

Pray Kids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word on...

“Why Prayer Works”

Ever wonder **why prayer works**? After all, if God already controls everything in the whole universe, why do we even need to pray?

Prayer is something like electricity. You know the light in your room? It's powered by electricity. But the light doesn't come on automatically, does it? You have to flip the switch first. Even though the electricity is there and ready, nothing happens until you flip that switch.

In the same way, God's power to do His will is always there and ready. But it doesn't happen automatically. You have to do something. You have to pray. When you pray according to God's will, it's like flipping the switch—things start happening!

So as you discover **why prayer works**, how about going in there and turning on the light? ★

It All Started in a Garden

The story of **why prayer works** goes back to the very beginning, when God created the earth. You can read about it in the book of Genesis.

From the very start, God put Adam and Eve in charge of all creation (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 8:4-6). God made Adam His “manager” on earth.

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A manager is someone who takes care of something for the owner. The owner gives the manager complete authority to take care of his property—to make decisions that need to be made, to fix anything that needs to be fixed.

Ruling over the earth was a big job! But God let Adam handle it. He put Adam in charge of the plants and the fish and the birds and the animals. Adam even got to name all the animals God had created, because God wanted Adam to be His partner in *everything*. He wanted Adam to do things His way,

but He wanted Adam to decide that on his own. Adam would walk and talk with God every day in the garden, so he knew just how God wanted him to take care of the earth.

Letting Adam make all of the decisions meant that God had to trust him. God trusted him so much that He even allowed Adam to give the earth away if he wanted to. And guess what? That's exactly what happened! Satan came as a serpent into the garden and talked Adam and Eve into disobeying God (Genesis 3). When they did what Satan wanted instead of what God wanted, Satan took over as manager of the earth (Luke 4:6).

God certainly was not happy that Adam had given the management of the earth away to the enemy. He could

have jumped in and taken things back into His own hands when Adam messed up. But that would have meant going back on His word—and being the holy and perfect God that He is, He can't do that. Still, God wanted humans, not Satan, to be the earth's managers, so He found a way to buy the earth back.

God came up with an incredible plan! *He became a man Himself*—Jesus. Jesus lived a perfect life and died to pay the price for Adam's big mistake. By allowing Jesus to die and rise from the dead, God created a way for us to manage the earth again.

Now, because of what Jesus did for us, we can pray and tell God we want things to be done His way on earth—just like they are in heaven (Matthew 6:9-13). When we do that, we are doing our job as earth's managers. But if we don't talk to God and tell Him we want to do things His way, Satan gets to be in charge. It's our choice. God won't interfere and make things happen His way unless we ask Him to through prayer!

Just like with Adam, God won't force you to do things His way. He has put you in charge: you can pray and ask for His will to be done. Or you can let the enemy call the shots. It's up to you! Will you be God's partner through prayer? ★

Sandra Higley is assistant editor of *Pray!*. She is co-editor of *Growing Up Prayerful*.

Dear Readers,

I've had lots of kids ask me **why prayer works**. Why and how does God go about answering our prayers? I'll let you in on a little secret: most adults wonder about this also.

In this issue of *PrayKids!*, we'll discuss **"why prayer works."** The key is asking God to do what He already wants to do. Sometimes that's called "releasing God's will" for a certain situation. Most of the time, we pray and tell God what we want done; but it pleases God when we ask what He wants done. So try asking for God's will as you pray. You'll see **why prayer works!**

Keep Praying!
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editor of
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Mission Statement

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

Online for Jesus

I am eight years old, and my life is a huge answer to prayer! You see, when I was born my body was addicted to drugs. I was on total life support because my lungs and heart didn't work on their own. I had needles and tubes everywhere on my body. The doctors had no hope for my life. They thought I would be a vegetable (not the kind you eat, but the kind of person who can't walk, run, and has to be fed through a tube).



By Justin Holland

about computers. Again, all we could do was pray. Soon she figured out how to do a website and that's when we started "Kids in Need of Prayer."

A man emailed to say that even our website is a miracle. A website needs certain codes put in so it will work. I guess God wants the website, because it is working, even though the codes my mom put in are the wrong ones.

Since I'm only eight, my mom helps me with the website and all the prayer requests. Thousands of people have visited the website, and they join with me in prayer for all the needs. I wanted it to be a website for kids so they could write what is in their heart and know that there are kids just like them praying for them. I want to share with others some of what Jesus has given me: hope, confidence in prayer, and knowing that miracles still happen. I want kids to know Jesus loves them and there is a place to go when they need prayer. ★

Justin Holland, age 8 (with help from *PrayKids!*). Visit Justin's website at www.geocities.com/kidsinneedof-prayer/.

