

PrayKids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word On...

God's Character

If someone described you (not the way you look, but how you act, your personality, your nicknames), what would he or she say? Maybe it would be something like, "Oh, Tommy—he's that friendly kid who laughs a lot." Or, "You know Emily—they call her 'The Brain' because she's so smart!" There are certain things about you that make you special.

God has a personality, names, and certain ways He acts, too. These make up **God's character**. The most important thing in the world is to really know **God's character** (Philippins 3:8). When you do, it will change how you pray. You can talk to Him about things based on who He is. Knowing **God's character** will make your prayer life bigger and better! ★

by Dick Eastman

God is always present • God is always powerful
 God is always faithful • God is always loving
 God is always knowing • God is always holy
 God is always truthful • God is always good

Calling on the Colorful Character of God

Close your eyes for a moment and try to imagine what God is like.

Did you imagine that God looked very, very old with long white hair and a flowing beard? Or did you have trouble even imagining how He looks? That's because God is a Spirit. You can't see Him like you can see your parents or friends.

But if you can't see God like you see other people, how can you find out what He's like? How can you get to know Him?

The answer lies in what we call **God's character**. God is very real—and He's very colorful! He has a distinct personality. He has special nicknames. And He has certain ways He likes to do things. He can think, talk, laugh, and do anything you can do—except much more! As you learn new parts

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Filled to the Brim with Him

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of God's colorful character, you'll probably find yourself wanting to pray more colorful prayers—things that “go with” His character.

An important word to remember when you're praying according to **God's character** is the word “always.” “Always” means *eternal*. God has *always* existed and *always* will. With this in mind, here are 10 important parts of **God's character**.

1. God is always present.

This means God is everywhere, all the time. So you can pray anywhere, anytime.

2. God is always powerful.

God can do anything. He has all power. So He can answer *any* prayer you pray according to His will.

3. God is always knowing.

God knows everything, even before it happens. So you can have peace and confidence when you pray, because you're talking to a God who already “gets it.”

4. God is always fair.

God does only what is right and just. So you can ask Him to do what is right in any situation, and He will do it—even if the situation looks unfair, and even if you don't know what is best.

5. God is always holy.

“Holy” means “perfect.” God can never sin. That means He can never make a mistake in the way He hears or answers your prayers.

6. God is always loving.

The Bible says that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Whenever He talks to you or listens to you as you pray, He is doing it because He loves you so much and so perfectly. Even if you fail, His love never will.

Now that you know more about **God's character**, try filling your prayers with Him.

For example, because God is always present, begin by thanking Him that He is right there beside you. Talk to Him just like you would to a close friend who is sitting in your room.

Or, because God is always powerful, pray about something that seems impossible. He's a big God who can answer big prayers.

Or pray to the God who is always patient. Ask Him to help you with something in your life that keeps happening over and over again.

As you fill up your prayers with **God's character**, you'll find that your prayers get bigger and better. They'll start to overflow with the images, nicknames, and personality of God. What a wonderful way to have a conversation with Him! ★

7. God is always good.

Isn't it a wonderful feeling when people are good to you? It's even better to know that God is good, all the time. Rely on His goodness when you pray.

8. God is always faithful.

Someone who is faithful is someone you can count on, no matter what. God always keeps His Word and He will never leave you. So you can talk to Him, knowing that He's faithfully ready to hear and to act.

9. God is always truthful.

God is truth. He cannot lie. Everything He has said in the Bible is true. You can ask Him for the truth about anything, and He will reveal it.

10. God is always patient.

Have you ever made the same mistake over and over? Thank God for His patience. He will always forgive us when we ask Him to.

Can you think of other parts of **God's character** that are not on this list? Make your own list. But most of all, call on the colorful characteristics of God as you talk to Him each day. ★

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Mission Statement

The mission of **PrayKids!** is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages 8 to 12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.

Encourage Your Kids

If your child has a story of an answered prayer, how his/her life was impacted by prayer, or how his/her class prayed and something special happened, please send it to:

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We cannot publish everything that is sent in, but we may put some additional stories on our website, www.praykids.com

"I Will Bring You Home"

Last year, my brother was sent to fight in Iraq. His name is Sgt. Alan Russell Eddy. He is 26 years old. He is a Marine and a sharp shooter. My mother and I, and people around us, prayed constantly for him. Lots of times, in the middle of the evening national news, we would stop and pray. My mom would also have me pray with her lots of times during the day when she felt my brother needed it.



