

PrayKids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

Seeking and Soaking

The Word On...

SEEKING GOD

Do you like to play Hide and **Seek**? If you are the one "**seeking**," you look behind every rock and tree and bush—and you don't stop until you find who you are looking for. You are totally focused on what is most important: finding the one who is hidden.

Seeking God is a lot like that. You look for Him in every single thing you do. You can't wait to uncover special moments with Him. And it is so much fun to find Him that you'll want to keep **seeking Him**—and learning how to find Him—for your whole life! ★

Can you imagine what it would have been like to be one of Jesus' best friends while He was here on earth? Jesus had lots of people who liked to be with Him. They liked listening to the stories He told and the way He explained the Scriptures. They had never heard

anyone teach the way He did, and they had never seen anyone do the things He did. Crowds followed Him just for a chance to see Him do a miracle. But were all these people who liked being with Jesus His best friends?

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The Bible tells us about some of Jesus' special friends: Mary and her sister Martha. He loved them very much. He liked to go to their house to have supper and talk. Their house was one of the places He went to get away from the big crowds that followed Him.

Jesus loved both Mary and Martha, but Mary had a very special place in His heart. When Jesus came to spend time at her house, Mary would sit at His feet and hang on every word Jesus said . . . while Martha kept busy with the cooking and cleaning. The Bible says that Mary spent her time *listening* to Jesus, but Martha was *distracted* (Luke 10:39-40). Martha even complained to Jesus, asking Him to make Mary help her with the dinner preparations. Jesus told Martha that Mary's choice to spend time **seeking** and listening was best.

One time, Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus got very sick (John 11:1-44). The sisters sent word to Jesus, asking Him to come heal their brother. By the time Jesus finally arrived, however, Lazarus had died and had been in his grave four days.

Mary and Martha both grieved about their brother's death. They both talked to Jesus about it, even saying the same things. But when Mary saw Jesus, she fell at His feet. Jesus saw how very sad Mary was, and He cried. Then He did a miracle—He brought Lazarus back to life! It's no surprise that after that, many of Mary's friends put their faith in Jesus.

What was the difference between Mary and Martha? Both of them spent time with Jesus. Both of them loved Him, and He loved them. So how did Mary become one of Jesus' *best* friends? The Bible tells us that Mary understood what Jesus was saying, even when His disciples didn't seem to (John 12:4-7). She didn't just listen. She took pleasure and delight in finding the hidden truth in what Jesus was saying.

When Martha spent time with Jesus, she was also busy with other plans and details. When Mary was with Him, she

listened, focused all her attention on Him, and sat at His feet in worship. She was **seeking God** with all her heart.

That's the kind of best friend Jesus is looking for. You can be one of His *best* friends too. Listen to Him! Focus all your attention on Him! Worship Him! When you're **seeking Him** with all your heart, you'll find Him and He'll find you! ★

Sandra Higley is assistant editor of *Pray!*

Pour It On

One time, Mary saved up the money she had earned for a whole year to buy expensive perfume, which she then poured on Jesus' feet. The disciples made fun of her for doing that, but she didn't care. She knew Jesus was going to have to die on the cross and that this would be one of the last ways she could show Him how much she loved Him. It was a way to worship Him. Can you think of ways you might worship Jesus? Could you draw Him a beautiful picture, or write Him a love poem? ★

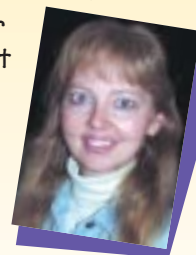


Dear Readers,

Kids love surprises. Ok, so do adults! Do you realize that God has lots of surprises for you as you learn about Him? You'll find those surprises when you slow down and **seek Him**. **Seeking God** is exciting, because everywhere you turn . . . there He is!

You can start exploring about God through prayer, reading the Bible, and really listening to Him. You'll find that He wants to show you lots of things about Himself, as well as lots of things about what He wants for you and your life. So start **seeking Him** right now!

Keep Praying!
Nancy Sutton,
editor of *PrayKids!*



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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.