But God had other ideas for me. He sent me a mother who adopted me and prayed for me. My mom started prayer chains and had lots of people praying for my healing. God even sent the lawyer who helped my mom adopt me and prayed for me.

Well, the doctors were wrong! When they unplugged me from all the machines, my body started working on its own. Soon, I was able to go home from the hospital. Now I'm a healthy boy who can do all the things the doctors said I'd never be able to do. I guess you could say I'm one of God's miracles!

One night when I was seven, I had a dream that I was on TV praying for other kids, and there were others helping me pray. The strange thing was I wasn't moving around on the screen, but I was perfectly still. A couple of weeks later, someone gave my mom a computer. I was watching her work on the computer one night when I told her, "Mama, the computer monitor is the TV screen I saw in my dream." She didn't know what to do since she was just learning

Heaven Here and Now

When you're God's prayer partner, you find yourself looking all the time for ways to agree with Him in prayer. One way to pray God's will is to pray the way Jesus showed us in Matthew 6:9-13. He said, "This, then, is how you should pray. . . . Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

What does it mean to pray that things on earth will be as they are in heaven? What's it like in heaven anyway? Look up these verses to find some clues about heaven:

Revelation 4:8b _____

Revelation 7:15-17 _____

Revelation 21:23 _____

What can you pray based on these verses? For instance, you could take Revelation 4:8b and pray, "Lord, I pray that the whole earth will recognize Your holiness and worship You day and night!"

Make a list of things you know about heaven from the Bible. Now pray that it will be that way here on earth, too, and you'll get to see **why prayer works!** ★

Forecast:

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100% Chance of Rain

A Bible story based on 1 Kings 18:1,41-46

I don't see anything yet!" Elijah's servant stopped to catch his breath. He had run back to check the sky over the sea three times already.

Elijah nodded, put his head between his knees, and started praying again. He knew God wanted it to rain—God had told him so.

For a long time, Elijah had been trying to prove to wicked King Ahab that Jehovah was the One True God. Elijah had been working as God's partner by bringing messages to the evil king. Three years before, God had sent drought on the land through Elijah's word. All the rain stopped. The crops died, the rivers dried up, and the people and animals suffered terribly. Now, King Ahab was doing everything he could to find grass to keep his horses and other animals alive. But it wasn't going very well.

God was working miracles through Elijah, trying to get King Ahab's attention. But Ahab was stubborn and rebellious. He hadn't listened when it stopped raining. So God told Elijah to find Ahab and tell him that rain was on the way. Maybe Ahab would listen if he saw *another* miracle.

Elijah had found Ahab just as he had been told. "Listen, Ahab!" Elijah taunted, "I hear the sound of heavy rain!"

Ahab had squinted up at the bright blue sky and laughed. Elijah was crazy! There wasn't a cloud to be seen. It looked just like it had yesterday, and the day before that.

For three years there hadn't been a drop.

"I'm going home to have my supper," Ahab had called over his shoulder. "You don't know what you're talking about!"

So now here was Elijah—on top of a mountain with his servant—praying hard and checking for clouds. God said it was going to rain, and Elijah was determined to pray until it did!

"What about now?" Elijah asked, sending his servant once again to check the sky.

"Still nothing," his servant replied doubtfully. "Are you sure God is going to send rain? Are you sure your **prayers work?**"

"I'm sure . . . just watch!" Again, Elijah bent down to pray. Again and again, he sent his servant to check for clouds—five times, six times. Finally, after checking seven times, his servant yelled to him excitedly.

"I think I see something! Yes! Look, a tiny cloud no bigger than a man's hand is in the sky!"

"Hurry," Elijah said. "Run to Ahab and tell him that he had better hitch up his chariot and get going before the rain comes!"

As Elijah's servant ran to Ahab with the message, the sky grew black, the winds came, and the rain began to pour. "Thank You, God!" Elijah exclaimed. "I knew You wanted it to rain, and I knew You wanted me to keep praying for it because You're a God who answers prayer, and **prayer works!** Now You've done Your will, and the whole world—especially King

Ahab—knows that You are the One True God! ★

by Sandra Higley





Let's Pray for "MKs"

Have you ever heard someone talk about an "MK"? That's an abbreviation for a "missionary kid," or the child of a missionary. MKs are a lot like you. They love their families and friends, they have chores to do, they might have a special pet, and they go to church and school.

