LESSON 5

Praying to God



Aim: **To show the children how Jesus began to teach his disciples to pray.**

Scripture Reading: **Matthew 6:5–15; Luke 11:1; Nehemiah 1:1–11; 2:1–9**

Memory Verse: **Matthew 6:6**
"[W]hen you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Presenting the Lesson

Starting Point

Give some examples of what people do to attract someone else's attention. They can shout, wave their arms, bang a drum or blow a horn. Let the children give suggestions, too. Everyone will look at a person who does these kind of things, to see what is going on.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. **Show Picture 5.** Ask the class questions about it. Who are the people on the right looking at? **Give the children time to respond.** Yes, they are watching this man, who is richly dressed and praying aloud at the street corner. Jesus saw religious leaders praying like this so that everyone would notice them and think they were very godly. The praise of other people was the only reward for such people's prayers, Jesus said (Matt 6:5).
2. Jesus said we are to pray like this other man in Picture 5. He spends time alone with God in his room. He is not trying to impress other people with his prayers (Matt 6:6).
   Note:
   (a) The picture is a little misleading. In the Bible the second man prays behind a closed door (6:6). In the picture, the door is open; and the man is kneeling behind it, so he is not showing off to his neighbours.
   (b) It is the custom of Jewish men to pray with their heads covered.
3. **Tell the story of Nehemiah as an example of the way Jesus was teaching people to pray.** Nehemiah's visitors from Jerusalem brought him very sad news. The capital city of his homeland was still in ruins. Nehemiah prayed where he could be alone, telling God how sad that made him and asking God what he should do (Neh 1:1–10). He did this for four months!

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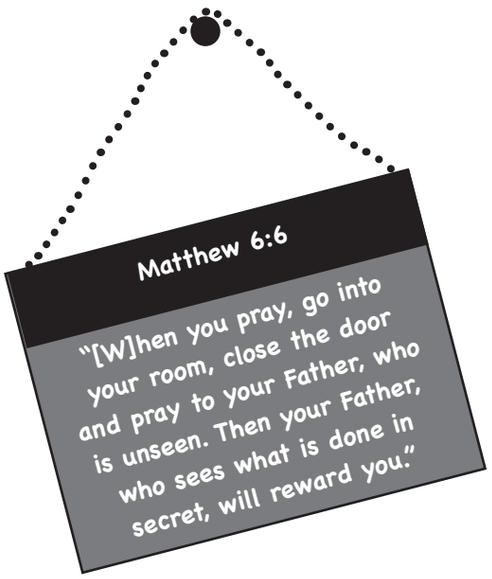


4. Only after he had spoken and listened to God Nehemiah went to the king of Babylon, whose servant he was. When the king asked him why he looked so sad, Nehemiah told him about Jerusalem. The king gave him leave to visit the city and also gave him building materials and protection for the journey (2:1-9). That was far more than what Nehemiah had prayed for.

Instil the Memory Verse

Our Response to the Story

This lesson will have a greater impact if you, the teacher, can share a story from your own life about an answer to prayer.



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