Praise Away the Doubts

By David Sutton

My relationship with God has just grown and grown ever since I was three and I asked Jesus into my heart. But all of a sudden one awful Friday night, it felt like my wonderful relationship had just disappeared. Satan was planting doubts in my mind about God and the Bible.

It was really hard to tell my parents what I was feeling, but I knew they could help me. My mom and I talked, prayed, and read the Bible. I felt better. But the next morning the doubts returned—and stayed all weekend. I didn't even feel like eating or playing.

On Monday I was still doubting, so my mom suggested that our family just praise God. Even though I didn't feel like it, we played our favorite worship CD, sang, and even played some instruments along with the music. It wasn't easy at first, but after a while songs, prayers and praises started just bursting out of me. I even sang some of my prayers. Although I couldn't see Him, I could feel God's presence right there in the room with us. We prayed and praised God for two whole hours. I didn't want to stop!

It was really fun, but most important was the change it made in me. Instead of doubting, I was filled with happiness and tons of faith. By praising God, my empty feelings turned into joy. When I focused on God, I realized my doubts just weren't true. God *had* been with me all along. And my relationship with God is stronger than ever. Now if doubts start to come, I stop them immediately by praising God.



These are some of the verses that helped me. Maybe they'll help you too!

- When I felt God wasn't near: "Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8).
- When I tried to understand how God could do all the miracles in the Bible: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain" (Psalm 139:6).
- When I really want to go from doubting to believing 100 percent: "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).
- When my brain felt like it was fighting a battle against doubt and fear: "And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7, New Century Version).
- When I felt discouraged: "Why am I discouraged? Why so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!" (Psalm 42:5, New Living Translation). ★

David Sutton, age 10, is the son of *PrayKids!* Editor Nancy Sutton.

Conversations with Jesus

One place you can **seek God** is in His Word. When you want to worship Him and tell Him how much He means to you, you can use His own words from the Bible.

You can also use the Bible to help you hear what's on God's heart, because that's one of the ways He talks to us. When you are one of Jesus' best friends, He will share many special things with you from Scripture.

