

BIBLE LESSONS

written by Margaret Law (Adelaide, South Australia, 1985). Presentation: Colleen Plant (email: hannahrt@bigpond.net.au)



LESSON 12: GOD GIVES ... THE GIFT OF PRAYER

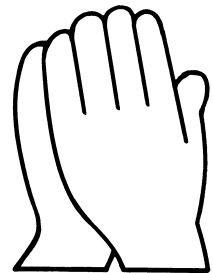
AIM: That children understand that God loves to hear and answer prayer and that praying is just talking to God like they would talk to their best friend. However, God cannot help us if we don't ask Him.



ROLE PLAY: Requires three characters. Two people are tied up and obviously distressed. A third person is willing and helpful. The tied people are struggling to get free, but cannot. Willing helper approaches the first tied person and offers help continually, but the tied person totally ignores any offers and just keeps on struggling. So Willing Helper approaches the second tied person and offers help. This person gratefully accepts and after being untied, they begin to chat, exchanging names and information, etc., arranging to meet one another for a meal—generally becoming good friends. They walk off arm in arm, while the first tied person continues to struggle.

Explain that this role play is a little like those who do and do not pray.

MEMORY VERSE: "Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers, ask God for what you need, always asking Him with a thankful heart." (Philippians 4:6).



STORY: THE WHITE BIRDS

This story is most effective with bird cut-outs to illustrate each of the people.

- First person - prayed without caring
- Second person - unforgiving heart
- Third person - filled with doubts
- Fourth person - sorry for sins
- Fifth person - thankful heart.

I once read about someone who had a very strange dream. He dreamed that an angel beckoned him to follow and led him into a church where five people were kneeling in prayer, and in front of each sat a white bird with folded wings.



"Watch these people at prayer," said the angel, "and notice what happens to the white birds."

So the dreamer watched the first person. She was a woman, beautifully dressed, kneeling right in the front of the church. She prayed with her face lifted and the words flowed from her lips. Her white bird was the largest and finest and whitest of them all, but although she prayed and prayed, it never moved at all, nor fluttered a feather.

THE WHITE BIRDS (continued)

“Put out your hand and touch it.” said the angel. The dreamer gently touched the perfect white feathers and drew back his hand hastily. “I believe it’s dead,” he said. “Yes,” replied the angel sadly, “it’s quite dead. This woman has been to church since childhood. She puts on her best clothes and she knows all the best prayers by heart. Her words are so beautiful, but she does not mean them, and when she leaves the church she forgets all about them. She does not even think about what she is saying. “Look! She is glancing at her neighbour in the next, wondering how much her hat cost.”

The dreamer moved to the second kneeling figure. He seemed to be praying very nicely. The beautiful white bird in front of him stirred its feathers and soared upwards and the dreamer, following its flight, noticed that the church had no roof. Up it mounted straight into the blue.

But suddenly, the face of the praying man changed. His devout expression became hard and bitter, and he pressed his lips together, muttering something under his breath. Then the beautiful soaring bird dropped as though an arrow had pierced its heart and lay dead on the church floor. The dreamer turned questioningly to the angel.

“The man started to pray sincerely,” said the angel, “but as he prayed, he remembered someone who had wronged him. Anger flooded his heart and he turned from love. He will not forget and he will not forgive. See, he is hurrying out to plan some revenge, so his prayer never reached the Father.

The dreamer paused before the third praying figure. A woman was kneeling, her hands clasped, the marks of tears on her cheeks. As she prayed the fair white bird in front of her began to rise and then sunk back, summoned its strength and rose again, almost reaching the top of the pillar, and then seemed to fall. But before it reached the ground it struggled up again, rapidly beating its wings, and at last it reached the clear blue air, fluffed out its feathers and disappeared into the sunshine.

The angel, who had been watching anxiously, drew a sign of relief. “This woman has passed through great sorrow,” said the angel, “and could no longer believe that God loved her or cared for her. She has not been here for a long time, but today she came back and tried to pray. But as she prayed her doubts returned, she could not believe, she nearly gave up, but she told the Lord about her doubts and whispered the promises of God and her faith was strengthened. Her prayer reached the Father and He has drawn near to comfort her. See, she is smiling!”

The fourth kneeling figure looked like a tramp from the streets and in front of him huddled such a weak, dingy bird, which looked as if it could not rise at all. The man did not even seem to be speaking, he just looked wretched. But all of a sudden, the bird’s dull wings quivered and it flew straight upwards in strong flight. And as it reached the open sky, its wings, kissed by the sunshine, gleamed white as snow, and the angel laughed for joy. “That man does not know how to pray at all,” said the angel. “He has never prayed in his life and does not know what words to use. But his heart is heavy with his sin and his needs, and his thoughts are crying out for mercy and forgiveness. And just at this moment all the angels of God in heaven are rejoicing because another sinner has come home.”



