

PrayKids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word On...

Praying to Know God's Will

God cares about all the details in your life. He cares about where you go, what you do, who your friends are, and much, much more. Because He cares so much, He wants to help you with every decision. That's why He promised, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you" (Psalm 32:8).

But don't forget to ask Him! When you're not sure about something—whether it's a big thing or a small one—ask to know **God's will**. He knows everything about you and about your past, present, and future. He will put you on the path that leads in the right direction . . . every time!★

RUSTLE! CRUNCH! SNAP! The grass and branches seem almost alive as you move through the dense jungle. You are an explorer, charting unknown but exciting territory. Who knows what you may encounter?

A jungle safari can be a lot like life: It's a great adventure, but you can't always be sure what lies ahead. You may not see dangers lurking in the shadows. You might not know which path will take you to your destination.

continued on page 2

UP FOR ADVENTURE?

BY ARLYN LAWRENCE



(continued from page 1)

Thankfully, there is Someone who knows all these things. God not only created you, but He also has a grand plan for you—a map for your life! He knows what lies ahead of you. He already sees the dangers you might fall into if you take a wrong turn. He knows your destination, and He knows the best paths to take you there.

God has told us, “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do” (Isaiah 42:16). What a relief! God doesn’t keep the map to Himself. He will share it with you so you can make good decisions, even when you can’t see ahead!

The map God has for you is a part of His will. **God’s will** includes everything from how the universe works to what happens in your life. The same God who created and named the stars is not too busy to help you in your day-to-day life (Psalm 147:3-4). Isn’t that amazing?

But how do you know **God’s will** in *your* life? How do you know who your friends should be, what activities you should participate in, or what you should be when you grow up? Here are two of the best ways to find out:

1 **Read the Bible.** God’s Word is filled with His instructions

for us. He has given us these because He cares so deeply about us. He wants us to know how to live for Him, make good decisions, and be protected. So read it every day! Not reading your Bible is like not reading your map for life.

2 **Talk with God.** Psalm 25:4-5 says, “Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.” When you pray to know **God’s will**, He might speak to you with His still, small voice. He might show you a Bible verse. He might use circumstances in your life, or the guidance of a person such as a parent, teacher, or pastor. When you ask, remember that God’s response will never contradict what the Bible says. Then watch carefully for His answer!

But the most important thing to remember is that it’s God who holds the map for your life. As long as you stick close to Him, you’ll be on the right path! ★

Arlyn Lawrence is contributing editor for *Pray!* She is mother to five children, all of whom love adventure!

ONE STEP AT A TIME

God rarely gives us the whole map for our lives all at once. He often reveals His plan to us step by step. He gives us one step, and then waits for us to show that we can trust and obey Him as we take it. When we are faithful in what He tells us in His Word, or in what He speaks to us in prayer, He will give us the next step. Then, as the master said to the servant in Matthew 25:14-21, God will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” ★

PrayKids![®]

Email: praykids@navpress.com
Website: www.praykids.com

EDITORIAL TEAM

Cynthia Bezek, Lani Hinkle, Arlyn Lawrence

DESIGNER

Bridget McNamara

ADVISORY TEAM

Kim Butts

Harvest Prayer Ministries

Cheri Fuller

Families Pray USA

Members of the Children’s Prayer Mobilizers Network

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Mission Statement

The mission of **PrayKids!** is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages 7 to 12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.

Grown-ups!

Sign up now
for our **NEW**
PrayKids! Online
Newsletter

This is a *free* monthly newsletter, including timely *PrayKids!* articles you may have missed, exclusive subscriber-only offers, and updates on newly released resources and tools. It’s perfect for Sunday school teachers, children’s workers, Christian school teachers, homeschool parents, and anyone else who has a heart to encourage kids in growing their prayer lives! Just go to www.praymag.com, look at the lower left under the newsletter sign-up section, check the box next to *PrayKids! Online Newsletter*, and click the SIGN-UP button!