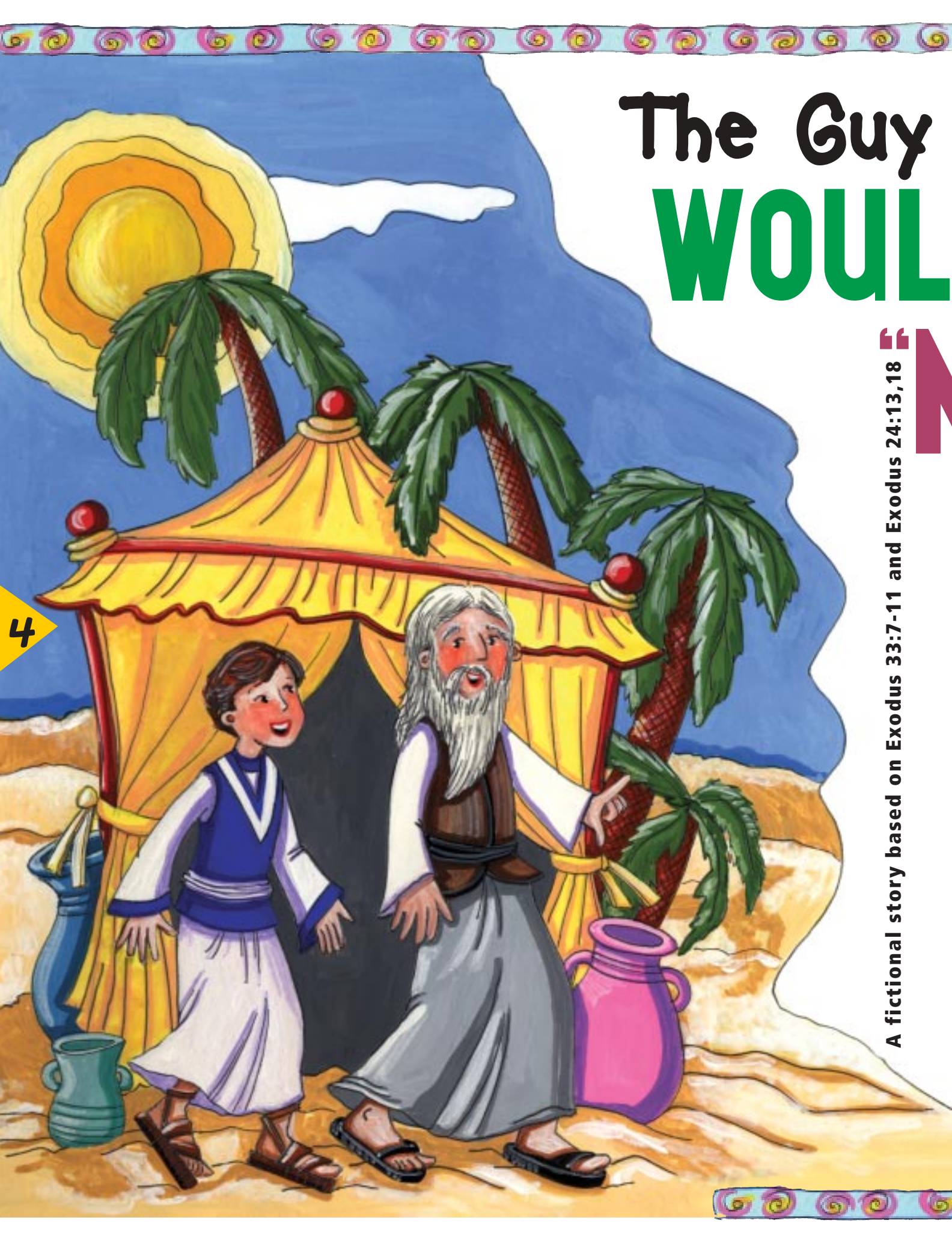
One way to **seek Jesus** is to turn Bible verses into a prayer conversation with Him. Here is an example from Psalm 27:4,8: "Lord, my heart says to me, '**Seek His face!**' And I do want to **seek Your face, Lord—more than anything!** I want to spend time gazing at how beautiful You are! I want to spend time where You are, just enjoying You."

Now try turning these verses into conversations that **seek Jesus**: Isaiah 45:3; Jeremiah 29:13, 33:3; James 4:8a. ★

The Guy WOULD

A fictional story based on Exodus 33:7-11 and Exodus 24:13,18

4



Who Just

by Sandra Higley

DN'T LEAVE

Joshua's SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

May I come with you, Moses?" Joshua asked as he jumped up and fell in step with his leader. Moses was headed out of camp, to the special place he had set up to meet with God.

"Anyone who wants to **seek God** can come to the Tent of Meeting. That's what it is for," beamed Moses. "Come along, my young friend!"

Joshua grinned. He had been working as Moses' helper ever since they started this long journey in the desert. Joshua loved the excitement and adventure of being this close to a mighty man of God. He had seen God use Moses to bring plagues on Egypt so that Pharaoh would set the Israelite slaves free. He remembered how amazing it was to walk through the path God opened up in the Red Sea as they escaped the Egyptians.

Now, all Joshua wanted to do was serve Moses well and get to know the miracle-working God of Israel. Joshua knew that Moses talked with God face to face, just like a man talks with a friend. Joshua wanted to know God that way too.

Joshua felt a shiver run down his spine as they got closer to the Tent. A huge pillar of clouds started to form at the door as they entered. It was God's sign that He was there to meet with them. The cloud pillar stretched way up into the blue sky where

people could see it for miles around. As soon as the Israelites saw the clouds, they came to the doors of their own tents and worshiped the Lord.

Joshua sank to his knees in the cool darkness inside the Tent. He trembled at the thought of being this close to the awesome God who had appeared in smoke and fire on top of Mount Sinai. That was when God met with Moses and wrote the Ten Commandments on stone. Joshua had wanted to get closer then, but only Moses was allowed to go up the mountain to meet God. Joshua shifted and stretched a little as he remembered how stiff he had felt while he waited 40 days and 40 nights at the base of the mountain for Moses to return.

