. “You can pray,” answered his uncle.

“Oh, I do that,” said Paul. “I pray all the time! But that’s such a little thing.”

“That’s pretty much what you said about the flamingo’s leg,” Uncle Mike reminded him, “but that little leg held the bird up, didn’t it? And your ‘little’ prayers can do great things, too.” Uncle Mike smiled as he added, “God made it that way.”

There’s a song that goes....

*Why worry, when you can pray? Trust Jesus, He’ll be your stay.*

*Don’t be a doubting Thomas, Rest fully on His promise,*

*Why worry, worry, worry, worry when you can pray?*

Thought: Do you have problems you can do nothing about? Nothing, that is, but to pray?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not be anxious, but to commit all things before You in prayer. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

## HEAVEN IS A WONDERFUL PLACE

Whenever Suat visited her grandparents, Grandma usually called her into the kitchen to help prepare a snack. But Grandma didn't call her today because Grandma had passed away last week. Suat sighed as she rocked slowly in her grandmother's favourite chair. "How's school?" asked Grandpa.

"Okay," said Suat. She looked at the wall where a picture of her grandparents hung. She closed her eyes tightly and wished Grandma would be standing there when she opened them. But that couldn't happen, of course.

"You miss Grandma, don't you?" Grandpa asked quietly. A tear slid down Suat's cheek. "I miss her, too," Grandpa said with a sad look on his face. "Sometimes I want to call out to her in the kitchen to talk with her. It's hard to accept the fact that she isn't here anymore." He opened the drawer of a table and pulled out a box. "But look," he said. "When I feel especially sad, I look through this memory box. As each picture or article brings back memories, I thank God for the special times and the ordinary moments that I could spend with Grandma."

Grandpa held out the box, and Suat took it. "Oh, here's a picture of Grandma baking cookies!" exclaimed Suat. "And here's one I drew of them." Suat and Grandpa talked a little about the lovely cookies Grandma could bake.

"Shall we thank God for that?" asked Grandpa. Suat nodded, and Grandpa prayed, "Father, thank You so much for Grandma and for the time You allowed us to share with her. Thank You for the memory of the beautiful times. We miss her so much, but we know she's with You now. We thank You for that, too. Help us look to You for strength and comfort." A few tears wet Grandpa's face, and he hugged Suat tightly.

"I have an idea," said Suat. She went to the kitchen, and Grandpa followed. He smiled approvingly as Suat began putting some biscuits on a plate, just like Grandma used to do. "Grandma used to tell funny stories when we were in the kitchen together," said Suat with a grin. "The funniest one was about how she met you." She giggled and gave Grandpa a hug. "I'll tell you what she said."

Thought: Heaven is a wonderful place.

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for saving me and providing for me a place in heaven. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## GOD IS ALWAYS WITH YOU!

“Where’s Friskie?” wondered Monica when she got home from school. He always meets me at the door. Then she saw it - a trail of tissue paper. “Oh, you did it again, you naughty puppy!” scolded Monica. “Come here, Friskie!” A white ball of fur came slinking out from under Monica’s bed, tail tucked between its legs. Monica laughed. “You know you’re guilty, don’t you?” she said, picking up the puppy and fluffing his fur. “But I love you anyway, and I forgive you. Let’s get this mess cleaned up.”

That night, Monica had trouble sleeping. She couldn’t forget something bad she had done that afternoon. She tossed and turned. “Why did I do that?” she kept asking herself. “Why did I steal? I’m a Christian, and I know Jesus must be unhappy with me. I wish I could hide!” She pulled the blanket over her head, but it didn’t help. Suddenly, Monica shivered. It seems as if... as if... “Mom!” she called. “Mom!”

The light came on, and Monica blinked as she lowered the blanket and saw her mother’s concerned look. “Oh, Mom,” gasped Monica, wide-eyed, “I thought... well, it seemed like... like God was right here.”

Mom smiled. “You know the Holy Spirit is always with you,” she said, “but why does that frighten you? God loves you.” Monica shivered. “I... oh, Mom, I stole some money from Su. It was on her desk, and...”

“And that’s why you’re afraid,” said Mom when Monica paused. “The sense of God’s presence is frightening when we have sin in our lives. It makes us want to hide from Him, but we can’t do that.” She put her arms around Monica. “Remember how Friskie tried to hide after dragging the tissue paper down the hall from the bathroom?” Mom asked.

Monica nodded. “Yes, but it didn’t work. I knew where he was hiding and I knew what he did. He knew, too. I could tell he was ashamed, and I forgave him.” “When we’re sorry and confess our sin, God forgives us, too,” said Mom. “I will confess my sin and ask God for forgiveness,” said Monica. Her voice trembled. “I’ll return the money tomorrow.” Together, Mom and Monica bowed their heads and prayed.

Thought: Does God’s presence comfort you or make you afraid? It should make you afraid if you know of a sin in your life and are unrepentant.

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for the reminder that You know everything and that everywhere is in Your presence. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## GOD'S WORD GUIDES US

Wei Rong sat on the sofa with his grandmother as she read aloud from her Bible. The thunderstorm outside made him glad to be safe and warm in the house. But Wei Rong was startled by a very loud crack of thunder. "Whoa!" he exclaimed when all the lights went out. "It's dark in here. Do you have a flashlight, Grandma?" "There's one in the kitchen," said Grandma. "It's in the top drawer next to the stove. Do you want to go find it?"

"Sure," said Wei Rong. He jumped up and started toward the kitchen, but he bumped his knee on a small table. "Ouch!" he yelped. He took a couple more steps and bumped into the couch. "I don't like the dark," he grumbled. Wei Rong finally made it to the kitchen, opened the drawer, found the flashlight, and switched it on. "This is better," he said. "I can see where I'm going now."

"Good," said Grandma. "Now let's see if you can answer this question . . . What people live in the dark all the time?" As she spoke, the lights came back on. "All the time?" Wei Rong looked at her in surprise. "You mean like way up in the north pole where the sun doesn't shine for weeks? But it does shine part of the year. They're not in the dark all the time."

"True," Grandma agreed, picking up her Bible again. "Everyone enjoys some daylight, but people everywhere also need a different kind of light. That's because, in a way, those who live without the Bible live in the dark all the time. Do you know why?"

Wei Rong looked uncertain. "Well . . . I learned a verse that says the Bible is like a light," he said.

"Exactly," agreed Grandma. "God says the Bible gives light to our lives. It shows us the way to know and love God, and how to live for Him day by day." Wei Rong set the flashlight on the table. "I think we should keep this right here, Grandma, just in case the lights go out again."

"Okay," agreed Grandma with a smile. "And let's keep Bible verses in our hearts for times of spiritual need. You said you don't like the dark, so let's read some more of God's Word."

Thought: Do you read the Bible every day? Do you memorise the Bible verses so that you'll never be without the light of God's Word?

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for the reminder of the importance of reading the Bible daily and memorising the verses. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## HEAR AND DO GOD'S WORD

The Book of James teaches us how to live our lives in the way that pleases God. To help us understand the Bible, James sometimes uses objects or things that we are familiar with. In James 2:22-24, the “mirror” is used to help us understand how we should regard God’s Word.

James 2:22 says, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” James tells us that we need to be doers, not just hearers of God’s Word. We cannot just hear the Word of God and keep it as head knowledge, but after hearing we need to be a doer of God’s Word, i.e., to obey and practice what it says. If you just hear but do not do God’s Word then you are deceiving yourself. This means you will be lying to yourself.