Prayer Clears the Way

One night, when my parents dropped me off at our Awana program at church, they told me they were going to visit a friend who has been diagnosed with a mental illness called schizophrenia. It was his birthday. At group prayer time, I asked my group to pray for my mom and dad and that Mike would let them tell him about Jesus. We all prayed.

Two hours later, my mom and dad picked me up. I asked how their time with their friend had been. They looked at me funny. Then they told me a long story about how they had tried to share Jesus with him many times before. He would always change the subject or start getting squirmy and leave. This time they couldn't believe what happened. They said *their friend* brought up God and the Bible and wouldn't stop asking questions and talking about Him. I smiled and said, "My group and I were praying for you!"

I think God is so cool to hear our prayers and send His Holy Spirit across town to this man's mind just because we asked Him to!

A few days after that, I wrote a paper for a writing contest. I called it "How to Get to Heaven." I was very sad when my teacher told me she couldn't enter it because it was "too preachy" and wouldn't win. On the way home I told my mom that I didn't write the paper to "win." I wrote it so the judges would learn the way to heaven and think about it. I was really bummed out that the teacher wouldn't even turn the paper in.

Later that day, before my gymnastics class, a college kid came up to me and asked if I died that day, would I know for sure that I'd go to heaven. I told him yes and all about the paper I had just written. He said he couldn't believe I was only 10! He told me I was an awesome leader for God. I can't tell you how much better that made me feel.

That night I told my mom what the college boy said. She started crying. She told me that at that exact moment she had been on the phone with her friend, and they were praying for me and my situation!

My family prayed some more that night. The next day, my teacher told me she had entered my paper in the contest! God had changed her heart.

I love how God answers my prayers and makes Himself real to me. I want all the kids in the world to know that He loves you too and will hear you when you talk to Him. Just try it! ★



By Brennan Bilek, age 10

Prep Work!

Praying to know **God's will** is easier if you've done some preparation. Praying these Scriptures as "prep work," will get you ready to ask God about His will anytime, anywhere.

New Thinking: Father, please give me a whole new way of thinking so I will be able to know Your good, pleasing, and perfect will. Help me to use Your Word to light up the path You want me to take (Romans 12:2; Psalm 119:105).

Obedience: I want to make You happy, Lord. Help me obey You when You guide me. Show me how to be faithful in the little things of life so You can trust me with bigger and bigger things later on (Matthew 25:21).

Faith: Giver of wisdom, there are so many things I don't know. Remind me to ask You about those things whenever they come up. And whenever I ask, help me to believe that You will guide me. If I don't hear from You right away, give me the patience to wait for You, because I know You will always come through (James 1:5-7).

Deception at Camp

A fictional story based on Joshua 9

“Captain Joshua!” cried the soldier as he burst into his commander’s tent.

“What is it, Josiah?”

“Strangers in the camp, sir,” reported Josiah.

Joshua tugged his gray beard.

“What do they want?”

“They want to make peace with us, sir.”

“But God has forbidden us from forming friendships or covenants with anyone from Canaan,” said Joshua.

“Right,” replied Josiah. “You’d better go talk to them.”

Joshua followed Josiah to the outskirts of Israel’s camp at Gilgal. A worn-looking group of travelers huddled together. Israelite soldiers surrounded them.

“Attention!” called Josiah.

The soldiers parted to let Joshua through. One of the travelers approached and bowed.

“Are you Joshua?” he asked.

“Yes. Who are you?” Joshua folded his arms.

“We are Gibeonites. We have journeyed from a far country to meet you and ask for peace.”

“Are you sure you’re not Canaanites?” Joshua asked suspiciously.

“No, sir!” replied the man. “We have been traveling for many days. Look! Our bread is crumbling and green from mold. Our clothes are sweaty and dusty. And look at my shoes—they were new when we left home!” The man’s companions

nodded in agreement.

“They do look like they’ve come a long way, sir,” Josiah whispered to Joshua.

“I think so, too,” replied Joshua.

“Can we make a promise of peace, then?” asked the Gibeonite leader.

Joshua nodded. “We will swear by the Lord our God. Our nations will not fight each other. Bring food for our weary guests,” he called to the servants.

