

PrayKids!®

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word On...

Authority/ Submission

Most kids understand that obeying God is a good thing. He's the highest **authority**, isn't He? It makes sense to have thoughts and actions that match what He wants. That's called **submitting** to God's **authority**.

But did you know God wants us to **submit** to **all authorities**? Even ones we think are not very good? Romans 13:1-2 says that if anyone is in **authority**, then God put that person there. That's hard to understand sometimes. But God can use good and bad rulers to carry out His purposes. God has a plan. Everything He asks you to do will work out for your best when you obey and **submit** to what He says! ★

Over and Under

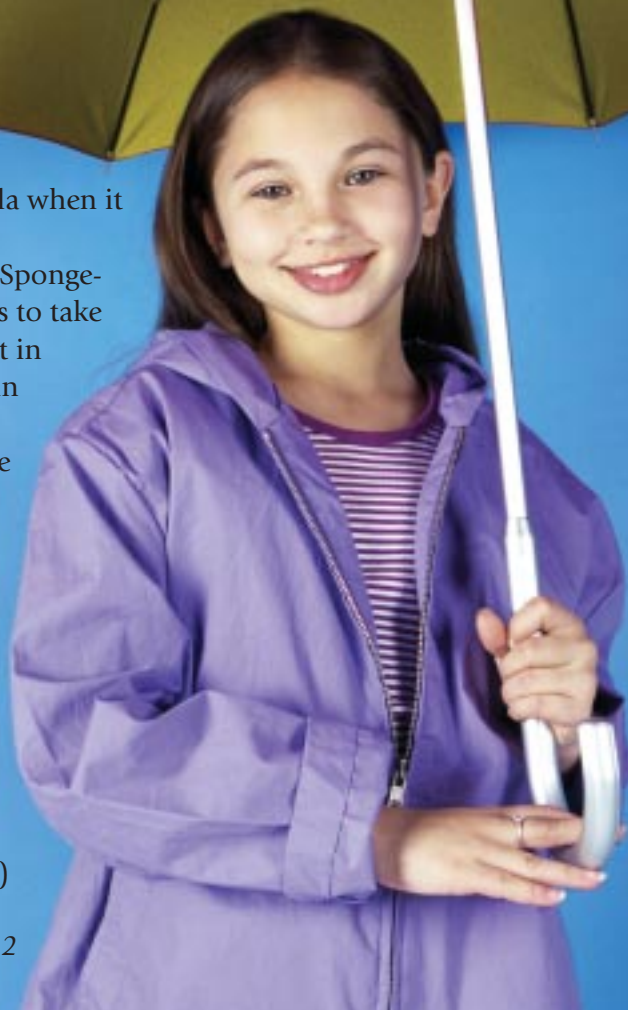
By Sandra
Higley

Aren't you glad for an umbrella when it rains?

My grandson has a bright-yellow, Sponge-Bob SquarePants umbrella. He wants to take it with him everywhere he goes—just in case! The minute the first drop of rain falls, he whips out his umbrella and stands under it. The raindrops hit the umbrella instead of him! He is protected from every last drop.

God has made an "umbrella" for our lives, too. He puts special people (like Mom and Dad) in a place of **authority** over us. That means they are in charge. They make decisions about our lives. We stand under their **authority** just like we would stand under an umbrella. God wants us to **submit** (that means follow and obey) to them.

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Who's the Boss?

Who are the people God has put in charge over us? The Bible talks about four groups of people we should follow and obey:

1. **Government leaders:** such as the president, judges, or police officers (Romans 13:1,2).
2. **Church leaders:** your pastor, Sunday school teacher, church elders (Hebrews 13:17).
3. **Family leaders:** Your dad, mom, grandparents, and others (Ephesians 6:2).
4. **Job/school leaders:** Your principal, teachers, and coaches. When you get older and have a job, this may be your manager, supervisor, or company president (1 Peter 2:13,14,18). ★

Power and authority

in prayer only come when you obey the people in authority over you.

(continued from page 1)

There are some very special reasons for this! God has made a promise: If you honor your father and mother, you will live a long life and things will go well for you (Ephesians 6:2-3). I want a long, good life, don't you?