James 2:23-24, uses the analogy of a person looking at a mirror to describe someone who a person who hears God’s Word but does not do what it says. These verses say, “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:”, For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” “He beholdeth himself” means he sees his own face in the mirror. When he looks, it is not just one glance but he is looking and examining every part of his face. Maybe he sees some dirt on his face. Children, if you see dirt on your face or if your face is messy what will you do? This person after seeing dirt on his face that needs cleaning, does not bother to clean his face. Instead, he goes away, completely forgetting how he looked. This person is a hearer but not doer of God’s Word.

The Bible is like a mirror to us. When we read or hear the Word of God, it must speak to us. It will tell us and remind us how we need to obey God. Sometimes the Bible reminds us of our sins so that we will repent and change our ways. If we respond with obedience, we will be the person who is a hearer and doer of God’s Word. If we do not obey, then we will be like the person who is a hearer but not a doer of God’s Word. God will be pleased only with those who hear and obey His Word.

Thought: Do you make effort to obey what the Word of God commands you?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not just to hear Your Word, but also to obey it. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## I WILL BE KING!

According to God's promise in 1 Chronicles 22:9, Solomon would be the next king of Israel after King David. But at the start of 1 Kings, we read that King David's oldest surviving son, Adonijah, had taken advantage of his father's old age and sickly health to proclaim himself as king.

Adonijah did not bother to ask his father's permission to be king. He assumed that it was his right as the oldest surviving son. What do you think Adonijah was more concerned about? He wanted the power that came with being a king.

Sometimes we can be like Adonijah. We may be eager to be in positions of authority and influence so that we can gain the respect of others. Maybe you desire to be a leader in school, or to have a strong influence among your friends. If this is to feed your pride or gain some reward, it is sinful before God. When Adonijah said "I will be king" (1 Kings 1:5), he was full of pride. Selfish ambition displeases God.

Adonijah tried to make himself king over Israel by doing things his own way. He neither prayed to God, nor sought godly advice. Pray that you will not be like Adonijah who exalted himself. Rather, pray that you will humbly seek God for direction and submit to His way for you. Don't fall into the trap of pride like Adonijah did.

Unscramble the words below to find out God's response to the proud and humble.

**oGd tsisreeth hte dopur,**

**btu eitgvh crgae vont eht luhebm.** (James 4:6)

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Thought: Self-promotion is no promotion.

Prayer: Father in heaven, grant to me a humble heart that will always seek to do what is pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## SOLOMON CROWNED KING

After Bathsheba and Nathan told King David what Adonijah had done, King David immediately gave instructions to arrange for Solomon to be anointed king before all Israel. Solomon was not chosen because he was David's favourite son. He was chosen because God had told David that Solomon would be the next king.

Solomon was placed on King David's mule and brought to Gihon, a place near Jerusalem. Along the way, there must have been a great crowd lining the streets to witness Solomon riding on King David's mule. This was a clear signal to all who thought that Adonijah would be their next king! In Gihon, Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet publicly anointed Solomon with oil from the tabernacle. Solomon was officially crowned king over all Israel and Judah. The loud, joyful shouts of "God save king Solomon!" rang in the city.

Solomon did not fight with Adonijah over the throne, neither did he manipulate his way to be king. On the other hand, Adonijah plotted and schemed to be king out of selfish ambition and pride. He is a good example of a man who devised his own way, but failed. What the Bible teaches us is so true. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." (Proverbs 16:9)

Dear children, we can devise our way to what we deem as success, but it only leads to eventual failure if it's not God's will. Remember that success and promotion are from God alone. Are you doing things your own way, or are you trusting in the Lord and committing your ways to him?

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and write down 1 area you want to commit to God and trust Him for:

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Thought: Success and promotion are from God, not man.

Prayer: Father in heaven, help me to trust in You for all areas of life and not to devise my own ways. Direct my paths in Your ways, for Your way is perfect. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## DESPERATE FOR MERCY

Have you ever been exposed for something wrong you did? Do you think that you will get away with doing something wrong? Sooner or later, the people around you will find out. Adonijah must have also thought that he would get away with crowning himself as king. He even managed to make the people think that he was king.

But Adonijah was in for a rude shock. When he and his guests received news that David had just made Solomon king, Adonijah became very afraid. His wrongdoing was completely exposed! There were also serious consequences to bear. He could be sentenced to death for snatching the throne. The guests immediately left for fear of being associated with him.

How do you react when your wrongdoing is exposed? Adonijah panicked. His immediate reaction was to do something to save his life. He desperately ran to the altar of burnt offering and grabbed the horns of the altar. This made it seem as though Adonijah was sorry, but was he sincere?

When we are exposed and desperate for mercy, we may show that we are sorry to prevent ourselves from suffering the consequences. God knows our hearts. He knows if we are putting on an outward show, or if we are sincerely sorry for our actions and sins. Adonijah was not sincerely repentant. He only put on a show so that he would not have to die. After David died, Adonijah tried to take the throne from Solomon again (read 1 Kings 2:13-25). This time, there was no second chance. Adonijah had to pay for the consequences with his life.

Dear children, are you sincere when you say sorry for a wrong that you have done? Or is it just an outward appearance to avoid the consequences? Don't be like Adonijah and take the mercy given to you for granted!

Thought: Have I sincerely repented of my sins, or am I just putting on an appearance of repentance?

Prayer: Father in heaven, forgive me of my sins and be merciful unto me. Transform me Lord. I pray for a wholehearted devotion and sincere obedience to You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



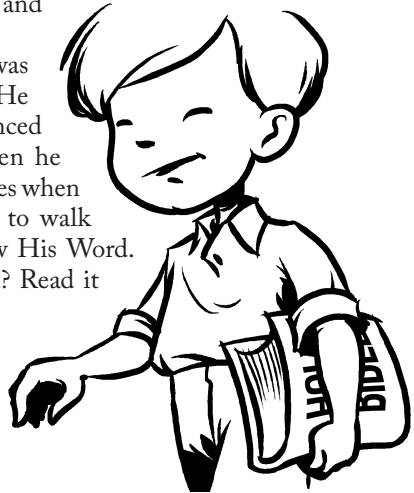
## WALKING IN GOD'S WAYS

At his deathbed David gave precious words of advice to Solomon. Of all the advice he could give, of how to win wars, or how to make his kingdom rich and prosperous, David instructed Solomon to be strong to walk in God's ways. This was the most important and main thing Solomon needed to do. God would take care of everything else. These words are also for all of us.

Walking is part of everyday life. Nobody can walk for us, we have to take each step for ourselves. It is the same in our spiritual life. In order to be strong and mature, we need to walk by taking steps of faith. Your parents and Sunday school teachers cannot do it for you. You need to walk for yourself. But how do you start to take those steps of faith, and walk in God's ways?

God gave Israel civil and legal laws (read Leviticus 19), and the moral laws, like the Ten Commandments. There were also special events that God told Israel to keep, like the Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread. These were God's testimonies to be observed so that the people would remember God's deliverance and provision for them.

David's advice to Solomon was to obey the LORD in all His ways. He could say this because he experienced God's presence and blessings when he obeyed, and the painful consequences when he did not. Dear children, for us to walk in God's ways, we must first know His Word. Are you familiar with God's Word? Read it diligently!