The next day Josiah reported to Joshua’s tent. “Captain, there’s bad news,” he said. “Those men tricked us. The town of Gibeon lies only a few miles away, in Canaan.”

Joshua stiffened. “What? That means we disobeyed God by making peace with them! Oh Josiah, why didn’t we seek **God’s will** before we acted? This could cause our people trouble for generations!”

Some time later, a frantic message came to Joshua at his camp in Gilgal. Five enemy kings had attacked Gibeon, and the Gibeonites pleaded for help. Joshua trembled, quickly realizing what this meant.

“God expects us to keep our promises,” said Joshua. “We made an oath to the Gibeonites, so we *have* to defend them. But because we disobeyed God and promised without consulting Him, we can’t assume He will go with us into this battle. Why, *why*, WHY didn’t we ask God before we made that treaty?”

With a heavy heart, Joshua led the Israelites to Gibeon. To the steady thump of his soldiers’ feet, his head rang with the words: *Without God, we will fail.* Finally, with Gibeon in sight, the army stopped to prepare for battle. In that pause, Joshua heard a Voice he recognized: “Don’t be afraid,



By Kathleen E. Bracher

Gilgal

Joshua. I am with you."

Joshua was overjoyed. God would go with them into battle after all! The Israelites charged on the enemy kings at Gibeon. The Lord rained giant hailstones on the kings' armies. Even more miraculous, God made the sun stand still in the sky. He didn't let it set until Israel had the victory.

"We won, Captain!" Josiah

said after the battle.

"No, Josiah. God won," Joshua replied. "He was merciful to us. He didn't fail us even though we failed Him. But, Josiah?"

"Sir?"

"Next time, remind me to pray. I need to know **God's will**. My way makes a mess, but His way makes it all come out right."

"Yes, sir!" Josiah said with a salute. ★

Kathleen Bracher directs the children's choir at Rhein Valley Baptist Church in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Different Battle, Different Plan

God is so cool. He doesn't do things the same way every time. That's why it's so important that we pray to know **God's will** about *everything*. Here's an example from 2 Samuel 5:17-25:

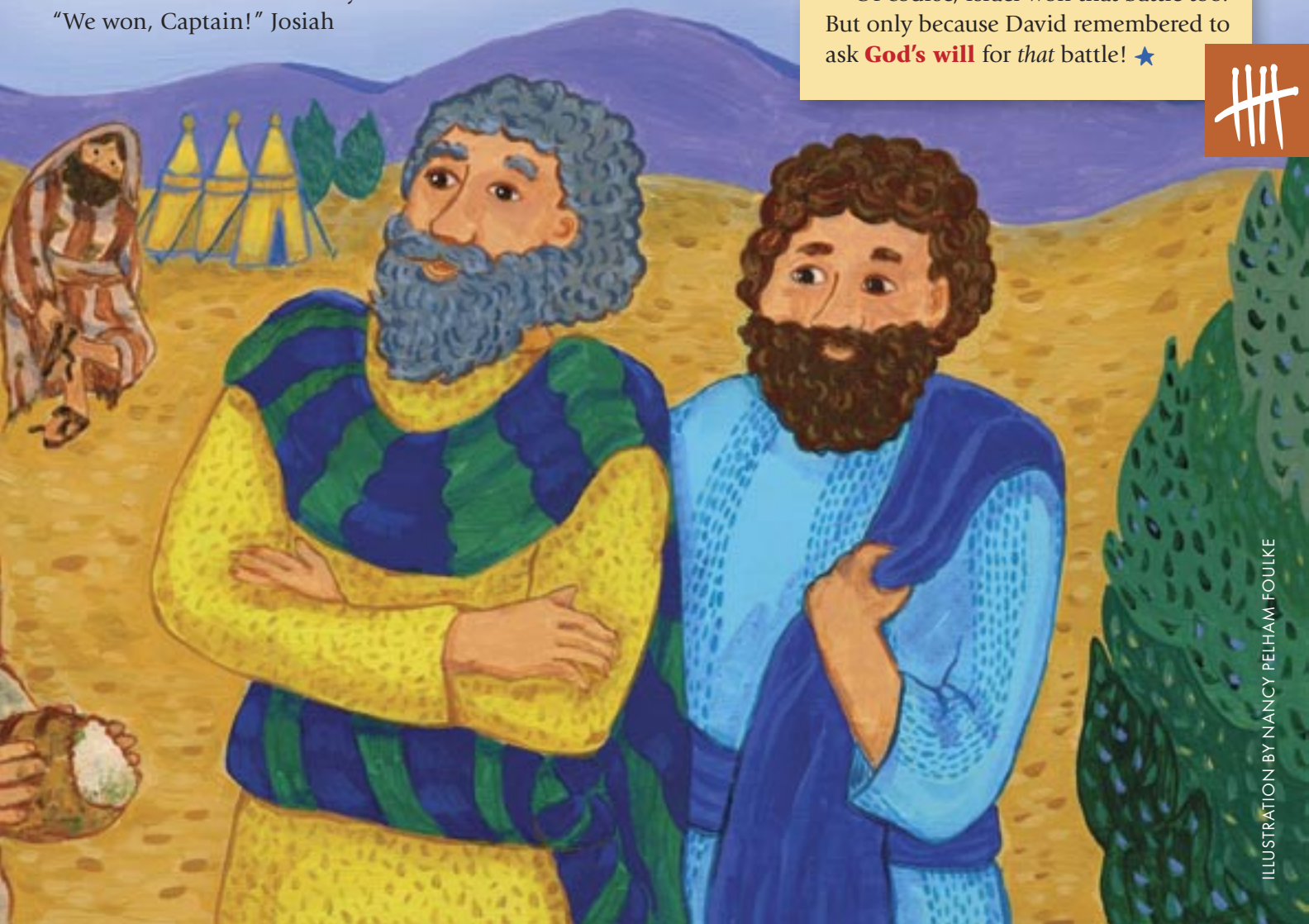
One day Israel's enemy, the Philistines, approached the place where King David and his men were.