MKs may *not* be like you in some other important ways. Most MKs live outside the United States. If they've lived there for a long time, that's where they probably feel most at home—and the United States may seem like a foreign country. Their chores may include cleaning the house after a dust storm or typhoon, or helping draw water from a well. Their pets may include a dog or kitten—or a goat, monkey, or chameleon! They may attend church under a thatched roof shelter or in a mud house.

Like some of you, MKs may be home-schooled, or they may attend an international school with the children of government and business workers from all over the world. Many MKs attend Christian boarding schools. That means they live in dormito-

ries at the school for most of the year. They usually have only two vacations—one at Christmas time, and one in the summer.

God told us to share His love with others (Matthew 28:19-20), and MKs often have a chance to do that. But they need to know the truth of the Bible and have the courage to share it (Romans 10:14-17), and they need to be obedient in speaking and living for Him (John 14:15)—all the same things that we need ourselves! We can help MKs by praying for them, their parents, and the people with whom they live and work. ★

By Cheryl Parker, who taught MKs in West Africa for 16 years. She currently lives in West Palm Beach, Florida, and teaches at the Moody Bible Institute extension school.



MKs are kids like you!



The Stark children are MKs in Mexico.



Annie McKay plants yams in Papua New Guinea.

COVER THE GLOBE

Here are Some Things to Pray for MKs:

1. Father, help MKs to know without a doubt that You love each of them and want to be their Savior (John 3:16).

2. Jesus, help MKs to grow as You did: in wisdom, in physical strength, in relationship with God and with other people (Luke 2:52).

3. Heavenly Father, please protect MKs who are living in dangerous parts of the world, or in places where people don't like to hear about Jesus. Help them to learn to trust You and not be afraid (2 Timothy 1:7; Isaiah 41:10).

4. Jesus, when MKs are lonely or sad, remind them that You are their forever-friend and their place to hide—and that You've promised to never leave or forsake them (Psalm 46:1; Hebrews 13:5-6; Proverbs 17:17).

5. Lord, remind me to pray for MKs, whether they are overseas or in the United States, and show me ways that I can help them (Colossians 1:9-14; Philippians 4:16).

MKs at the airport in Papua New Guinea.



Morphing the News

Does hearing the news ever make you worried or sad? Or mad? Learning about wars, crimes, and disasters can make a person feel kind of powerless. But did you know there is actually something you can do about bad news? You can “morph” it into good news!

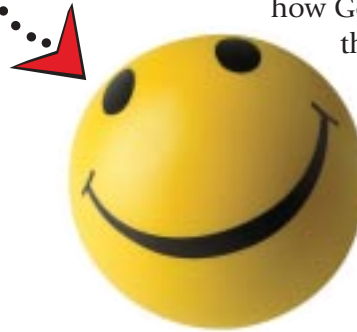
The next time you hear or read about bad news, Ask God how you should pray about it. Ask Him what His will is for that situation. For instance:



- If there’s a war, you could pray for the leaders of the countries involved and for peace (1 Timothy 2:2).
- If there’s crime, ask God to bring the wrongdoers to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).
- If there’s a disaster, pray that God will urge His people to show compassion on those in need (Psalm 41:1; Matthew 5:7).

In this issue, you’ve learned some things about how God releases His power into the world through prayer.

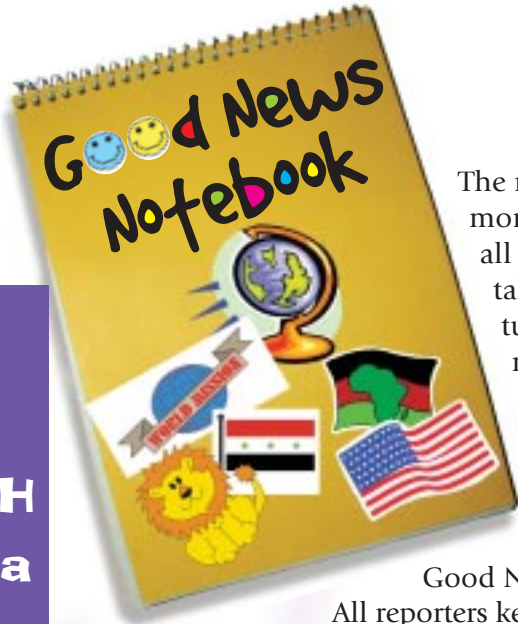
You understand **why prayer works**. So don’t get upset about bad news—start praying for God to morph it! ★



The more you pray, the more you will notice all the ways God takes bad news and turns it into good news through prayer. Don’t keep all the things you’re noticing to yourself!

Become a Good News Reporter.

All reporters keep a notebook handy. So start by creating your very own Good News Notebook. Get a notebook, write Good News Notebook on the cover, and decorate it with flag stickers, maps, or anything else that reminds you of what’s going on in the world.