Thought: Walking in God's ways means knowing God's Word, obeying Him wholeheartedly in faith, out of love for a great God.

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for Your amazing love and for saving me from my sins. Thank You for all the promises in Your Word. Help me to have faith to walk in Your ways and to love You more each day. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## LOVE MOTIVATES OBEDIENCE AND WORSHIP

Can you think of some ways that people use to show love for each other? Some show love by giving presents, some by spending time, others in words. Love motivates us to want to do something for our loved ones. In the same way, when a person loves God, it would also show in his actions.

Solomon loved the LORD. What did Solomon do out of love for God? He *“walked in the statutes of David his father”* (1 Kings 3:3). Like David, Solomon obeyed God’s laws. He knew God’s Word and obeyed it. The name of God used here is “LORD”. Whenever “LORD” is used in capital letters, it refers to the covenantal name of God - “YAHWEH”, or “Jehovah”. This means that Solomon had a personal relationship with God! Obedience to God’s Word is motivated by a love for God and a close, personal relationship with Him!

What else did Solomon do for God? Look at 1 Kings 3:4. He went to Gibeon (about 12km north-west of Jerusalem) to worship God and offer 1,000 burnt offerings. His worship was motivated out of a love for God! Do you drag your feet to church? Solomon’s example teaches us that when we worship the Living and True God, we worship Him out of love.

We don’t deserve to come into God’s presence because we are sinners. It was God who first loved us. And He loved us so much that He even gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. Only because of Jesus, the Risen Saviour, we can come into God’s presence to worship Him! His amazing love for us, ought to spur us to love Him more!

Thought: Do I truly love God? Or do I love myself more than God?

Prayer: Father in heaven, please help me to walk close with You. Search my heart, and know my thoughts. May my motivation to obey and worship You, be from a sincere heart that loves You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## ASK FOR WISDOM

If God were to give you a blank cheque and say – “Ask anything, and I’ll give it to you.” What would you ask God for? It’s an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ask God for your heart’s desire! Would you ask for the most popular toy that everyone has? Or would you ask for good results in the exams? What is your heart’s desire? Let’s see what Solomon wanted.

Solomon was resting at night, when God appeared to him in a dream. He could have asked for more riches, a greater kingdom, and even a longer life. But his reply was probably nothing that you or me would have thought of asking!

After Solomon praised God and humbly confessed his helplessness as a young king to rule a great nation, he presented his heart’s desire before God. He only had one request. Solomon’s sincere desire was to have wisdom to execute right judgment. It was a request that pleased God. Wisdom is not just for kings. We too need wisdom every day to choose between what is good and bad, and make the right decisions that are pleasing in God’s sight. Pray and ask God to grant you wisdom too.

Do you know how precious wisdom is?  
Read Proverbs 8:11 and write it here.

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Read the verse again slowly and try to commit it to memory!

Thought: How can I start to have wisdom? Fear the LORD, and know His Word.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I praise You for Your great mercy towards me. Although I’m young, I pray that you would grant me a godly fear and wisdom to judge between good and bad. Help me to make right decisions that will be pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

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## REQUEST GRANTED!

Solomon's request for wisdom pleased the LORD. Why? Many of our prayer requests are often self-centred to make ourselves feel good. But Solomon's request was not for himself. He requested for wisdom so that he could be a good king. He understood wisdom was needed for this great calling from God. He asked for wisdom not for his sake, but for the sake of God's people – the great nation of Israel.

Solomon's request was so that he could better serve God. The LORD gave him great wisdom that the world would never see again. Besides that, God also gave him riches, honour and if Solomon continued to obey God, he was promised a long life. All these were not part of his request, but the LORD was pleased to give these to Solomon. It was a clear and authoritative sign that God was with him, a young king at the start of his reign.

Like Solomon, do you find yourself faced with a difficult, uphill task that you don't think you can handle? Wisdom will help you to know and apply God's Word correctly. If that's what a king needs to ask for, we definitely need to as well.

Write out the correct order of the scrambled phrases below to find out what James 1:5 says!

**let him ask of God./ that giveth to all men liberally./  
and it shall be given him./ If any of you lack wisdom./  
and upbraideth not;**

Correct order:

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Thought: God will never find fault with those who ask for wisdom, but will give it freely.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I pray that You will be with me through all the challenges of life and to grant me wisdom to handle them. Help me to be an obedient child, a kind person, and a consistent Christian. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## THE PROOF OF WISDOM

A very tough puzzle was given to King Solomon. No one knew how to solve it and the case went all the way to the king for judgment. Here's the puzzle:

Two pregnant mothers stayed together in a house, and gave birth 3 days apart. One of the mothers accidentally slept on her child and killed the child! She realised this at midnight and did something terrible: she exchanged her dead child with the child of the other mother. Now both women accused each other of lying. Each claimed that the little boy was theirs. With no other witnesses in the house, who was telling the truth? What would you have done?

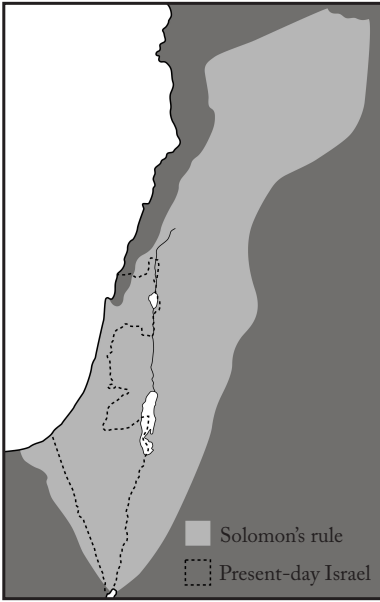
Solomon did not hesitate. He understood the great love a mother has for her children. He called for a sword to divide the boy so that each mother could take half of him. At once, the real mother surrendered her right to the child. She loved her child so much she would rather give him up than see him killed. However, the woman who lied agreed to divide the little boy in two. How could she be the true mother?! Solomon's shocking test revealed who the real mother was. What a brilliant solution!

What can we learn from this? God's wisdom is above man's wisdom. Where man is limited and has no solution, God shows that His wisdom enables us to find the right solutions. God's wisdom is the key to all puzzles and difficulties of life! What was the result? The whole nation of Israel feared King Solomon because they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to judge rightly. God's name was glorified before the whole nation!

Thought: The proof of God's wisdom is right judgment in difficult times.

Prayer: Father in heaven, help me to look to You as my source of wisdom and strength. Help me to judge rightly, that I may be a good testimony for You and a blessing to others. Please grant me the strength to continue to trust in You and to read and love the Bible, for there is great truth and wisdom in it. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## THE RICHES AND WISDOM OF SOLOMON



Remember how God was pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom? Besides granting him wisdom, God also promised Solomon riches and honour. Today we get a glimpse of just how much God blessed Solomon. He was so rich that every day his household enjoyed great amounts of bread and different types of meat. The portions mentioned in verses 22 to 23 sound like they are more than enough for a grand feast, but it was their daily provision! Everyone in Solomon's household lacked nothing, even the animals!

How did Solomon receive honour? He ruled from the River Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, and all the way to the border of Egypt. This is much larger than the area

that Israel occupies today. Israel also enjoyed peace with the neighbouring kingdoms. They paid Solomon honour by bringing presents and serving him all his life.