Joshua closed his eyes. "Oh, God, I worship You!" he said quietly. He could feel the Lord's presence in the Tent as Moses asked God for instructions on how to lead the people. As soon as Moses had his answers, he stood up to head back to camp.

Joshua started to follow, but then realized he did not want to go. "May I stay here, Moses? May I stay and **seek God** a while longer? I don't want to leave!" Joshua pleaded.

Moses smiled and nodded. He knew Joshua was exactly where he needed to be. He knew Joshua's choice to **seek God** was the best one he could make. ★

Joshua went to the Tent of Meeting with Moses every day and stayed behind even after Moses left. He never seemed to tire of being in God's presence.

His desire to **seek God** in this way made him the obvious choice when the Israelites needed trustworthy spies to check out the Promised Land (Numbers 13:1-14:9,30). Because Joshua spent time **seeking God** and was filled with God's Spirit (Numbers 27:18-20), he knew what God wanted for His people when others did not.

When Moses died, God chose Joshua to take over as leader of the Israelites. Because Joshua never stopped **seeking God** with his whole heart (Numbers 32:11-12), God used him in special ways.

When you **seek God** and get to know Him, He will use you in special ways for His kingdom too. Not only will God be delighted that you want to know Him more and more, but He will also teach you and show you things you've never even thought of! ★



Let's Pray for Christian Athletes

Do you know what the world's most popular sport is? It's soccer. No matter where you go in the world, people are playing or watching some kind of sport. Whether it's soccer or something else, people love sports. Each week you will find millions of people at sports stadiums or at home watching sports on TV. Maybe you know some kids who seem to do nothing but watch, play, or talk about their favorite sport.

Let's face it—sports are fun to watch and play. But sometimes people make sports too important. In fact, some people idolize or almost worship top athletes. They let sports control their lives. This can happen even to kids. It's sad when people give sports or athletes a higher place in their lives than God.

But God also can use sports to reach people. Many sports fans won't go to church to hear a sermon. But guess what? They would be willing to listen to athletes tell about how Jesus changed their lives.

Christian athletes all over the world use their



athletic ability and influence to tell people about Jesus Christ. There are also Christian organizations that have designed sports ministries to reach people through their love of sports. These ministries often offer sports camps where athletes can train kids in sports skills as well as share Jesus with them. Athletes in Action is one group that trains

Christian athletes in how to live the Christian life, study the Bible, and share their faith with others. Other sports ministries sponsor competitions and events that feature Christian athletes. All over the world, Christian athletes are making a difference in the lives of sports fans. ★

Special thanks to Tina Silbersack of Athletes in Action (aia.com), which is the sports ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.



PHOTO CREDIT BY ATHLETES IN ACTION

SIX

LOVER THE GLOBE

You can aim your prayers at sports ministries that specialize in your favorite sports, or at Christian athletes and ministries working in specific countries. You'll find all the information you need at Sports Outreach Online's website (www.sportsoutreach.org/ministry/index.php).

1. Heavenly Father, use Christian athletes to bring the good news of Your love to those who have not yet believed or heard about You. Let their message about Your Son spread rapidly and be honored (Romans 10:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:1).

2. God, whenever Christian athletes open their mouths to speak to fans or to teammates, please give them just the right words so they can share God's love without fear (Ephesians 6:19).

3. Lord, help Christian athletes not to listen to wicked people or do the things evil people do. Help

them to be pure, peaceful, gentle, fair, and honest in their public and private lives (Psalm 1:1; James 3:17).

4. God, keep the athletes who make lots of money from becoming selfish, greedy, or arrogant. Teach them not to put their hope in wealth, but to put their hope in You. Help them not to think more highly of themselves than they should when fans praise them (1 Timothy 6:17; Romans 12:3).

Praying with Your Body

Did you know that your body can **seek God** along with your spirit and voice? God gave you your body, and He loves it when you use it to communicate with Him! You can use many different positions, or “postures,” when you pray. Each one is a way of showing God what is in your heart and asking Him to meet you there.



Kneeling shows God that you are entering into His presence or asking Him for something (and you accept that He will answer in the way He knows is best for you).