But there are some even better reasons to **submit** to people who are in **authority**. You can't be powerful in prayer unless you follow Jesus' example, which is this: Even though He was God, He stepped down from His throne in heaven, and came to earth to die. When He **submitted** Himself like that, He was lifted up and given **authority** over everything (Philippians 2:5-11). He told us we would do even greater things in prayer than He did (John 14:12-15)! Can you imagine? But being **submissive** is the first step.

Satan did the opposite. Remember Satan's first sin? He started out as an angel, but he was proud in his heart. He didn't want God to have **authority** over him. So he rebelled against God. Because of that, God threw him out of

heaven (Revelation 12:7-9)! God hates rebellion. He says it is just like sorcery or witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23). When we rebel against people God has put over us, we rebel against God.

When we rebel, we step out from under the umbrella of **authority** God has put over us. Then we are on our own. God no longer defends us. Instead, He opposes us (James 4:6). He stops fighting our battles for us and lets us fight on our own.

It's not a good thing to be on your own! When you pray, you fight Satan himself. You *need* God on your side! You need to have power and **authority** over Satan. But power and **authority** in prayer only come when you follow and obey the people who are in **authority** over you.

God has made an umbrella just for you. Stay under it! You'll be able to pray with **authority** like Jesus. And in the same way an umbrella protects you from the rain, you'll be protected as you pray! ★

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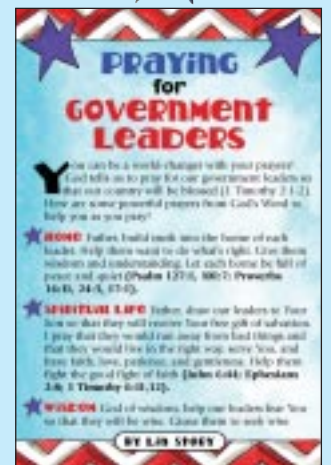
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Mission Statement

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.



PrayKids! has a great resource to help you pray the Bible way!

www.praymag.com

No Fair!

By Addison Bevere

You know how it is. Sometimes it seems as if you get blamed for everything that goes wrong. I know what that's like too.

I've always liked gym class. I enjoy the sports and games, not to mention it's my easiest class! Run a mile—get an A. I wish all my classes were that easy! Of course, it helps when you have a teacher you enjoy. But when I was in the third grade, my gym teacher didn't seem to like me. I felt blamed for everything! If people were talking, he called my name. If everyone was cutting up, I was the only one corrected. It really started to get to me.

One day as we stood in line, two friends behind me were talking. There was a rule: no talking in line. I started to get nervous. I just knew I'd get blamed. Then it happened. The teacher yelled, "Addison, stop talking!" I was being punished for a crime I didn't commit!

I was upset and defended myself: "It wasn't me!" Why couldn't this guy get it through his head?

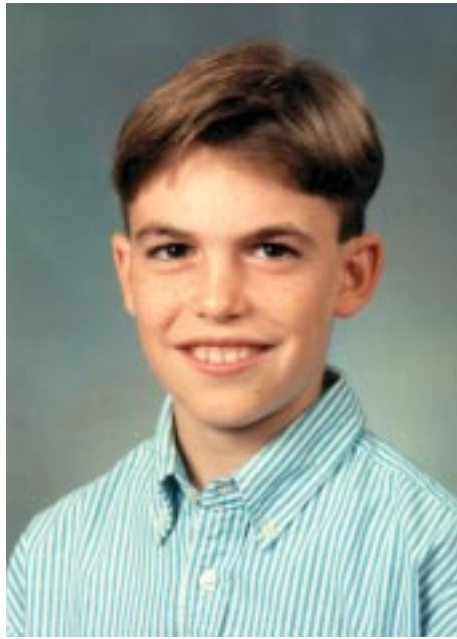
At dinner I shared what happened with my parents. I expected some sympathy. To my surprise, my dad told me I was wrong. He explained how my answer to my teacher was disrespectful. It questioned his **authority**.