God gave Solomon unequalled wisdom. He didn't have to flip through books or search the internet to find answers. He knew the answers for all types of questions about plants, animals, birds, creepy crawlies, and fish. Solomon also composed many proverbs and songs found in the Bible. Kings from near and far travelled to come and hear his wisdom!

Solomon started very well and was blessed by God. But would he continue well, and remember the Giver of all these good and perfect gifts? Dear children, keep your eyes not on the gifts but on God the gracious Giver!

Thought: Do I seek the gifts or God who is the Giver of all gifts?

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for providing for me in so many ways. As I enjoy these blessings, help me to remember that You are the gracious and faithful Giver of these blessings. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**BE HUMBLE**

Hiram, the king of Tyre at that time, was David's good friend. To continue the good relations that he had with David, he sent his servants to pay their respects to Solomon.

Solomon didn't get carried away by the visit. Instead, he saw it as an opportunity to serve God in his calling to build the temple. He wasn't serving God because his father asked him to, or because it was his desire. It was first because the LORD had called him. Do you notice that he refers to God as "the LORD my God" in verses 4 and 5? Solomon had a personal relationship with God. He knew God and knew that God had called him to build the temple.

Dear children, do you have a personal relationship with God? Is He your God, or just your parents' God? Before you can serve Him, you must first have a personal relationship with Him. Only then will you be able to serve with conviction and purpose.

Solomon wanted the best for the LORD's house, and humbly requested for Hiram to supply the timber and skilled workers for the task. Hiram gladly agreed to supply all the timber needed in exchange for food.

When you are called to serve in a particular area, you may still find that you are lacking in some skills or resources. God will send people your way to supply the help. Be humble to ask for help and learn from those with more experience and skill. The LORD was with Solomon and sent the right people to help him build the temple.

Thought: Even the richest and wisest king needed help sometimes, what more me?

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for calling me to salvation. I pray that You would also show me how I can serve You better. Grant me humility and wisdom to ask for help from the right people. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## WISDOM TO PLAN AND PREPARE

Solomon had the responsibility of preparing, organising, and gathering all the raw materials. He needed many men to work at various locations and bring materials to the construction site. Lots of planning and organisation work was needed. Look at the number of men needed!

30,000 to chop down timber,  
70,000 to carry the materials to the construction site,  
80,000 to dig up rocks from the mountains; and  
3,300 to lead and oversee the work

A strong, solid foundation also had to be laid. Many types of stones were needed – great stones, costly stones, and stones that were cut out from far away mountains. It's exciting to see a building rise up from the ground! But the preparation work before that is very important. Without proper preparation, it is impossible to build anything well.

The importance of preparation does not apply only to Solomon, or builders of buildings. It applies to you too. Dear children, if you have accepted Christ as your Saviour, every act of service that you do, is building upon Him as your firm foundation. Serve God among your friends and family! But before you do any act of service, consider the points below and prepare yourself first.

Is your heart prepared to serve God humbly, out of love?  
Ask God to prepare your heart so that you will serve with the right attitude.

Are you equipped to serve God?  
Ask God to show you a person who can teach you the skills. Be equipped with the knowledge of God's Word.

Are you prepared to sacrifice your free time to serve God?  
Ask God to grant you faith, and the joy of serving Him and His people.

Thought: It is easy to say I want to serve, but I must prepare well so that I can serve God acceptably. Prepare now!

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for health and strength to serve You. Prepare my heart and equip me for service, so that every act of service I do may be pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



## MARVELLOUS WORK OF GOD

A construction site is usually a noisy place. The loud sounds of drilling and joining metals, nails being hammered into wood, and cranes dropping off heavy metals. But while the house of God was built, there was no tool of iron used inside it! Can you imagine the unusual scene of a peaceful and quiet construction site?

There was no hammering or sawing at the site. This means that every stone and piece of wood had to be carefully and accurately cut to its exact dimensions. They had to be made ready first before being brought to the site to be assembled. This was no easy task. It required skilled craftsmen with an attention to detail. The leaders also had to plan well in order to give clear instructions to the thousands of men.

When was the last time you worked on a difficult and demanding task? Did you feel overwhelmed? To build the Lord's temple was a significant and mighty task. And to complete it would be a great accomplishment. It is easy to be overwhelmed or distracted when serving God. You may even start to lose sight of Him and forget about your spiritual walk.

It is at this point that God directs Solomon to remember his spiritual walk. He told this to Solomon at the start of his reign. It was time to remind him again. Solomon was called not only to serve and build the temple. More importantly, he was called to have a close walk with God and to obey Him.

You may be actively participating in church, but are you walking close to God and obeying His Word? Don't lose focus. Remember that God doesn't just see your acts of service. He cares to see if your service truly comes from your love for Him.

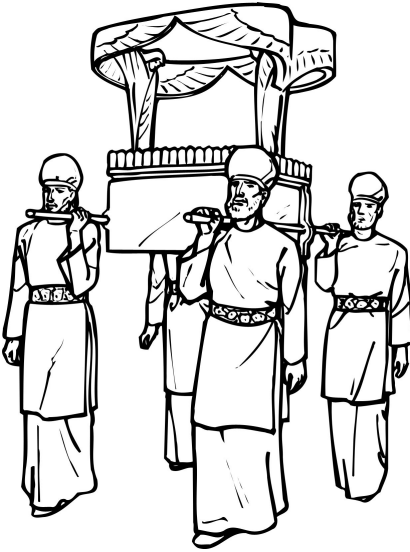
What are some of the ways you may serve God?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Thought: I must be faithful in service!

Prayer: Father in heaven, forgive me when I lose focus or become distracted in my service. Fix my heart upon You alone that all things done may bring glory to Your name alone. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## IS GOD AT THE CENTRE OF YOUR LIFE?



The months of preparation and construction of the temple led to this point. It was time for the Ark of the Covenant to be brought to its resting place, the finished temple. What did the Ark of the Covenant represent?

It represented God's presence with Israel. Whenever the Israelites saw the Ark in their midst, and the pillars of cloud and fire leading them, they knew that God was with them. The priests carried the Ark by long poles, known as staves, on their shoulders and went before Israel as they travelled. When they rested, the Ark was placed in the most holy place of the tabernacle, in the centre of the whole camp.

God's presence was at the centre of Israel's worship, service, and attention. The cloud which had led Israel throughout her travels now filled the house of the LORD. What an amazing and glorious sight!

Is God at the centre of your life? This means that in your daily life, you gladly desire to obey Him and to be led by His Word. Why? Remember that the LORD has done great things for you, especially His work of salvation in your life. Just as God was faithful to lead Israel all the way, He is also faithful to lead and guide you through life. When God is at the centre of your life, He is pleased to fill you with His presence and others will see Him through your life.

Thought: It is better to have the presence of God than the company of the world.

Prayer: Father in heaven, draw me nearer to You and let me have a closer walk with You. Help me to do my Quite Time daily. Help me to lead a God-centred life that will glorify Your name. That is hard for me because I still misbehave or get angry for the wrong reason. So please help me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

After seven years, the temple was finally built! Imagine that you're part of the crowd that had gathered for the dedication ceremony. For the very first time, you have a grand temple to worship the LORD God. What a magnificent sight! As part of the crowd, looking at the temple and the king standing before you, what would you think of? Perhaps many would think how great and wise Solomon was in building such a grand temple. We tend to give credit to man when something wonderful has been achieved. And man delights in taking credit too!