"Should I go and attack them?" David inquired of God.

"Yes," God said. So David's army fought the Philistines head-on and defeated them.

A little while later, the same thing happened. The Philistines approached, so David inquired of the Lord again. It's a good thing he did, because God told him to attack—only this time from behind!

Of course, Israel won that battle too. But only because David remembered to ask **God's will** for *that* battle! ★





Let's Pray for Our Enemies

Is anything harder than praying for someone who is mean to you? Yet that's exactly what Jesus tells us to do. In Matthew 5:44 He says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Think of someone who always says mean things to you. What about a family member or friend who has treated you unfairly? It's natural to want to get back at someone who hurts you, isn't it? But the Bible says that if we hold onto anger, we open the door to evil in our lives (Ephesians 4:26-27). If we want to be like Jesus, we have to learn to love and pray for people who are mean.

Jesus did the hardest thing anyone could ever imagine. When He was suffering and dying on the cross, He prayed for the people who crucified Him.

He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Isn't that amazing? He could have asked God



to punish them. But instead, He asked God to forgive them!

So, the next time someone is mean to you, stop and pray a blessing instead of being mean in return. Why? Because God uses the hard things in life, like being mistreated or being made fun of, to make us more like Jesus. We can respond to unkindness with more unkindness, *or* we can let Jesus use us to pray for change in the hearts of those who do wrong. (If someone continues to hurt you, however, get help from a trusted Christian adult who can join you in praying and helping you.)

Remember that the most important prayer you can pray for enemies is that they will come to know Jesus Christ personally.

If all enemies prayed for one another, do you think we would have any wars? What would happen if we started to pray for terrorists or for the bullies at school? God loves everybody—even people who do evil things. He wants everyone to be a part of His kingdom. He can use your prayers to make that happen! ★

—By Kim Butts,
Harvest Prayer Ministries

SIX

LOVE THE GLOBE

Praying for Enemies

1. Lord, help me to forgive and not be angry with people who hurt me. I don't want to give Satan a place in my life (Ephesians 4:26-27).