By Christina Loran, age 11

One time my mom felt that my brother was in extreme danger. She said it was like a tidal wave that came over her with a great need to pray. This was about 10 a.m. on Palm Sunday. We continued to pray until about 3 p.m. Then the urgency left my mom and she had peace. That night on the news we learned that riots had broken out in the streets of Baghdad, where my brother was.

That next week was the worst fighting of the whole war. We prayed that God would surround Alan with angels and would protect his mind, body, and soul. Before he left for Iraq, in November 2003, the Lord had given our family some Scriptures: "The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. . . . Do not fear . . . the LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. . . . I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. . . . At that time I will bring you home" (Zephaniah 3:15,17,19,20). We claimed that for our family and for Alan.

One day Alan called us from Iraq and mom asked him what had been going on on Palm Sunday. He said he had to go into a house full of terrorists. There was a battle and two bullets went right past his face, and one went through the material of his pants' leg. All of the bullets missed him. Several of his buddies were killed. Later, he was out scouting and God stopped him. He couldn't move. He looked down and saw a mine just inches from his foot.

All of his Marine buddies knew about God's protection for my brother. He told us it was evident that many people were praying for him. He could feel the prayers. He said he knew his guardian angels had been protecting him. He thought that a lot of his buddies sensed it, too, because they wanted to stay close to him to get the protection also.

My brother came home on Thursday, June 24, 2004 to Camp Pendleton, California, where he is stationed and lives with his wife. He and my mom talked on the phone a long time. We tell everyone how happy we are that he is safely home, and how God answered all of our prayers. I have experienced the power of prayer through this. ★

Yoo-Hoo... Who Are You?

One way to get to know **God's character** is to pray Scripture. If you find a verse that says God is a Creator, for example, you know you can ask Him to make something new. When you see Him in Scripture as a Provider, you know you can ask Him to help you with your needs.

Look up the verses below. Each one tells you something about **God's character**.

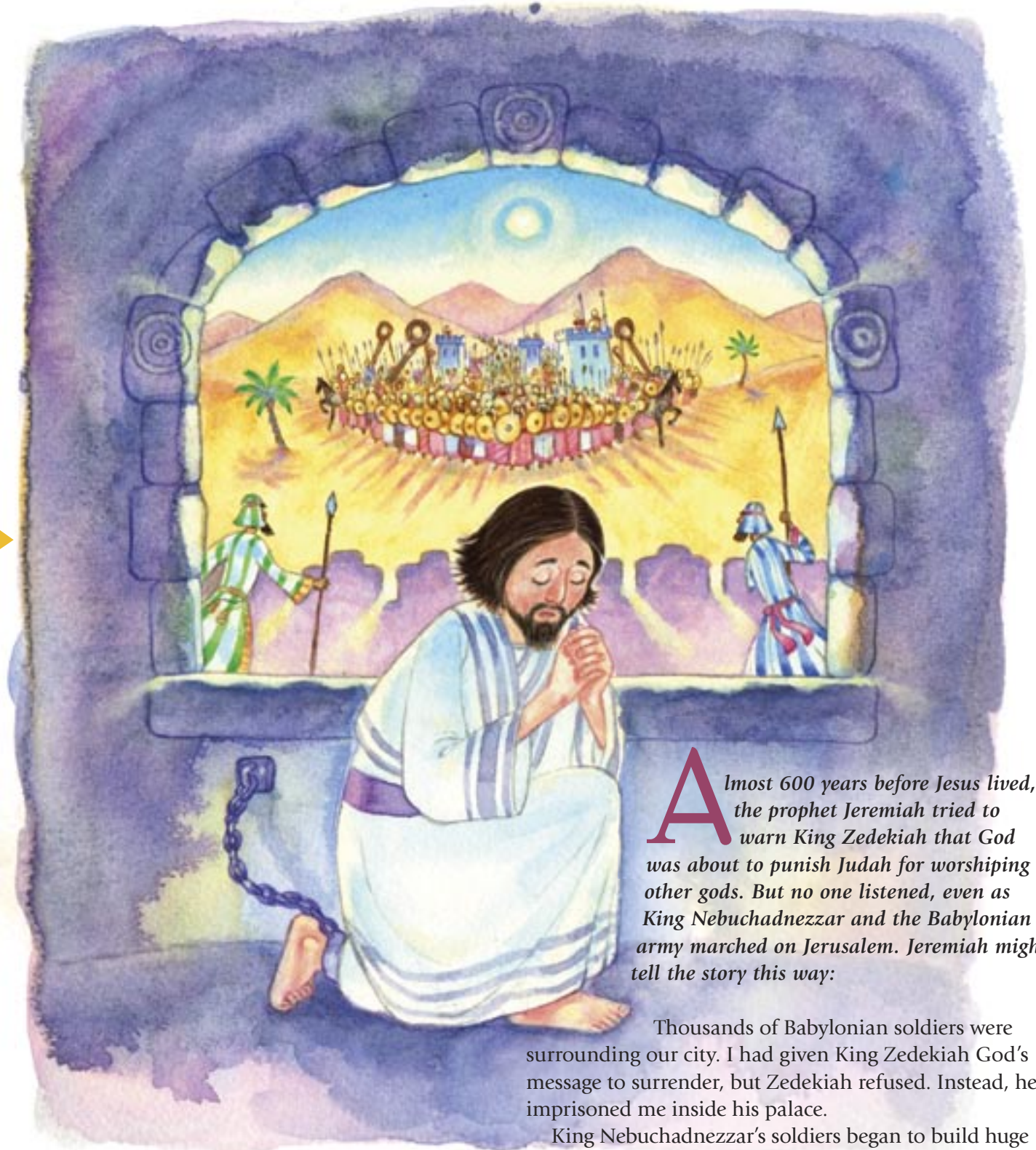
- 2 Corinthians 7:6—Comforter
- Psalm 140:7—Deliverer
- Psalm 45:4—Righteous and true
- Psalm 51:10—Creator
- Hebrews 11:6—Reward giver
- 1 John 1:5—Light