But look at Solomon's first words to Israel, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel" (1 Kings 8:15). Solomon immediately turned everyone's attention to the God of Israel! He took no credit.

Solomon emphasised to Israel that it was God who "with his hand fulfilled it" (verse 15). If God did not give peace to Israel, or supply the help and materials, if He didn't give Solomon the gift of wisdom, the temple would not have been built. Truly, "the LORD hath performed his word that he spake" (verse 20). Solomon made it known that he was only part of God's wonderful plan to fulfill His promise.

When God calls you to be His child, He starts a good work in your life. Your life now has true purpose and meaning. God promises to perform this good work to completion. Like Solomon, you and I cannot take any credit but give all glory to God. We are but participants in His wonderful plan. Solomon knew this very well!

Read this promise in Philippians 1:6 and fill in the blanks below.

"Being \_\_\_\_\_ of this very thing, that he which hath  
 \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ in you will  
 \_\_\_\_\_ it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Thought: God has a purpose for my life – to know Jesus as my Saviour, and to serve Him faithfully.

Prayer: Father in heaven, I praise You for You are a faithful God who keeps Your promises. Thank You for beginning a good work in my life. I need not fear because You are in control. Grant me the faith to continue to trust in Your promises. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## PRAY WITH A THANKFUL HEART

Are you sometimes at a loss for words when you want to pray? Perhaps even though you have the desire to pray, you are not quite sure how to start. Let's learn from how Solomon prayed as he dedicated the temple to the Lord.

The first thing we learn is that prayer is between only you and God. Sound quite obvious? In fact, many are afraid to pray aloud in a group because they are mindful of how others view them. But whether you are praying alone or in a small group, you stand before God alone. Look at verse 22. "...Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation..." This is the same for us too. Whether in private or in public, we do not stand before man, but before the LORD in prayer. Therefore, when you pray you don't need to impress anyone. It is God who hears and sees your heart.

The second thing we learn is that prayer comes from a thankful heart that appreciates the great things that God has done. Solomon started his prayer by praising and thanking God. The Living and True God of Israel kept all His promises. The temple was finished only because God made it happen. There is no God like the God of Israel!

Are you thankful for the blessings that God has given to you? If you don't know how to start praying, start by praising and giving thanks to God! What God has done for you, is beyond what the nicest and most helpful person on earth has done, or can ever do for you. He loved you so much, that He gave His only beloved begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross, to save you from your sins. And now, because Christ lives, you can face tomorrow without fear. Isn't there so much to praise and give thanks for? Don't take God's goodness for granted!

List out some of God's blessings in your life. Praise and thank Him for His faithfulness!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Thought: I can only start to pray if I have believed in Jesus Christ as my Saviour, and acknowledge God as the only Living and True God.

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for all your goodness and blessings in my life. Help me to prayerful at all times. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## PRAY WITH HUMILITY

Besides knowing how to start our prayers, it is also important to reflect on our attitude when we pray. To have the right attitude, we need to answer these two questions:

Who is God?

Who am I before this God?

Who is God? God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. There is no way to measure His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Be full of wonder to know how great our God is!

Solomon desired for God's presence to dwell in the temple. Yet he also recognised this seemed like such a feeble request before an almighty and powerful God! If the heavens cannot contain God's presence, why would He choose to dwell in this temple? God has all the right to decide not to dwell with sinful man. Like Solomon, we must first understand and accept how great God is, before we know how to approach Him.

Who am I before this God? Compare the little ants that crawl on the floor with the size of your little toe. The ant is so many times smaller than your little toe, what more the size of your whole body! It is almost incomparable. How about us before God our Maker? Compared to the ants that are smaller than us, we are even smaller compared to our infinite God!

Solomon knew how small he was before God. Though he was a king, he referred to himself as a servant. What was Solomon's request? He pleaded on behalf of Israel for the forgiveness of sins, so that their prayers may be heard. Solomon approached God humbly.

What is your attitude when you pray? Do you pray for your own desires to be fulfilled and expect God to give you what you want? You are not the starting point of your prayers. God is. Remember how small you are next to an infinite and mighty God. Therefore, approach Him with humility and lowliness.

Thought: Do I pray with a proud or humble attitude?

Prayer: Father in heaven, please humble me that I may acknowledge You as the great and faithful God. There is none like You. Forgive me for being proud at times. Teach me to pray with a sincere and humble heart. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## PRAY FOR GOD'S FORGIVENESS

In your private prayers to God, do you ask Him to forgive you of your sins? Perhaps you pray something similar to this - "Father in heaven, please forgive and cleanse me of my sins." By uttering these words, does it mean that God will surely forgive?

There are times when we ask God to forgive without proper reflection on what our sins are. Confession of sins becomes part of a prayer routine that we follow, and the words are said without much thought or seriousness. But Solomon clearly put much thought into his prayer.

Let's study Solomon's prayer a little more closely. As he dedicated the temple, his prayer was one about forgiveness. Throughout these verses, do you notice a similar pattern in the prayer? Can you tell what this pattern is?

Fill in the blanks!

1. If the trials that Israel faced were because of the s \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ they committed,
2. If Israel were to confess their sins and \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ n back to God,
3. Solomon asked that God would f \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ , and deliver them from their trials.

What was the condition to be forgiven? IF Israel recognised the terrible sins of their hearts (1 Kings 8:38), turned away from their sins (1 Kings 8:35), and returned back to God in prayer (1 Kings 8:33). Behind our prayers, must be a repentant spirit.

We need to first be serious and really know the sins of our hearts, and truly repent. It's no use just uttering words of forgiveness without meaning it. To repent means to turn away from your sins, confess it to God, and humbly ask Him to forgive.

Do you sincerely desire to be restored to God and to experience His peace and forgiveness? Without God's mercy and forgiveness, you will be most miserable because you remain unforgiven. Thus, Solomon prayed for the most important thing. The true blessing was not prosperity or success. It was to experience the restoration and mercies of the LORD.

Thought: Am I a forgiven or unforgiven sinner?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, whenever I sin, may Thou grant me a sincere, repentant heart to seek forgiveness from You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## DO YOU PRAY FOR STRANGERS?

It seems strange to pray for a stranger. We usually pray for those we are close to, not those we do not know. It is therefore interesting and instructive for us to read that Solomon prayed for strangers. Here we learn of Solomon's concern for the salvation of others outside Israel.

Who does 'stranger' here refer to? Look at 1 Kings 8:41. It refers to people outside of Israel who left their own countries to be a part of God's people. Why would they leave home to travel such a long distance to a foreign land? Even though they were far away, they heard of God's great name and all the wonderful works that God had done for Israel. They believed in God through the witness of Israel. Anyone looking at Israel would be able to see God and find salvation. Israel was God's visible witness on earth!

Dear children, can others who are observing your life tell that you are God's witness too? While you used to love the life of sin and disobedience, now you love God and desire to obey Him. There is a difference in your behaviour and conduct because of God's wonderful work of salvation in you. Can others tell the difference? Can those close to you, especially your family, tell the difference?

Solomon also asked God to answer the prayers of these strangers, so that all the people of the earth would also come to know and fear Him. He desired the salvation of others outside of Israel! Having experienced the salvation of God, will you also pray for the salvation of strangers like the people that your church missionaries are trying to reach?