2. Heavenly Father, there are many people in the world who do not love You and whose hearts are evil. Turn them from evil and toward peace. Draw them to Jesus Christ, who is waiting to use them to do good works for Him (Psalm 34:14; Ecclesiastes 3:12).

3. Lord, help Christians everywhere to love and pray for enemies such as terrorists. Use us

to overcome evil with good (Luke 6:27-28,31; Romans 12:21).

4. Mighty God, help Christians who are being persecuted or mistreated because of their belief in Jesus to pray for their enemies and forgive them (Matthew 5:11).

5. Father, help me to trust You to bring about justice. I know that it's Your job, not mine, to pay people back for wrongdoing. Help me to love and forgive people like You do (Romans 12:19; Luke 6:35).

Don't Even Ask!

Did you know that you don't even *need* to ask **God's will** about some choices?

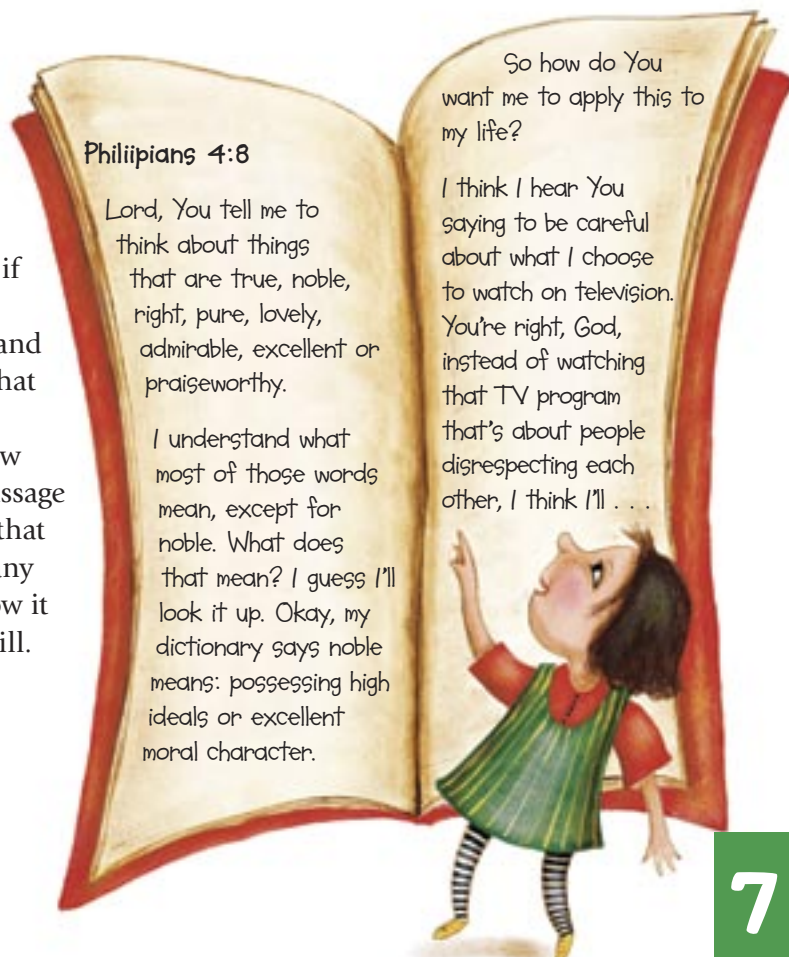
It's kind of like in your home. Do you *need* to ask your mom if you can hit your sister? You already know what she'll say! Is it necessary to ask your dad if you should do your homework? Ridiculous, right?

Just as you know your parents' will about hitting and homework, you can know **God's will** about things that are important to Him. How? By reading the Bible.

Here's one way to do it. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you **God's will** through His Word. Then choose a passage and read it slowly. What is the passage about? Write that down, or think about it for a while. Ask God about any parts that are unclear. Then ask Him to show you how it applies to your life. Whatever He shows you is His will.

Here are some passages to get you started:

Philippians 4:8; Ephesians 6:1-3; Galatians 6:10;
1 Timothy 6:6-10 ★



Match 'Em Up

When you pray to know **God's will**, you can never be sure just how God will answer. He is very creative! Read the following Scriptures, then match *how* God guided with the *person(s)* He guided.