My dad reminded me about how Jesus was persecuted. The Pharisees told a lot of lies about Him. But He never defended Himself, not even once. Jesus just committed His case to His Father in heaven, who always judges righteously. Even though it's natural to want to defend ourselves, God wants us to let Him be the judge.

My father asked if I wanted to do this my way or God's way. Well, my way wasn't working, so the decision wasn't hard! My family prayed together. We decided I should apologize to my gym teacher.

The next day, I apologized and told my teacher that I knew I shouldn't question his authority or try to justify myself. He was amazed. Then things began to change. I went from being the student who was always blamed to the one who received the Student of the Week award! At the end of the year, I was awarded Student of the Year! My gym teacher and I even became friends.

If your way is not working, try it God's way. It really works! ★



Addison Bevere in the Third Grade

Speak No Evil

The Bible has a lot to say about how we treat the people God has placed in **authority**. God wants us to pray for them. But did you know He also wants us to give thanks for them, respect them, and **submit** to and obey them? There's even something we're not supposed to do: We're not to speak evil about them.

Sometimes it's hard to do all these things, especially when we disagree with the decisions our leaders make. But praying Scripture really helps. For example, from Proverbs 21:1

you could pray something like, "God, You are King of kings! Please direct my teacher to do what is right for our class."

From 1 Timothy 2:1-2, you could pray, "Lord, thank You for my mom and dad. Thanks for my teachers (name them), my pastor, and our president (and other leaders you think of). Help them make wise decisions today that bring good to our family, school, church, country, and world."

Why don't you try? Turn these Scriptures into prayers: Exodus 22:28; Proverbs 24:21; Ecclesiastes 10:20; Titus 3:1. ★

OUTSIDE

Moses' sister Miriam learned a hard lesson. Disrespect for **authority** can get in the way of our prayers and keep us from God's blessing.

BY JOYCE K. ELLIS

Here I sit, outside Israel's campground. Everyone treats me as "unclean." A bird twitters a song nearby. I love music, but I don't feel like singing. I wish I could take back what I said. Let me tell you how it happened. . . .

I love my youngest brother, Moses. When I was young, I watched over him in the Nile before the Egyptian princess adopted him. But when he moved into the palace of Pharaoh, it was as if Aaron and I were our family's only two children. We played together and talked about everything.

When we grew up, Moses returned as God's leader to deliver our people to the Promised Land. I became a prophetess. God speaks to me, and I tell others what I hear. I even wrote a song about how God used Moses to cross the Red Sea and bring us out of slavery.