The last person in the church was a little boy, and in front of him sat a tiny, spotlessly beautiful bird. The child folded his hands and said that he was sorry that he had hit his sister, and asked God to make his mother well, and please to help him with his sums. He thanked God for the football he had received on his birthday, and the bird flew straight upwards with a song of joy. The child ran out into the garden to kick his ball, laughing up

There are as many ways of praying as there are people of prayer. It is neither the form nor the place of prayer, nor the position—kneeling, standing or walking—that really matters. The important thing to God is the inner attitude of your heart.

KEYNOTE:

“If I had ignored my sins, the Lord would not have listened to me.” (Psalm 66:18)

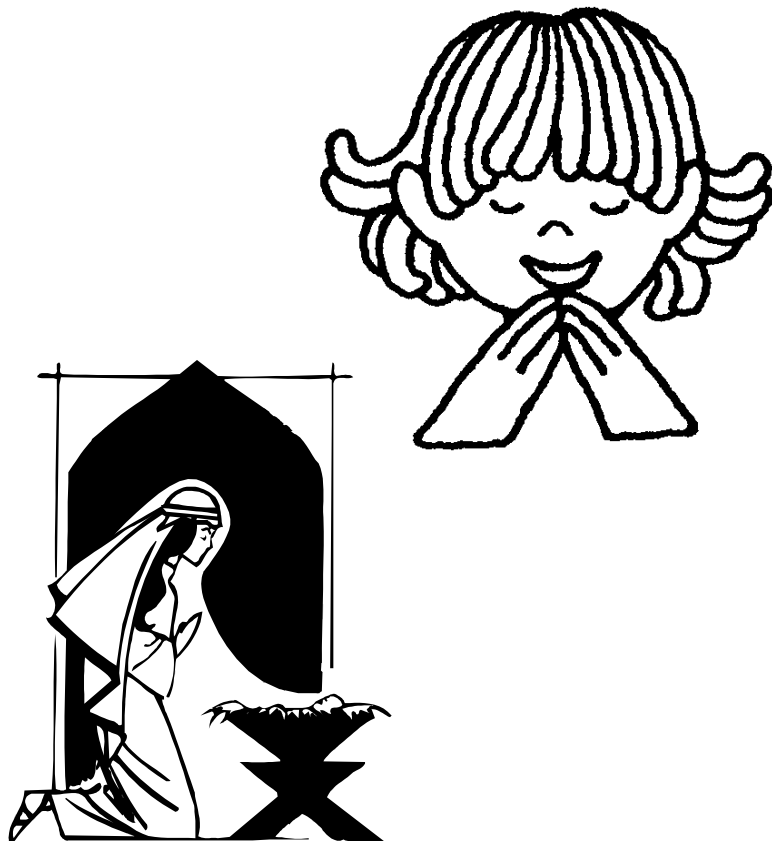
PRAYER OF DAVID: *May my words and my thoughts be acceptable to you, O Lord, my refuge and my redeemer!* (Psalm 19:14).

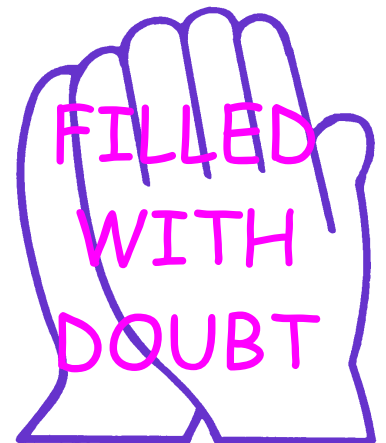
THINK ...

When you know that your heart is not right with God, what do you usually do?

- Feel guilty all over and shrivel up
- God out and enjoy yourself and forget about it
- Just hope to do better next time
- Pretend that it matters to neither God nor yourself
- Avoid facing God about it and put on a brave face
- Tell God honestly all about it, about how you feel, and ask Him to forgive you and help you to start afresh.

Which do you think is the right attitude, and why are the others wrong?





God loves to hear and answer your prayers.
 Decode this message to find out what He tells us about praying.



	1	2	3
A	instead	chapter 4	about
B	worry	Philippians	pray
C	about	Do	anything,
D	not	everything	verse 6

_____ _____ _____ _____
 C2 D1 B1 A3

_____ , _____ _____
 C3 A1 B3

_____ _____
 C1 D2

_____ _____ _____
 B2 A2 D3

GOD GIVES THE GIFT OF PRAYER

What is prayer? Prayer is just talking to Jesus like you would talk to your best friend.

God loves to hear and answer your prayers. He is pleased when we worship Him in prayer, praising Him for all that He is and has done, and will do, praising Him for sending His Son to save us from sin by dying on a cross and rising again three days later, before ascending into heaven, where He is now preparing a place for all who believe.

