



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Hears Our Prayers

SCRIPTURE: James 5; 1 Thessalonians 5

WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 66:19–20

Pause now to read [James 5:13–18](#).

When I first heard the term, divine expectation, I immediately fell in love with it.

The friend who used it was describing a tough situation. His wife was seriously ill and slowly growing weaker. And though he was juggling kids, a career, and serving as a part-time caregiver, he never left home without pausing to kiss his wife and then checking to see that her jogging shoes were by the door.

“We used to run every day,” he said. “I’m praying she recovers, and when that happens, I want to be sure her jogging shoes are where she can find them.”

That’s a guy who prayed with faith. He had faith that God is, that God was listening, and that God loved his wife. He trusted God wanted the best for his wife, and, as far as my friend was concerned, that best would include one day again lacing up those shoes.

This isn’t a miraculous healing story. His wife eventually died, and my friend eventually placed her shoes in a box he carried to a secondhand store so someone else could use them.

Praying with faith doesn’t necessarily mean God will say “yes” to your every request. But it does mean you trust He hears you and will respond. And it means you look for and praise Him in whatever response He gives you.

How will you faithfully pray with divine expectation today?

—**Mikal Keefer**

Children’s Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

First Thessalonians was written by Paul to the church in Thessalonica, and from early Christian history, James, the brother of Jesus, has been understood to be the author of the letter of James ([Galatians 1:19](#)). Both authors emphasize the need for faithful, consistent prayer.

WHAT?

These letters are very different in structure and purpose. First Thessalonians addresses the specific situation of believers who were concerned that Jesus would not return. James is a letter of general wisdom meant to circulate among different churches.

WHERE?

The letter of James is addressed to the “12 tribes scattered among the nations” ([James 1:1](#)), which may refer to all the Gentiles who believe in Jesus. Thessalonica, however, is located in northern Greece.

WHEN?

Some people think that [1 Thessalonians](#) is the earliest written document in the New Testament, perhaps written in the late 40s or early 50s. James died around the year 62, and many scholars think his letter was written a few years earlier.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY

Jesus first taught His disciples to “always pray and not give up” ([Luke 18:1](#)). Both Paul and James thus draw upon the teachings of Jesus in their statements about prayer.



Curiosity

LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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Curiosity Activity: Bubbles and Phones

SUPPLIES: cell phone (adult only), bubble solution and wand

Have kids gather around you and ask: **If we wanted to talk with somebody who is not here at church today, how could we talk to that person?** Allow kids to respond. If someone suggests a phone, hold up a phone and say: **Yes, we could call that person on a phone!** If no one suggests a phone, hold up a phone and ask: **Do you think we could use this phone to call the person?** Allow the kids to respond. **When we want to talk to somebody who is far away from us, we may use a phone. But what if we want to talk to God? Can we use a phone to call God? We don't need to use a phone to call God! We can talk to God any time simply by praying.**

Do you know how to pray? Sometimes when we pray, we fold our hands and close our eyes. We do this so we aren't distracted by other things around us. But we can talk to God anytime, anywhere. We don't have to have our eyes closed for God to hear us!

Use the bubble solution and bubble wand to blow a few bubbles. **When we pray, we can imagine our prayers going right to God, kind of like these bubbles as they float up. God hears us every time we talk with Him. Let's blow bubbles and think about talking with God.** Blow more bubbles and encourage kids to say some simple prayers to God while watching the bubbles. You could guide them in simple prayers, such as: "God, we love You!" or "Thank You, God, for our friends!" **It doesn't matter where we are or how we pray—God hears our prayers!**



9:00 Service

Belief

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **Father God, we know that You always hear our prayers. Help us hear from You today. As we worship You and hear Your Word today, help us remember that You hear us and want to spend time with us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

****Note to leaders:** This story is not in our picture Bibles. You can use the prayer strips and the script in your Belief bag to aid in telling the story.

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read James 5:13-18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NiRV from the text below:

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Then that person should pray. Is anyone among you happy? Then that person should sing songs of praise. **14** Is anyone among you sick? Then that person should send for the elders of the church to pray over them. They should ask the elders to anoint them with olive oil in the name of the Lord.

9:00 Service

¹⁵ The prayer offered by those who have faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will heal them. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ So confess your sins to one another. Pray for one another so that you might be healed. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. Things happen because of it.

¹⁷ Elijah was a human being, just as we are. He prayed hard that it wouldn't rain. And it didn't rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again. That time it rained. And the earth produced its crops.

¹⁶ Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

**But God has surely listened. He has heard
my prayer. Give praise to God.**

— Psalm 66:19–20a

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- What have you prayed and asked God about?
- What does it mean to praise God?



Identity

LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

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Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for hearing our prayers.

God, thank You for hearing our prayers. Help us to always remember to pray and talk with You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you always remember that you can pray anywhere, anytime. May you remember that you can pray no matter how you are feeling or what is going on. May you always remember that God hears our prayers.

9:00 Service

Closing Activity: Prayer Bear

SUPPLIES: teddy bear

Hold up a teddy bear and show it to the kids.

This is our Prayer Bear! Prayer Bear reminds us that we can pray anywhere! I am going to hide Prayer Bear somewhere in our room, and let's see who can find him! You will find him in places we can pray.

Hide the bear in various places around the room and let the kids find it. Ask questions about each place. For example, you could hide the bear at the snack table and then say: **"Prayer Bear was at the snack table! Can we pray to God during snack time?"** Or you could hide the bear with the toys and say, **"Prayer Bear was playing! Can we pray to God when we play?"**

Prayer bear reminds us that we can pray anywhere, and God hears our prayers.

9:00 Service