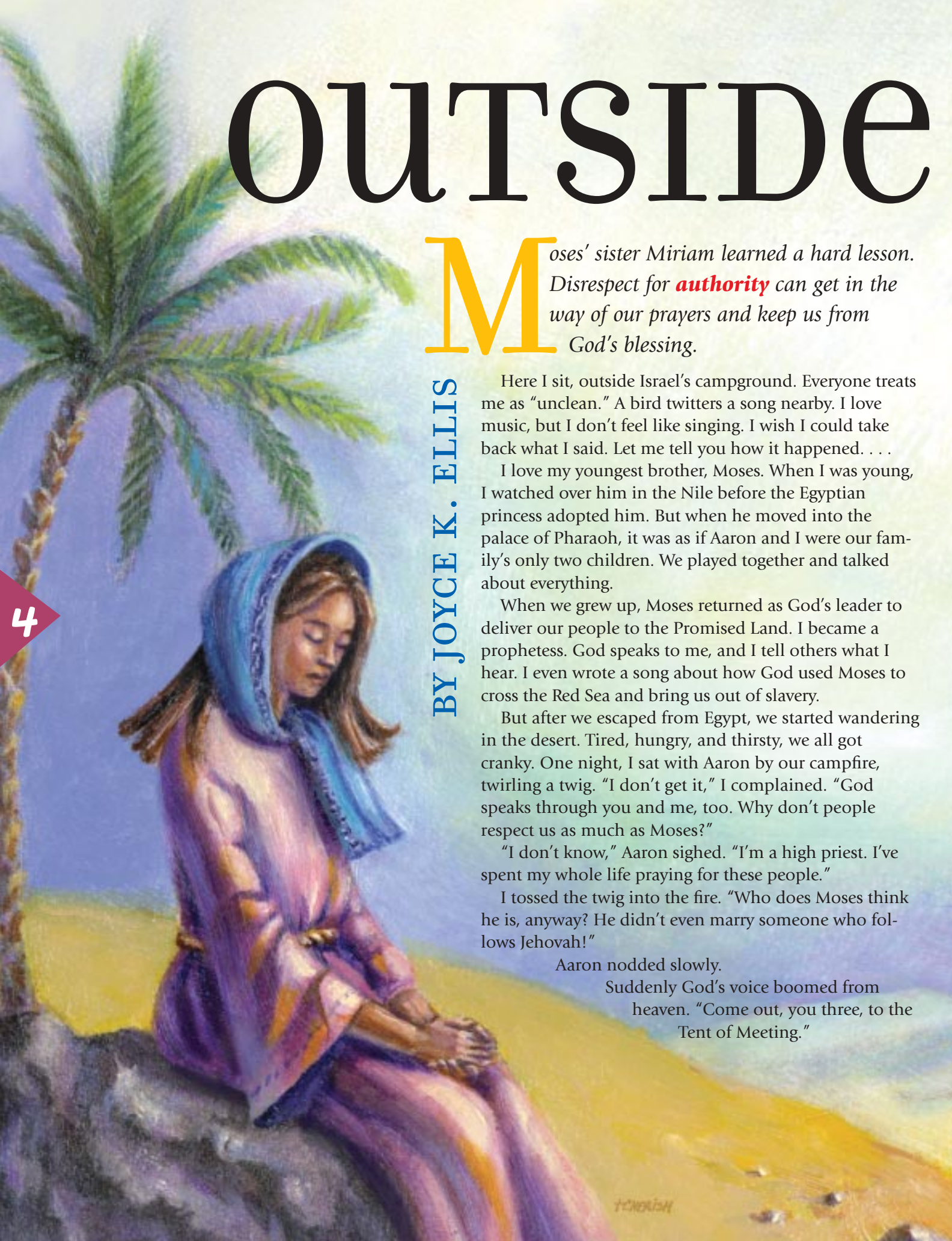
But after we escaped from Egypt, we started wandering in the desert. Tired, hungry, and thirsty, we all got cranky. One night, I sat with Aaron by our campfire, twirling a twig. "I don't get it," I complained. "God speaks through you and me, too. Why don't people respect us as much as Moses?"

"I don't know," Aaron sighed. "I'm a high priest. I've spent my whole life praying for these people."

I tossed the twig into the fire. "Who does Moses think he is, anyway? He didn't even marry someone who follows Jehovah!"

Aaron nodded slowly.

Suddenly God's voice boomed from heaven. "Come out, you three, to the Tent of Meeting."



THE CAMP

A Fictional Story
Based on Numbers 12

My heart pounded. Aaron and I ran to the tent, but Moses had gotten there even faster. A tall Pillar of Cloud hovered by the entrance to the Tent. God was there. Tears stung my eyes. What had I done?

"Miriam! Aaron!" God thundered from the cloud. "Step forward!"

My knees buckled, but Aaron steadied me. We walked forward, shielding our eyes.

"Listen," God commanded. "I usually speak to prophets in visions, but with Moses I talk plainly and in person. Why did you speak disrespectfully against him?" God's anger blasted us like a red-hot furnace.

Suddenly, I felt strange. Swollen splotches of white spread over my body.

Aaron gasped. "Miriam! It's leprosy!" Leprosy is a disease that eats away your skin. There is no cure. Aaron grabbed Moses' hand. "Moses—our godly

leader—please don't judge us harshly for our thoughtless sin."

Moses raised his hands to heaven. "Please heal her, God!" he cried.

God answered Moses' prayer and healed me. But to remind us all of the results of sin, I had to live outside the camp for seven days. Today is day seven. Speaking against God's chosen leader kept me from my friends and my position as prophetess. And my sin kept my people from moving closer to the Promised Land. "Lord, please help me be more careful with my words!"

Wait! I think I see Aaron coming for me. "Thank You, God!" I'm forgiven. Now we can journey on. ★

Author and speaker Joyce K. Ellis is creator of *One-Minute Bible Devotions for Kids*.