Now use what each verse says about **God's character** as you talk to Him. Here's an example: "God of Light, shine into the darkness so that people everywhere will see how much You love them" (1 John 1:5). Try it with other verses. You'll find that your prayers get fuller and fuller of God! ★

A Prophet's Puzzling

A fictional story based on Jeremiah 32

4



Almost 600 years before Jesus lived, the prophet Jeremiah tried to warn King Zedekiah that God was about to punish Judah for worshipping other gods. But no one listened, even as King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army marched on Jerusalem. Jeremiah might tell the story this way:

Thousands of Babylonian soldiers were surrounding our city. I had given King Zedekiah God's message to surrender, but Zedekiah refused. Instead, he imprisoned me inside his palace.

King Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers began to build huge dirt ramps against our city walls so they could enter easily. Within days, there would be nothing in Jerusalem

By Joyce K. Ellis

Purchase

but catapults, arrows, and swords: full-scale war!

People trembled in their houses. While I prayed for us all, Jehovah spoke to me. "Jeremiah, your cousin Hanamel is coming to see you," He said. "He will offer to sell you his farm in your hometown."

I frowned, puzzled. As a relative, I had dibs on buying Hanamel's property. But Nebuchadnezzar was about to capture everything! Why buy land that would soon be taken over by Babylon?

Nevertheless, my cousin showed up, exactly as God said. "Buy my field in Anathoth," he pleaded. "Keep it in the family."*

I didn't understand, but somehow I knew this was God's idea. I knew His character: He wouldn't set up this opportunity without a purpose. Although Babylon would conquer us, Jehovah had promised that one day our people would be free. I also knew that God never lies. Maybe He wanted me to show people I trusted His promise.

So I signed the purchase agreement and paid Hanamel 17 shekels of silver. Now the sale was legal and final. Then I told everyone there the rest of what God commanded: "Take these documents and put them for safekeeping in a pottery jar. Life will return to normal. Homes and fields will again be bought in this country."*

I gave the scrolls to my secretary, Baruch, and slipped away to my room to pray. I trusted **God's character**, but I still didn't really understand. "O Sovereign LORD!" I prayed. "You have made the heavens and earth by your great power. Nothing is too hard for you! You are loving and kind to thousands. . . . You are the great and powerful God, the LORD Almighty. You have all wisdom and You do great and mighty miracles."*

Then I praised God for His never-ending love to us, even though our sin had brought sad consequences, like this war. When I finished praying, God's answer came to me: "I will bring them all back to this place and let them live in peace. They will be my people and I will be their God." I didn't know when or how it would all happen. But, like always, praying according to **God's character** gave me peace and confidence. I had talked to Him about how good, faithful, powerful, and holy He is. So I knew I could trust Him with anything.

Over time, the war took the lives of thousands of our people. Thousands more became Babylon's slaves. But 70 years later, God *did* bring our people back home. And my family farmed the land again in Anathoth. But this wasn't a big surprise to me. It was exactly like **God's character** to do something like that! ★

*adapted from *The Message* and the New Living Translation.



Dialing God's Number

Use a telephone keypad to decode the story of what the prophet Elijah learned about **God's character** in 1 Kings 19. (Remember that each keypad number has three possible letters.)