- Numbers 22:21-34
- Judges 6:36-40
- Ruth 3:1-18
- 1 Samuel 3:1-14
- Nehemiah 2:11-12
- Daniel 9:1-3
- Matthew 2:7-12
- Luke 1:26-38
- Acts 2:14-41
- Acts 8:26-40
- Acts 10:9-20
- Acts 13:2

Angel
Physically moved by God
Dream
Fleece
God's "out loud" voice
Heart moved by God
Holy Spirit's words
Parents
Scripture
Sermon
Talking donkey
Vision

Balaam
Church at Antioch
Daniel
Gideon
Jerusalem crowd
Magi
Mary
Nehemiah
Peter
Philip
Ruth
Samuel

Exploring God's Will Together

By Cheri Fuller

The Thorpes, an Illinois family, desperately needed beds for their three children. Having outgrown the crib and small beds, the kids were sleeping on the floor. The family wanted to follow **God's will** in every area of their lives, so they gathered to pray about this need.

As they prayed, the parents remembered the verse, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another" (Romans 13:8). Since they were trying to get out of debt, they sensed God reminding them that charging new beds on a credit card wasn't His best for them. "Then, Lord, show us Your way and please provide beds," one of the kids prayed. "Or open a way for us to find a good deal on used beds at a garage sale," petitioned the oldest.

One night a few weeks later, the parents were out on a date. While the kids were at home, a furniture store delivery truck pulled up and unloaded three brand-new beds.

"Who are these beds from?" the children asked.

"We can't tell you; it's anonymous," the delivery man replied.

When their parents returned, they were just as surprised as the kids. The family dropped to their knees in the living room and thanked God together that He had provided for them according to His will. The beds

lasted many years, and the family never did find out who sent them!

Seeking **God's will** as a family can be an exciting adventure with surprising results. Here are some things to remember as you do:

Pray God's Word. On many issues, God doesn't leave us to guess what His will is—He reveals it through the pages of Scripture. Keep the Bible close at hand as you pray about **God's will** as a family. When there are decisions to make, ask God to point you toward relevant Scriptures. Pray with those Scriptures in mind, and you'll be much more likely to pray according to **God's will**.

Commit your plans to the Lord. Proverbs 16:3 tells us, "Roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will] and so shall your plans be established and succeed" (Amplified Bible). What a great promise! He will shape our very thoughts when we ask His will.

Amy Carmichael, a famous English missionary who served in India, often prayed like this: "Holy Spirit, think through me until Your ideas are my ideas." God never failed to guide her as she cared for thousands of orphans and rescued children from temple prostitution.

Don't let your kids think that if

you miss God's will the first time, you miss God. If you are moving toward Christ and endeavoring to pray His will, He will meet you and your kids there. He promises never to leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). Even if you make a mistake, He allows for and redeems our mistakes. And don't worry if, as your family prays, you have different ideas of how God is leading. Just keep praying, and ask God to bring your hearts and minds into agreement with His will and bring unity.

Remember and encourage your kids that **God's will** isn't a burdensome thing—it's the greatest discovery of freedom in all of life. It's a marvelous adventure to walk with Him and do what He has planned for you. ★

Cheri Fuller, founder of Families Pray USA, encourages kids, parents, and churches to impact their world through prayer. See her website www.cherifuller.com for resources.

MEMORY VERSE

*In all your ways
acknowledge him, and
he will make your
paths straight.*

—Proverbs 3:6

PRAYKIDS!: A HANDS-ON GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING KIDS WHO PRAY

Ready for a leader's guide that makes it even easier and more fun to teach children ages 7 to 12 to pray? This REVISED and EXPANDED version of the 26 leader's guides currently available at www.praykids.com comes handily bound in a single, easy-to-use volume. *PrayKids!: A Hands-on Guide for Developing Kids Who Pray*—Available Fall 2005.

Back issues of PrayKids! are available in packs of 10 for \$6.99. Select from 26 different topics and themes 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.