A HOT DECISION

Long ago, a king ordered his people to worship a golden statue. Three young men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—wondered what to do. They knew God wanted them to obey their ruler. They also knew God never allowed idol worship.

First, here's what they *didn't* do. They didn't yell, run away, complain, or argue. They didn't show disrespect.

What they *did* do was tell the king politely that they

couldn't worship any god besides the true God. They told him they would rather die than disobey God.

Guess what happened? The king threw them into a blazing furnace, but God saved them! They didn't even smell like smoke (Daniel 3)!

Usually, we don't have to make choices like this. But remember: if someone in charge asks you to disobey God's Word, don't be disrespectful. Pray. Obey God. Then trust Him with what happens. ★





Let's Pray for Unreligious People

Most people believe in God. Even if they aren't Christians, almost 85 percent of the world believes in some kind of god. Many people see the stars and oceans, plants and animals, and think "Someone made this! Someone big, wise, and powerful! God must have made all this!"

But 938 million people in the world do not believe in any god at all. These people are called *unreligious*. Some unreligious people are called *atheists*. An atheist is a person who doesn't believe God is real. Other unreligious people are called *agnostics*. An agnostic thinks you cannot know for sure if God is real. A third type of unreligious person doesn't really care if God is real or not.

Many unreligious people live in countries in Asia such as China, North Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Others live in Europe in countries such as France, Italy, Russia, and Great Britain. Cuba also has many unreligious people. Unreligious people live all over

the world, including the United States. Some may live in your own neighborhood.

In school, you may learn about how unreligious men have influenced history. One man, Friedrich Nietzsche, is known for saying "God is dead." Another, Karl Marx, said religion was as bad for people as using drugs.

Unreligious people do not pray or believe in miracles. They don't believe in heaven or hell. They do not believe God created them or loves them. They think the world happened by accident.

Many unreligious people are sad because they cannot find purpose in life. ★



COVER THE GLOBE

How to Pray for Unreligious People:

1. Creator God, show Yourself to unreligious people through what You have made. Help them see that the world did not happen by chance (Romans 1:20).

2. King of kings, move the hearts of leaders in unreligious nations to let people preach Your truth and give out Bibles. Help all the people to hear about You and believe (Proverbs 21:1; Romans 10:17).

3. Eternal God, help unreligious people feel how empty their hearts are because they do not know You. Make them hungry for You, so they will seek You, reach out for You,

and find You (Psalm 63:1; Acts 17:26-28).

4. Precious Savior, help unreligious people not to be fooled by wealth. Help them see that true riches are found only in You (Matthew 13:22; Revelation 3:17-18).

5. Lord, help young people everywhere to love the truth so they can be saved. Help them to see Your eternal power and all the things that make You God so they can know You (2 Thessalonians 2:10; Romans 1:20).



Inside Out

Did you know that it's possible to obey with your actions on the outside, but not **submit** your heart on the inside?

Let's say your mom asks you to take out the trash during your favorite TV show. You do what she asks right away, but in your head you're thinking: "This is so stupid. Why can't I take the trash out *after* my program?" Did you obey on the outside *and* inside? Disrespectful thoughts are the sign of a rebellious heart.

Here's what you can do. Find time to get alone with Jesus to sort it out. He will forgive you and help you be more respectful next time.



Make a list. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you think of anyone in **authority** you have not been **submitted** to, both inside and out. Pray about each one He brings to mind.

Here's a sample prayer to help:

Father, forgive me for my sin of rebellion toward _____. I pray for (him/her), and thank You for (him/her) because this pleases You (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Help me submit to this person just like it says in Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The next step: If possible, go to the people on your list. Ask them to forgive you. Tell them that you have asked God to help you **submit** to their **authority** inside and out. ★

Pictograph

The Bible is full of people who **submitted** to **authority**. Solve the puzzles below to find out who did! Look up the Scriptures to check your answer. (Answers on page 8)

Hands On



1. Answer _____ (Genesis 39:1-6)



2. Answer _____ (1 Samuel 26:7-11)



3. Answer _____ (Philippians 2:5-11)



4. Answer _____ (Matthew 8:8,9)

I Spy . . . Disrespect

By Cynthia Hyle Bezek

Disrespect for **authority** is a critical issue in the church today. It affects our personal prayer life and ability to mature spiritually. But disrespect for **authority** has so permeated our society that we hardly even notice it. This activity will help you and your children recognize disrespect in our culture and at home. Begin with a quiz to see how you and your family score on the respect-o-meter:

1 . Read Ecclesiastes 10:20. This command applies only to the way we talk. True or False?