Elijah was running for his life. Queen Jezebel had threatened to kill him and he knew she meant business! The exhausted prophet thought he was the only follower of God left. He felt like a failure. And, worst of all—he had lost sight of how great God was. Feeling hopeless, he cried out to God and then fell asleep under a tree.

The next morning, God told Elijah to stand on Mount Horeb while He passed by. First came a strong 9463 _____. An 3278478253 _____ came next. Then a 3473 _____. Finally a gentle 9447737 _____ came, and that's where Elijah learned about **God's character** all over again! God told Elijah about His plans. He showed him which way to travel. He commanded him to anoint a new king. He surprised him with the news that there were still 7,000 Israelites left who didn't worship false gods.

As Elijah talked with God, Elijah remembered that God is faithful, trustworthy, and powerful. Elijah got his eyes back on who God is—and suddenly he knew what he was supposed to do. ★

Answers: Wind, earthquake, fire, whisper





Let's Pray for War-Torn Countries

Ennas is 10 years old; her brother Achmed is 12. They live near Baghdad, Iraq. I met them after the U.S. Army forced the dictator, Saddam Hussein, from power. Ennas and Achmed live in a war-torn country.

War is terrible. It hurts entire populations. Grocery stores close. Schools are cancelled. Churches stop meeting. People are afraid to go out to shop or work. Sleeping is hard because bombs are dropping and planes are flying overhead. Fear grips the hearts of everyone. Ennas and Achmed have lived this fear.

Everyone is hurt by war, but children are hurt the most. Since 1945, more than 149 wars have been fought around the world. Twenty-three million people have been killed, including children. Many others have been injured permanently.

When children face violence, it often stirs up hatred. In some cases, national leaders even teach children to hate their enemies. Hatred ruins their lives.

Besides fear and hatred, war also creates poverty, hunger, disease, and environmental hazards. All of these things cause more children



Even children, like this little Iraqi girl, may be searched during war time.

to die, or they interfere with children's growth and health. Yet probably the most frightening event for children in the midst of war is that they might lose their parents.

God tells us to "Defend . . . the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy" (Psalm 82:3-4).

The day I met Ennas and Achmed, they were following our group of American soldiers. At that time, we did not know that their mother had died, and their father was unable to care for them. Yet God gave one of the soldiers, Sgt. Cooper, eyes of compassion when he saw the children. Quietly, he bought a new dress for Ennas and a new pair of shoes for Achmed. They were stunned and thrilled.

Sgt. Cooper showed compassion to Ennas and Achmed, and was obedient to God.

Even though you may live far from a war-torn area, you can still be compassionate and obedient. You can pray for kids like Ennas and Achmed. God wants to help them! ★

By Tim Meador, who serves as a chaplain with the U.S. Army.

PHOTO BY SCOTT NELSON, GETTY IMAGES

SIX

LOVER THE GLOBE

Praying for Children in War-torn Countries

1. I praise You, Lord, because You are a father to the fatherless and You defend scared and lonely people (Psalm 68:5).

2. Thank You, Savior, for seeing the trouble and grief that children in war-torn countries are facing. Thank You that You will help them (Psalm 10:14).

3. Good Shepherd, please protect and provide for children who have lost their families, health, incomes, and homes because of war. Defend their cause. Let them know how much You love them (Psalm 23:1; Deuteronomy 10:18).

4. God of all compassion, comfort these children. Give them hope in the middle of all their troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

5. Jesus, Your perfect love can drive out all the fears these children face. Use Your love like a giant eraser to remove all hatred and bitterness from them. Let them know that You loved them enough to die so they could have life with You forever (1 John 4:18; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 4:10). ★



God's Personality Profile

When detectives want to learn about someone's background and character, they create a "dossier" (say DAW-see-ay). A dossier is a file that contains things like school records, passports, credit history, newspaper articles, and other information.

Here's how you can create a dossier on **God's character**:

Get an alphabetized expanding file from an office supply store. Every time you open your Bible, look for something new about **God's character**. Suppose you read Colossians 1:15: "He is the image of the invisible God." That's cool—God is invisible! Write down "invisible" and Colossians 1:15 on a piece of paper. File it in your dossier under "I."

The next day, suppose you read Romans 1:20. There, you find that God is not only invisible, but also eternal, powerful, and divine! Add Romans 1:20 to your "invisible" page. Then create pages under E, P, and D.

Before long, you'll have a bulging file. What do you do with it?