Be a good witness for the Lord, and pray for those who are not saved. May the Lord grant you the courage and burden to share the gospel with someone He brings into your life.

Write out Matthew 5:16 below, and commit the verse to memory.

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Thought: God saved me to be His messenger of the good news of salvation.

Prayer: Father in heaven, may Your name be highly exalted and greatly praised through my life. Help me to bear a good witness for You in all that I do, so that others may also come to know and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## PRAY IN TIMES OF BATTLE

Imagine you are a soldier engaged in a fierce battle. This battle is dangerous and the enemy is scheming and cunning. Your life is in danger. You have the best armour for protection and safety, and your weapons are of the best technology. But having all this protective gear, and battle weapons does not guarantee victory over this clever enemy. What is your battle plan? Solomon's prayer records the winning strategy for us!

There are two aspects that you must be sure of, in order to be confident of victory.

1. You must be sure that this battle is the LORD's. He is the one who sends you to the fight! (1 Kings 8:44). If you are fighting for any other reason, such as to take revenge or for your own private agenda, then you can be sure that you are very much alone in your battle. If it is not the LORD's battle, He is not with you, and you are sure to be defeated.
2. You must pray to the LORD (1 Kings 8:45). Even though you may have all the best plans, advanced weaponry, and best armour, without prayer and dependence upon God, you will still fail. Pray always! Depend and trust in the LORD! Your strength will fail, but in the strength of the LORD, there is victory. This must be your battle plan!

Are you really fighting a battle? Yes, it is known as spiritual battle. This spiritual battle is your struggle and daily fight against temptation, sin, and false teachings of the world. It is dangerous because it is a battle for your soul. The outcome will determine your eternal life or eternal death. Please do not think that you can outsmart your enemy. Your enemy Satan is also known as the "Father of Lies" and great tempter. He has succeeded in fooling many people into hell. Will you want to be his victim?

Keep praying! The battle never stops until we reach heaven!

Thought: As Solomon prayed for Israel, I too must pray always for my Junior Worship (JW) class and my own spiritual fight. The LORD will fight for His people.

Prayer: Father in heaven, this battle that You have sent me to fight is difficult and I often struggle. Grant me perseverance, faith, and courage. Help me to trust in You and to draw strength from Your Word. Maintain Your cause, for Your own name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



## PRAY IN TIMES OF CHASTISEMENT

To be chastised means to be disciplined and punished for doing something wrong. Nobody likes to be disciplined and punished. But more often than not, we cannot deny that it is only those who love us who would correct our wrongdoings. Others would not care to do so.

The people of Israel had sinned against God many times before, and were severely chastised. For murmuring and complaining against God in Moses' time, the people had to wander forty years in the wilderness. A whole generation died in the wilderness and could not enter the Promised Land. During the time of the Judges, Israel did much evil against God and worshipped idols. For that, God delivered them into the hands of their enemies. Each time Israel turned away from God, He chastised them because He loved them. It was to make them realise their sins and to turn them back to Himself.

Solomon prayed for God's mercy during these times of chastisement. He acknowledged that when Israel sinned, Israel deserved to suffer the anger and punishment of God. The punishment was hard – to be held as captives in a foreign land. But Solomon prayed for God to have compassion, to forgive if Israel confessed and repented of their sins, and returned to God with all their heart and soul. He didn't ask for Israel to be delivered, but humbly prayed that their foreign masters would show compassion to them during their time of captivity.

Have you sinned against God recently and are suffering the consequences of your sin? Have you told a lie, stolen, or made God angry with your filthy conversation or disobedient behavior? Were you proud in your own ways or lazy and idle with your time? If you are experiencing the consequence of your sin, be grateful that God is chastising you. Why? Because it means that you are His child and He loves you.

Even though it is a hard lesson, may Solomon's prayer instruct and comfort you. The more you don't feel like praying, the more you must pray and repent with your whole heart and soul. The consequences may remain, but you will experience the peace and forgiveness of your Heavenly Father.

Thought: "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6).

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank you for loving me enough to chasten me when I sin. Help me to repent and seek Your forgiveness. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## WHO AM I?

Why does the Most High God hear Israel's prayers to be forgiven? This is something that we ought to ask ourselves too. Why should the Almighty God hear and forgive us? In the conclusion of his prayer, Solomon ends with the basis for the LORD to hear Israel. It all lies in Israel's identity. So what is Israel's identity? Israel is God's chosen nation. Of all the people that He could choose to be His people, He set aside Israel to be His own. God brought them out of slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land.

What about your identity? Who are you? Many people find their identity in the things they own, the activities they do, or in the friends they have. A person's identity is how he defines himself. How do you define yourself? Are you a person who finds a sense of belonging and security in your possessions, activities and friends? Dear children, if your answer is yes, then you have an identity problem! Your sense of security and belonging will change depending on the situation around you. What should you base your identity on instead?

If you have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, your identity is the same as Israel's. You belong to God and you are His precious possession. Your salvation cost God the precious blood of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He hears your prayers because of what Christ has done on your behalf. This identity in the Lord is where a Christian's true sense of belonging and security lies. Many things may happen today, but you need not fear because your Heavenly Father is with you to hear your prayers and carry you through.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Saviour, the peace and forgiveness of God is freely offered to you. The question is, do you believe that only Jesus Christ is able to save you from your sins, and bring you back to God? Or are you still lost and aimless in this world, trying to find a place or group to belong to? Turn to God and you will no longer be lost.

Read Jeremiah 3:13 and see what God has to tell you today about what you mean to Him.

Thought: God hears my prayers and forgives me only because of Jesus Christ who paid the penalty for my sins.

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for saving me or I would still be lost in my sins. Help me to love You more each day, and to serve You with a grateful heart, in all the areas you have placed me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## CONSECRATE YOUR LIFE

Do you know of people who have given their lives to a particular passion or cause? Some strive to be the best actor on stage, the famous football player the wealthiest businessmen on earth, and the list goes on. Maybe you have a passion or goal that you are striving towards as well! Is it to score the highest marks in class or to win a competition? There's no doubt that all of us give our lives to something. The only difference is what we give our lives to.

In today's Bible passage, we read of Solomon speaking to the congregation of Israel. Solomon praised God who kept all His promises to Israel, and called on the nation to follow and obey Him with all their hearts. Besides dedicating the temple, he called the people to dedicate and give their lives to the LORD. What is the temple, if the people turned away from following the LORD? Therefore, what was more important is that the people fully consecrated their lives to God. This means a total devotion and dedication to the LORD and His cause.

The people of the world give their lives to find satisfaction in things that are temporal. Their lives are devoted to a relentless pursuit of achievements that are very soon forgotten. For example, can you remember who the top student in your school was last year? And at the end of it all, what awaits them is eternity in hell, because they believed not in God nor His Word.

Whereas to consecrate your life to the LORD, is to make your life count for eternity. What does this mean? It means that whatever you do for the LORD now is known to Him. Even the small little things that you think nobody sees, God knows. He can use all your works of obedience and service to be a blessing to others, so that they may also come to know the Living and True God! What are you giving your life to? Work for the cause of the LORD! Don't waste your time, or your life.

Thought: What you are devoting your life to? Reflect on how you spend your time because that shows where your heart is, and what your life is devoted to.