The importance of prayer is not how long your prayer is, or how many big words you use, or even whether you stand or sit or kneel or walk around while you pray. It's the inner attitude of your heart that matters to God. Prayer is a gift from God.

Jesus says He will give you anything you ask for IN HIS NAME (John 16:23). Asking for, say, a million dollars, because you want to be rich, is not asking in His name. If you ask for what you need and for the needs of others in the way Jesus teaches us in the Bible, He will answer your prayer and meet your needs.



There is spiritual power in the name of Jesus. God's power is released in your life when you pray to Him.

We are to pray IN FAITH. Faith is believing without seeing. Faith is trusting God to do what He promises even before we see it. The Lord says that ALL THINGS are possible to those who believe (Mark 9:23).

"May my words and my thoughts be acceptable to You, Lord." Psalm 19:14

the GIFT OF PRAYER

What did Jesus do in the Garden of Gethsemane just before He was crucified? (Mat 26:36)

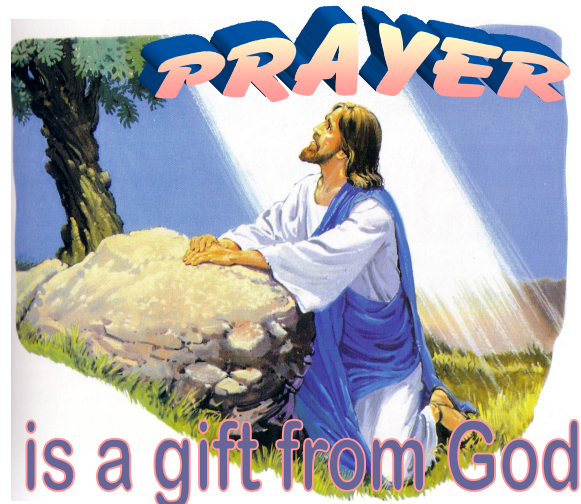
What did He ask the Father? (Mat 26:39)

What does this tell us about the gift of prayer?

What did Jesus tell the disciples to do and why? (Mat 26:41)

Whose will did Jesus pray to be done? (Mat 26:42) _____

My prayer:



JESUS ALWAYS TOOK TIME TO PRAY

4 COLOR BY NUMBER

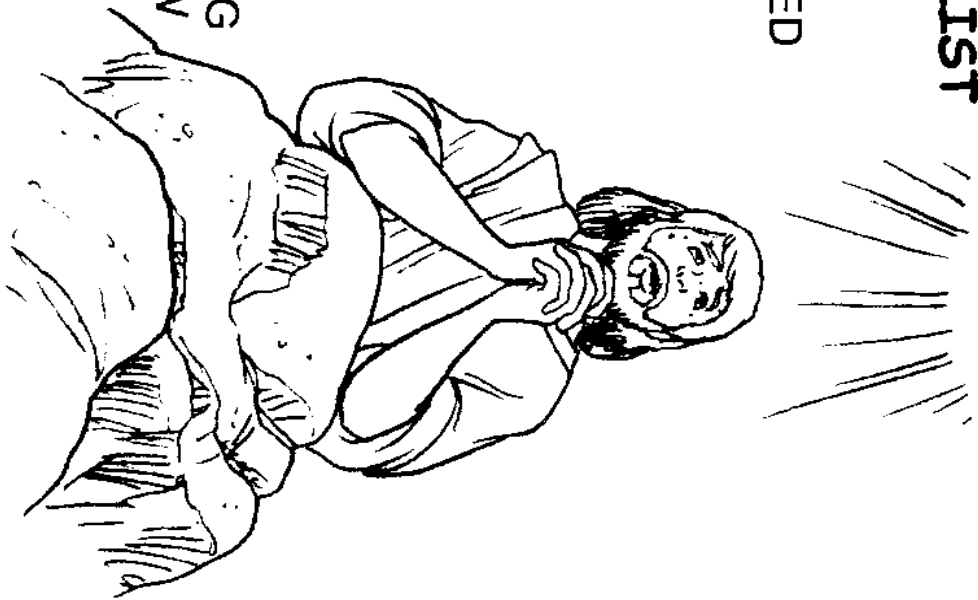


1= FLESH TONE 2= BLUE 3= BROWN 4= LIGHT BLUE
5= LIGHT BROWN 6= GREEN 7= YELLOW 8= DARK GREEN
9= GREY

WORD SEARCH

WORD LIST

- AGONY
- ANGEL
- APPEARED
- BLOOD
- CUP
- DOWN
- FROM
- GARDEN
- HEAR
- MEN
- PRAY
- RISE
- ROSE
- SLEEPING
- SORROW
- SWEAT
- TAKE
- WILLING



Jesus' Agony in the Garden - Luke 22:39-46

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