1. **Praise God.** For example, pull out the G file and praise Him because He is great, good, glorious, generous, and gracious.
2. **Encourage yourself.** Suppose you feel scared one day. Thumb through your dossier until you find characteristics like Protector, Deliverer, and Shelter. Watch yourself cheer up as you pray according to **God's character**.
3. **Minister to a friend.** Maybe a friend needs a reminder of God's faithfulness. Go to F in your dossier and pull out the records that prove God is faithful. Write your friend a note that includes those Scriptures. Tell your friend you are praying for him or her, then pray according to **God's character**. ★

Scout Him Out!

Hands On

Listed below are some important parts of **God's character**. Search the puzzle up, down, backwards, and diagonally. See how many you can find. As you find each one, thank God for that part of His character—or tell Him about a time when you experienced Him that way. Then think of some of God's other names, titles, and attributes (there are many, many more). Make your own **God's character** word search! ★

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

- ALL KNOWING
- ALL POWERFUL
- CREATOR
- DELIVERER
- FAITHFUL
- HEALER
- HOLY
- JUST
- KING
- LIGHT
- LOVE
- PROTECTOR
- PROVIDER
- REDEEMER
- RIGHTEOUS
- TRUE

Stamp His Image on Their Hearts

By Jim Mhoon

Am I the only one who felt wholly ill-suited and unprepared for the task of becoming a parent? I doubt it. We parents are entrusted with not only our children's physical and emotional needs, but also with their eternal souls. Now *that* has kept me up at night!

Scripture is clear about who is responsible for introducing children to God. Deuteronomy 6 commands parents to teach God's laws to our children in practically every setting—when eating at the table, walking down the road, sitting in our home.

Conveying God's Word and commandments is part of that teaching. The other part is teaching **God's character**. He is the model for who we are and how we should live, since we are made in His image.

So how do we do that? How do we stamp His image on their hearts? Some of it can be taught. But a lot of it is *caught* . . . from us! Our children examine our character and liken it to God's. It's scary: The impressions we make on our children will likely affect how they see God for the rest of their lives.

Thankfully, I can show my kids who God is, even though the gap between His perfection and my imperfection is, well . . . stark. How? It starts with prayer. For instance, I regularly ask God to give me His wisdom. As God has blessed me with wisdom, I've been able to demonstrate to my children what that part

of God looks like. I've been able to do the same (occasionally!) with characteristics like patience, love, justice, integrity, and faithfulness.

One such opportunity happened the other day at Starbucks. My daughter and I received too much change. We pointed out the mistake and returned the extra change. Afterward, my daughter said, "It feels good to be honest." I wish I had said, "Our spirit responds with joy when we act in accordance with **God's character**." What I did say was, "Yeah, it sure does." While my eloquence left something to be

Prayer Tips:

■ Reinforce through prayer those situations where you *do* exhibit one of God's characteristics. The next time you pray with your children, start by praising God for that trait.

For example, "God, You are faithful and true! No matter how dishonest people may be, You are always honest and You always keep Your promises. We love that about You, God!"

■ When you mess up and *don't* exhibit **God's character**, ask God for help—while your children listen. You might say, "Lord, I did not demonstrate Your patience just now. I'm sorry. Thank You for being patient with me even when I'm impatient with others! Help me to better display Your character next time."

desired, my daughter got the point.

Regrettably, more often I'm better at this: showing what God isn't like by not being like Him! Saying something mean about another person is not God-like. Pointing out to my daughter that doing so is sinful—and that God is never mean—says a ton about both me and God. I kind of yelled at another driver the other day and then caught myself. I asked my daughter, "Wasn't that terribly Christian of me?" She knew what I meant. "Nice job, Dad. I'm so proud."

As sinful creatures, we aren't always godly. Sometimes, by God's grace, we do reflect **God's character**. Other times, we fall woefully short of His perfection. But either way, the goal is to stamp the image of **God's character** into our children's lives. It's a big job . . . but we've got an even bigger Helper. ★

Jim Mhoon is a father of two, and program director for parenting ministries at Focus on the Family.

MEMORY VERSE

*But let him who
boasts boast about this:
that he understands
and knows me.*

—Jeremiah 9:24a

Free LEADER'S GUIDE for Teachers and Parents

Did you know we have a **free** leader's guide with extra activities, questions, and prayer points to go along with each article in *PrayKids!*? Go to www.praykids.com and select "Parents and Teachers." Then select which issue you want and click on the article title. Download what you need so you can use *PrayKids!* with your child, or with a group of kids.

Back issues of *PrayKids!* are available in packs of 10 for \$6.99. Twenty-two different topics/themes (with new ones released bimonthly) can be selected to teach groups of kids about prayer. To order, go to www.praykids.com or call (800) 366-7788 or (719) 548-9222 and mention offer #6456.