2 . What does it mean to "revile"?

- a. make fun of
- b. make light of
- c. curse
- d. all of the above

3 . Read Acts 23:5 and Romans 13:1-7. Which of these are true statements about God's standard for treatment of people in **authority**? Which are false?

___ It's okay to speak evil about our president because we have freedom of speech.

___ Good rulers are from God. Bad rulers are from Satan.

___ If we rebel against **authority**, we are really rebelling against God.

___ We should **submit** to

authorities so we will have a clear conscience.

___ We should not pay taxes when our taxes might be used for things that go against what God teaches.

___ If we owe someone respect, we should pay him or her respect.

4 . Which of the following are ways of speaking evil about someone in **authority**? (circle all that apply):

- a. sarcasm & jokes
- b. gossip & slander
- c. prayers & blessings
- d. criticism & complaints

5 . Here are some people in **authority**: the president, police officers, pastors, teachers, parents. What are some disrespectful ways we address them? What would be more respectful ways to address them?

So how'd you do? Chances are, if you are like most families, there's room for improvement! (Note: answers can be found in our leader's guide at www.praykids.com).

Here's a great way to begin to rid your home of disrespect. Give each family member a stack of index cards. Each time anyone spies disrespect in himself or in another family member (parents included!), he should write it on a card. Spy out and record on a

card disrespect that comes into your home through other ways—TV, books, newspapers, radio, CDs, videos, etc.

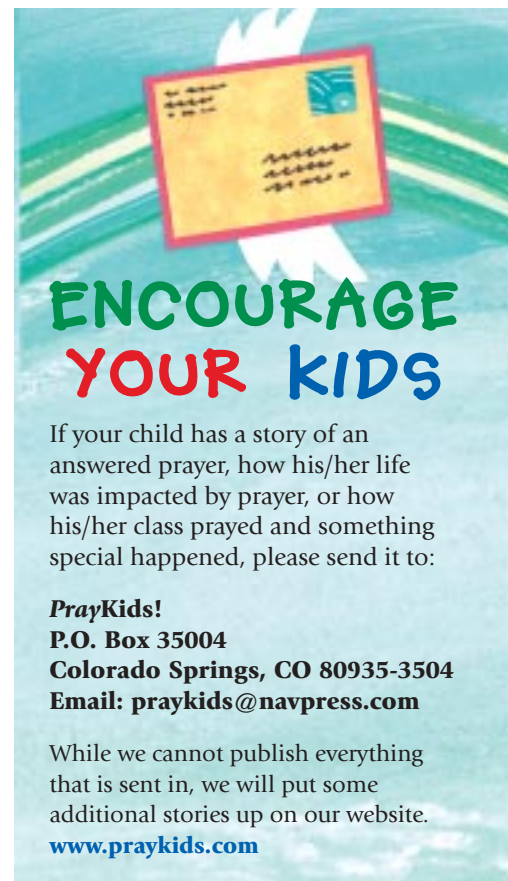
Provide a box to collect the cards for one week. At the end of the week, get together to read the cards and discuss what you learned. Were you surprised by what you saw in your culture? In yourselves? Did disrespect from family members decrease as the week went on? Why or why not?

Spend time in confession and prayer as a family. As the Holy Spirit leads, let family members confess disrespect they spied in themselves. Pray blessings on anyone who was the object of disrespect during the week. Finally, pray for each other and for society. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring you into **submission** to the **authorities** He has placed over you. ★

Pictograph answers from page 7:

1. Joseph 2. David 3. Jesus 4. Centurion

8



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 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 just click on the article title. Download what you need so you can use *PrayKids!* with a group of kids.

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