Prayer: Father in heaven, renew a right spirit within me. Incline my heart and all its desires to heavenly affections and not earthly ambitions. May Your name be honoured and exalted in my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## GOD IS GOOD! REJOICE!

The dedication ceremony was a solemn affair. At every point, Solomon remembered God's goodness and gave Him all the glory and praise. After he prayed, he rose from his knees and called on the people to consecrate themselves to God. He then offered even more oxen and sheep in thanks giving and praise of God's goodness. Surely even if Solomon sacrificed all the oxen and sheep in the world, it could not repay God's deep love and goodness to Israel.

Can you think of some ways where you have experienced God's goodness? He has been so good to bless you with a home and family, a church to worship in, and the daily provision of all your needs so that you need not worry or beg. Are you taking all these blessings for granted?

After the dedication ceremony, there was a great feast! Israel gathered together to celebrate and remember all that the Lord had done for them. After seven days together, they left "joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done..." (1 Kings 8:66). This sounds like a very enjoyable church camp! When Christians enjoy warm fellowship with each other, and share how God has been good to them, there is truly great rejoicing! Of course, when fellowship is accompanied with food, it is an even more enjoyable experience!

Before you start the day, remember God's goodness in your life and give thanks. You may face some challenges and the road ahead may be bumpy. But remember that everything that comes your way is according to God's perfect plan. He intends for all these to be opportunities for you to experience His goodness and guiding hand. So when God blesses you, remember to give thanks! One way to encourage others is to also share with them how God has been good to you. And the best thing to share is how God saved you from your sins!

Thought: I can rejoice because my God is good!

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for your loving kindness and goodness towards me. Help me to trust in You more, and to also share with others your goodness towards me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## GOD'S WARNING TO SOLOMON

God first appeared to Solomon twenty years earlier at the start of his reign as king (1 Kings 3:4-15). Now, God appears to him again to remind him to walk in His ways and to obey Him. This comes at the right time, when Solomon had accomplished all his heart's desire (1 Kings 9:1). He was certainly quite pleased with all that he had done. Thus, God gave Solomon a stern warning.

God told Solomon clearly how He would deal with him and Israel. If Solomon continued to obey and follow God, God promised to bless him and make his throne prosper. But if Solomon and Israel were to turn away from following God and worship other gods, He would punish Israel. They would be cut off from their land, and go through great suffering. All who looked at Israel would know that they were suffering because they forsook the LORD.

This was what Solomon needed to hear, especially after having achieved great things in the eyes of God and man. This is a lesson for us too. Even though we have done well in serving God, and even received praise from men, we should never think highly of ourselves. If we do, it will be the start of our spiritual decline. God knew Solomon's heart, and He knows ours. The warning to Solomon applies to us too. If you obey God, He will bless you. But if you deliberately turn away from Him to please your own desires, He will surely punish you.

Are you in a similar situation? Have you done well in certain areas, whether in church, in school or at home? Take heed of God's warning to you and don't get carried away with these accomplishments. Keep close to God at all times! It is the only safeguard against a quick spiritual decline. Let not pride or the attractions of the world cause you to forsake Him.

Thought: God's warning to Solomon applies to me too.

Prayer: Father in heaven, please help me to be humble and give Thee the glory for all my achievements in life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

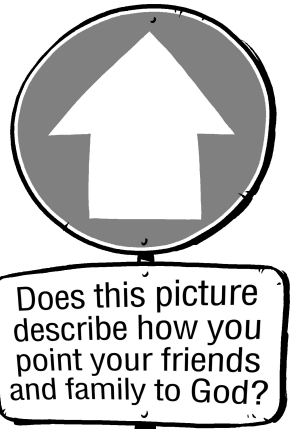
## THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

The queen of Sheba was doubtful of how wise Solomon was so she planned to ask him all sorts of difficult questions. She travelled with a great company of camels carrying spices, gold, and precious stones, all the way from Sheba (which is part of modern day Africa), to Israel.

She asked Solomon all that was in her heart and he answered every question. She heard his wisdom and observed how great his kingdom was, and how happy the people were. The queen confessed that she didn't believe in what others had told her. But now that she had seen it for herself, she concluded that it far exceeded what had been said. She then gave Solomon 120 talents of gold, and an abundance of spices and precious stones, the most that anyone had ever given him! In return, Solomon also gave the queen many gifts.

What is interesting to note is that the queen's observations were of Solomon's material wealth and possessions. She made no mention of his spiritual riches in the LORD, or recognise how God was the Giver of Solomon's superior, heavenly wisdom. Instead, the queen of Sheba was only impressed with him, and praised God for choosing a wise man like Solomon to be king. She did not realise that it was God who gave Solomon all these riches and wisdom.

What do you think people would say if they observed your life? Would they be impressed with your abilities and possessions, or would they be impressed with how God has blessed you with these gifts? Like a signpost that points people in the right direction, we must also point people towards God. If you direct others to pay attention to you, then you are pointing people in the wrong direction. You must point them towards God, because He alone is the Giver of every good and perfect gift.



Thought: Am I pointing my family and friends towards God by sharing His blessings and goodness in my life?

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for all your blessings. You alone are the Giver of all these gifts. Help me to always be ready to share your goodness with others, and to point them to You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

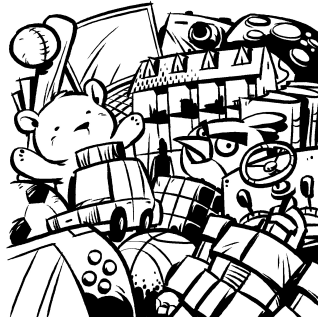
## TO BE RICH AND FAMOUS

God was good to Solomon and kept all His promises. He made Solomon the wisest man in the whole world. God also gave Solomon riches and honour, "...so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." (1 Kings 3:13) Yet, he soon turned away from God. Let's consider how God had blessed Solomon since the start of his reign.

Look at how rich Solomon was. Can you imagine seeing silver everywhere you turn? There was so much silver in Jerusalem it was as common as stones! Every year, Solomon received 666 talents of gold. What did he do with all these riches? He built himself a grand throne of ivory with an outer coat of the best gold. Even all his drinking cups were made of gold!

Solomon was also very famous. The Bible tells us that "all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart." He frequently received presents from people who visited him. They gave him silver, gold, clothes, armour, spices, horses, and mules. Solomon was a very influential and powerful man on earth! God made his words come to pass.

Yet, this paints us a picture of how being rich and famous can make a person quickly forget God. Instead of living for God, Solomon started to live for himself. Instead of following God, He started to follow after his own selfish desires. Solomon prized himself on his wealth, wisdom and fame. And because of that, he started to decline spiritually. How about you? Are you going astray from God? You know you are on a spiritual decline if you are spending all your time pursuing worldly things at the expense of spiritual activities like prayer and reading the Bible.



Thought: Am I on a spiritual decline that I'm not even aware about?

Prayer: Father in heaven, help me always to seek things above that are eternal rather than things on this earth that are temporal. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## SIN AGAINST GOD

*Ashtoreth**Chemosh**Milcom or Molech*

Do you know what these pictures are? They are the gods of the people who lived around Israel. This is possibly the saddest chapter of Solomon's life because he turned away from the Living God of Israel, to worship idols made from the hands of man. Solomon seemed so strong in his spiritual walk, and the LORD even spoke to him personally twice. What made him change so drastically and cause him to worship these evil idols?