Standing shows God that you are ready for “marching orders” and that you are waiting for Him to tell you what to do.



Uplifted Hands show God that you are reaching toward Him in praise or asking for something with arms open to receive it.



Walking shows God that you are “on the move” for Him and ready for His directions or battle plans.



Bowing shows God that you honor Him and feel humble because He’s so good and big and powerful.



Prostrate (lying flat on your face or back) shows God that you are in awe of Him and are desperate and hungry for Him to come and be with you.

Next time you **seek God**, try a new prayer posture. Ask Him how He wants you to approach Him. Then choose the prayer position that fits. You’ll be surprised at how God will meet you right where you are. ★

Picture Perfect

It’s great to find ways to tell God how much you love Him, like painting Him a picture or singing Him a song.

But did you know that God is busy doing those same things for you? He is always trying to get your attention. He wants you to **seek Him**, to look for Him everywhere. He paints a new sunset and sunrise every day, just to let you know He’s thinking of you. He gives the bird outside your window a special song because He knows you will enjoy it. God even put the grass and flowers beneath your feet for you to enjoy.

Think of all the things Jesus uses to get you to **seek Him**. Often, these are things you take for granted! If you can, take a nature hike. Go to a nearby park or just look out your window. Look at something God

created (the clouds, a flower, snowflakes, a butterfly) and soak in its beauty.

List all the things you see and how they remind you of God. Then spend time thanking Him for His creation—and that He leaves clues that help you to **seek Him**. ★



Five Days of Seeking

A Family Bible Study

By Cynthia Bezek

The Bible tells of many people who loved **seeking God**. They worshiped Him with all their hearts, and He revealed Himself to them in very special ways. You and your family can learn about **seeking God** as you work through this Bible study.

DAY 1

The book of Revelation is a breathtaking book about heaven and the end of time. God revealed it to John by sending an angel who showed him mysteries that no human being ever had seen before. Let's look at the special friendship John had with Jesus.

- Read John 13:23-25. "The disciple whom Jesus loved" refers to John himself. Where did John choose to sit, and in what way did John demonstrate his special friendship with Jesus?
- Read John 19:25-27. It must have been heartbreaking to watch Jesus suffer and die, yet John stayed with Jesus to the very end. How did Jesus show that He viewed John as a special and trustworthy friend?
- Read Revelation 1:10, in the *New Living Translation*, if possible. What day was it, and what was John doing when God began showing him wonderful things about the future?

DAY 2

Just as we wait in expectation for Jesus to return to earth, there were people long ago who were **seeking God** and

waiting expectantly for Jesus to come to earth the first time. One of these people got the privilege of seeing Jesus when He was only eight days old: a very old lady named Anna.

- Read Luke 2:36-38. What do you learn about Anna's life? Of the thousands of people who lived in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' birth, why do you think God chose Anna to recognize Him? After she saw Jesus, who did Anna tell about Him?

DAY 3

When we **seek God** in spite of our troubles, He sometimes surprises us in special ways.

- Read Acts 16:22-30. Where were Paul and Silas? How would you feel if the things that happened to them happened to you? What were Paul and Silas doing when the miraculous earthquake took place? What blessings did they experience?
- Read Luke 13:10-17. If you were badly crippled for 18 years, it might seem like a good reason not to go to church and worship. But worshiping God was important enough to this woman that she made the effort to go to the synagogue. Did she ask Jesus to heal her? What happened to her? What was her immediate response to God's miracle in her life?

DAY 4


- Read Acts 10:1-8 and 23-48. What was Cornelius' life like? What was he

doing when the angel of God came to him? What happened as a result of the way he was **seeking God**?

DAY 5

- Read 1 Kings 3:4-5. What was Solomon doing when the Lord appeared to him in a dream? Why do you think Solomon did this? How did the Lord show Solomon great favor?
- Read Luke 1:8-17. What was Zechariah doing when the angel of the Lord appeared to Him? What were the people doing outside while he was inside?

Did you notice all the times God blessed people in wonderful ways when they specifically set out to **seek Him**? How will this change the way you and your family worship Him and pray? ★



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.

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.

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