Cut out the headlines from “bad news” articles and paste them (one to a page) in your notebook. (If it’s something you hear on the radio or TV, write your own headline or description.) Ask God how He might want you to pray for each situation, and write down anything He tells

you (including Scriptures) below the headline.

Then keep praying, watching carefully for any ways God morphs the bad news into good news. When He does, write what you’ve observed in your notebook. And, like any reporter, report what you see! Show others your notebook and tell them what God has done through prayer. You will not only encourage others to pray, but you will bring joy to God. As it says in His Word, “How beautiful is the person . . . [who] brings good news” (Isaiah 52:7, New Century Version). ★



Bless Their Socks Off

By Randy Wilson



Whether or not the patriarchs of the Bible knew **why prayer works**, one thing is for sure. They understood the necessity of praying for their children in order to release God's will for them. The Bible calls this a blessing. Isaac's blessing meant so much to Jacob and Esau that they fought over it. Jacob in return blessed all 12 of his sons. The prayers they prayed for their children were answered because they released God's will.

Early in our children's lives, my wife and I began a blessing ceremony with them. I would lay my hands on their heads and tell them how beautiful they were, that they were a joy and a treasure. As they grew and God revealed their strengths and talents, I would shape the blessing and vision according to His Word and its practical application in today's world.

Now, you may be reading this and saying, "Right, but you don't know *my* children." First Corinthians 1:27-28 says God chose the things that are not to nullify the things that are. So you can begin by praying in faith for your children, that God would infuse them with the characteristics He wants for them, and nullify any ungodly traits they have now.

For example, if your child is fearful, you might pray from 2 Timothy 1:6-7: "Father, replace the spirit of fear with your spirit of strength, love, and self-discipline according to Your gift in forming this child."

Or if you notice dishonor in the atmosphere at home, you might pray: "Father, in Jesus' name we stand against any spirit of disrespect and disunity and ask You to intervene and bring down all of the enemy's

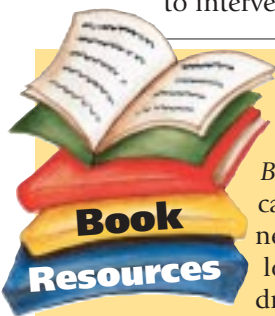
strategies for disorder in our lives. Surround our children with Your heart for unity, respect, and honor of each other, for our authority as parents, and every other authority You have set in place for their protection and blessing."

We do our blessing ceremony on Sunday afternoons. My wife lights a candle to signify the presence of God, and the children line up in front of me like a choo-choo train, from oldest to youngest. I pray and ask for God's insight and wisdom to speak His purposes into them regarding their future. Then, one by one, I look into their eyes and tell them who they are and what God has for them in the days ahead. I end with: "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you, and turn His face toward you, and give you peace, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Wouldn't you like to bless your children and pray prayers that release God's will into their lives? It's a joy to believe the truth regarding God's heart for our children, and by faith pray consistently for them to understand and assume their identity as God's creation. ★

Randy Wilson and his wife Lisa have seven children who regularly benefit from prayers of blessing. The Wilsons have written several books, including *Daddy's Blessing* and *Celebrations of Faith: Tying Your Children's Heartstrings to the Truth*.

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To help you start a lasting tradition of blessing your children, try the Wilsons' *Daddy's Blessing* (a gift book that comes with a scented candle in a gift tin). You'll have everything you need to communicate the biblical blessings of love, honor, value, and identity to your children as you release God's will into their lives.



Another great resource is *Pray!*'s bookmark prayer guide, "31 Biblical Virtues to Pray for Your Kids," by Bob Hostetler. It provides a prayer for every day of the month to release God's will into your children's lives (available through at www.praymag.com or 1-800-366-7788).

FREE Leader's Guide for Teachers/Parents: We want you to be able to use *PrayKids!* with a group of kids. On our website you'll find **group discussion questions and activities for each article**. Download and copy the information from www.praykids.com.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE HELP ON TEACHING YOUR KIDS TO PRAY:
www.praykids.com • www.cherifuller.com • www.harvestprayer.com
www.childrensprayernet.org • www.cgpm.org

Back issues of *PrayKids!* are available in packs of 10 for \$6.99. To order, call (800) 366-7788 or (719) 548-9222. Code #6258

Item #36

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:

PrayKids!
P.O. Box 35004
Colorado Springs, CO
80935-3504
Email:
praykids@navpress.com

While we cannot publish everything that is sent in, we will put some additional stories up on our website:
www.praykids.com