God had commanded Israel not to take wives from the unbelieving nations, because these women would turn their hearts to worship other gods. But Solomon took them to be his wives and concubines. His love for women was greater than his love for God. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines! That is a total of 1,000 women! For all his great wisdom and knowledge of God's Word, Solomon failed to apply it to his own life. What was the result of this?

God was right. Solomon's wives turned away his heart from God. He started to worship other gods, and even built places of worship for these idols, burning incense and sacrificing to them. He did this until his old age, with no signs of repentance. What a great change from the Solomon who once called his people to incline their hearts towards God, and to serve Him with a perfect heart! How quickly he had turned away from God to go after idols made of earth!

It is tragic that Solomon, who knew God so well, could backslide so quickly. This is a warning to us that we could also end up like Solomon. Are you keeping any idols in your heart? Are you allowing yourself to be distracted by something or someone, such that your heart no longer seeks after God?

*Thought: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16)*

*Prayer: Father in heaven, grant me wisdom to apply Your Word to my life. Reveal to me my secret sins, faults and idols. Break down every idol of my heart, and restore me to a closer walk with You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*



## CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

The LORD God of Israel blessed Solomon richly with wisdom, riches and honour. The LORD also appeared to him twice to command him to walk in His ways. But Solomon did not keep God's commands. He did evil in the sight of God – loved many foreign women, and worst of all, he brought their foreign gods to Jerusalem. He even built altars for their idols and worshipped them. As king, Solomon's actions were terrible examples and he deserved to be punished severely.

Out of the Ten Commandments, how many did Solomon break?  
Please circle the commandments that Solomon broke.



There are consequences to our sins. For example, cheating in exams will cost you an immediate failure, and telling lies will result in punishment by your teachers or parents. Even if the consequences do not come immediately, be sure that your sin will find you out. We may think that we can escape without anyone knowing, but it's no use hiding because God knows! He will one day reveal all our sins, and we will suffer the consequences.

Use the Ten Commandments above to honestly reflect on your life too. If you have been sinning against the LORD, confess your sins to Him. The consequences still remain, but we must confess and get right with the LORD. Part of true repentance is the willingness to suffer the consequences of our sins.

Thought: Am I taking God's grace and mercy for granted?

Prayer: Father in heaven, I pray for a repentant heart that seeks Your forgiveness whenever I sin. Help me never to take Your grace for granted. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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## JUDGEMENT OF GOD

Israel enjoyed peace during Solomon's reign, not because he formed political alliances, nor because of the many foreign wives he married. It was God who gave Israel the peace (1 Kings 4:24). However, Solomon's reign was later plagued with many problems and no peace. God stirred up the hearts of Hadad the Edomite, and Rezon of Syria, to trouble Solomon for the rest of his reign.

Enemies were not just from outside, they also came from inside Solomon's household. Even Solomon's trusted servant, Jeroboam the Ephrathite, had lifted up his hand against the king."Through the prophet Ahijah, God tells Jeroboam that he will be given ten tribes. Therefore, Israel would be divided into the northern and southern kingdoms. The north would be known as Israel; the south as Judah. God started to act out His judgment against Solomon. But instead of repenting and submitting to God, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40).

How powerful is God? When God executes his judgment, there is no way for any man to run away, no matter how wise or smart they may be. Even Solomon who was the wisest man on earth could not stop God from taking away the kingdom from him! The hearts of all men are in God's hands. He can turn people and circumstances to fulfill His will and judgment.

Do you tremble and fear before a holy and powerful God? Do you believe that only the blood of Jesus Christ, is able to turn God's anger away, and save you from punishment in hell?

Unscramble the Bible verse of Matthew 10:28b below.

**him body but destroy fear hell both  
in and which is soul to rather able**

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Thought: May the fear of God keep me from sin!

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for the warnings in the Bible that remind me that You are a holy and just God who hates sin. May the fear of God keep me from sinning against You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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 FINISHING WELL

Solomon's life is a warning and reminder to all of us. Although he started well, he didn't end well. Solomon desired to walk in the ways of God, to rule as a wise king, and to build the temple. His heart was right before the LORD, and the LORD was pleased with him. But what happened? How is it possible that someone so close to God, and who had such wisdom and deep knowledge of God's Word, could become so rebellious and disobedient?

Solomon reigned for forty years. That's a long time! But out of these forty years, about half of it was wasted in the pursuit of women, wealth, and the worship of other gods. Most of us start our Christian life with energy and enthusiasm. We look forward to coming to church to praise and worship God. We like to go to Sunday school to hear the teachers teach, and we want to attend every church camp. We are excited when we learn new lessons from God's Word! Sadly, when many children grow up, they start to focus their attention on worldly things. Some pursue good grades in school, others desire the company of friends, or squander their time chasing after pop celebrities, indulging themselves with worldly music and TV serials. Very soon, they slip and no longer desire to walk in God's ways. Just like Solomon, they started well, but allowed their hearts to be filled with worldly affections. Ask yourself, "Will I end up like them too?"

At the close of his life, Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. In it he tells us that in his pursuit of every worldly pleasure, he found only emptiness and his spirit was troubled. Solomon had everything he set his eyes on. But at the end of his life, what advice does he have for us?

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 and fill in the blanks below.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: \_\_\_\_\_ God, and keep his commandments: for this is the \_\_\_\_\_ of man. For God shall bring every work into \_\_\_\_\_, with every \_\_\_\_\_ thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Thought: It is important to start, to persevere (continue) and to finish well.

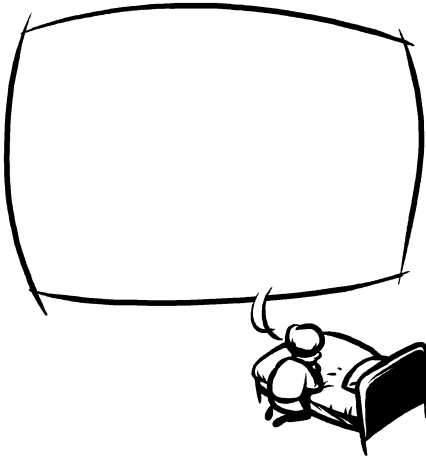
Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for the lessons that I've learnt from Solomon's life. Help me to be faithful to You until the day I see You face to face. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## BE A BETTER YOU!

Today is the last day of the year. Many in the world will be going for parties to celebrate the new year. There would be much feasting. Many restaurants will take this opportunity to offer special meals and they hope customers will like them. Others will party and get drunk.

Some may take this opportunity to make New Year's resolutions. Do you know what New Year's resolutions are? Resolution is a big word. What does it mean? When we make a resolution, we commit to something important to us. We try to change or improve ourselves in a certain way. Some resolutions include: "I've made a resolution to eat less junk food!" or "I will try not to call my brother any mean names."

Dear children, this is an opportunity for you to make your own New Year's resolutions list. If you need ideas to start, you may consider the lessons you have learnt this month. What have you learnt?



Some of the lessons are:

- Walk closer to God
- Be more obedient to Him
- Be a wise child
- To be more humble
- To put God in centre of our lives
- To pray more
- To not despise discipline

Dear child, in which area would you like to improve for the new year?

Thought: Start the new year a better person!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for protecting me and my family this year. I pray that I'd change for the better next year, that I'd be a better child, more consistent in my quiet time, and become a kinder person next year. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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