

Prayer

Jonah prayed to escape from the belly of a whale. Moses prayed to quench a great fire. Daniel prayed to survive the Lions den. Lehi prayed for his people. Nephi, (the son of Nephi) prayed on behalf of his people for the sign of Christ's birth so they could be delivered FROM DEATH. Christ prayed for the sinners as he hung on a cross. *Prayer seems to be important in the scriptures. What about in the life we live now? Is it as important? Do we still receive mighty miracles like in the Bible and Book of Mormon times?*

Let's take a moment and review some modern history:

In the hilly farm country of New York State lived a family with the very common name of Smith. Joseph and Lucy Smith had nine children; there were more large families than small ones in those days. The one we are most interested in is Joseph Jr. In 1820 he was just fifteen years old. The family had always been quite religious. The young ones were well taught by their mother and father.

During the same year the family's quiet life began to change, drastically! To begin with, there was religious revivals taking place all over the country and their little home town of Manchester was no exception. Men started traveling all over the United States holding "revival" meetings. Perhaps these were a little like our church reunions. These people had no television, movies or any of the entertainments that we have today. They only had each other. Therefore, these meetings were the most exciting social event the town had seen in a long time and all the townspeople and farmers attended. The Smith family did too.

There was intense competition between different church groups. This, unfortunately, led to bad feelings. There were bitter battles of words and opinions between former friends and among families. The Smith family was no exception. Their mother Lucy and children Hyrum, Samuel and Sopronia were convinced that the Presbyterian group was the best. While Young Joseph was more drawn to the Methodist group. Due to the conflicting ideas constantly hammered into his ears, Joseph couldn't make up his mind as to which church he should join.

He began to study the Bible for himself. One day, while feeling particularly confused and troubled, he came upon a verse, James 1 :5-6, which seemed to have been written especially for him. Eagerly he read it again and the words seemed to burn themselves into his heart and mind.

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“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not and it shall be given him.” He knew at that moment that the words were true and he knew what he must do, to get the answer he needed.

A little way away from the Smith home was a small grove of trees, quiet and peaceful, where he could be alone. Very early one spring morning, with the birds just beginning to twitter awake, he walked out into the woods and knelt down under the shadow of leaves from a big tree. With the soft morning light brightening around him, he began to plead with God for the answer to his dilemma.

Suddenly, shockingly, he felt as he was being snatched up! He couldn't see anything or anyone, but he felt that he was being held by powerful force, full of hate and destruction. He was surrounded and weighed down by a heavy darkness. He could not speak or move. He thought he must be dying. The only thing he could think to do was to cry unto God with all his might against this unseen but very real threat which had him in a death grip.

After his pleading to the Lord, brighter than the rising sun, appeared a pillar of light. Instantly the terrible personage who held him faded away. The beautiful column of light came down until it surrounded the young man. Mesmerized, he looked upward and saw two Beings, bright and glorious beyond the wildest imaginations, standing just above him in the fragrant morning air. One of these pointed to other and said, “Joseph, this is My beloved Son, hear Him.”

Hardly able to speak, he managed to stutter out his desire to know which of the various churches he should join. The second personage told him that he should join none, that they were all wrong. He said, “They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof” (Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) page 16). Again He forbade Joseph to join any of them. Minutes passed. The young man found himself alone again, on his back, looking up at the empty sky.

As you can imagine, this was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to him! He kept this beautiful memory to himself as he went about his work, then one day, finding himself with one of the town ministers, a man he admired and trusted, he confided the exciting story. To his shock and hurt his friend laughed and joked about Joseph's experience. If this ridiculous experience were real, the minister said with a sneer, it could have only come from the devil.

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Visions and revelations had ended in the days after the early apostles, he told Joseph angrily.

From then on Joseph found himself the target of harsh criticism from the “religious” community. It wasn’t easy for him to hear that people thought he was crazy! He was only fifteen, but no matter what people said to him or about him and his family, he KNEW he had seen a vision.

For the next three years Joseph was an ordinary, imperfect young man, lonely because so many had feelings of disgust toward him and all his family. Then, on the night of September 22, 1823, he went to bed feeling very weak, very sinful and very alone. His earlier experience came back into his mind with extraordinary vividness; he began to pray earnestly for forgiveness. He became fully confident that his need would be met.

As he prayed the room began to grow light and still lighter, until it was brighter than noontime. At his bedside, appeared a personage standing not on the floor but just above it. This being was dressed in a flowing robe, whiter than any earthly white could be. His whole body had a brilliance, never seen before. His face shone like a bolt of lightning. The light in the room seemed to gather around him. For just an instant Joseph was afraid of his visitor, but soon felt a happy peace slide over him. This was a different being than either of the two who had come the other time. He spoke. He told Joseph that he was Moroni and carried a message from God. He said that the Father had a work for Joseph and that his name should be spoken of both for evil and for good among all people!

Trembling with excitement, Joseph heard the rest of the message, there was a book written on golden plates, a book telling about the former inhabitants of the Americans, their lives and their beginnings. Moroni continued with the best part, in the book was the fullness of the everlasting gospel, as it had been delivered personally to these people by Jesus Christ Himself! With the book, he said, were two stones set in silver bows and fastened to a breastplate. This instrument was called interpreters and had been used by seers and prophets of ancient times. Now, once again they were to be used to translate this precious book!

The angel also quoted a few Bible scriptures. Joseph had heard them and we have too but with slight variations from our King James Version. (Mal 4:6)

“And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers, if it were not so the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) p. 21, 22). He went on to say that the fullness, or

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completion. Of the time of the Gentiles would soon come. Then he showed Joseph in a vision the place where the plates were hidden with the interpreters. They must not be shown to anyone unless God commanded it. If he disobeyed this order he would be destroyed!

Slowly, the light disappeared and with it the angel, only to come back two more times that night. On each visit the angel gave more information about the work that was to be done. Sternly, he warned that the plates were not to be used for personal or family benefit, only for the building of the kingdom of God. Just as the sun began to rise on September 22nd, the angel departed for the last time.

The Smith family, were poor people and there was work to be done. While helping his father in the field Joseph looked so weak and pale that he was sent back to the house to rest. Wearily he started back and began to climb the rail fence. This effort was too much for his tired body and he fell to the ground. Suddenly the angel was there, looking down at him. He told Joseph to go and tell his father what had happened. A little worried, he did so. To his great relief and joy his father, a good man accepted the story and warned him to obey the instructions very carefully.

Story taken from: Church History for Juniors by Holly Bartlett (chapters 5 and 6)

*Wow! A young man **prayed**... and that was the beginning of a marvelous work..*

Let's dig a little deeper and figure out what "Pray" really means.

Why Pray:

II Nephi 14 : 11 -12 For if ye would hearken unto the spirit which teacheth a man to **pray**, ye would know that ye must pray: for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray. But behold I say unto you, that ye must **pray** always, and not faint: that ye must not perform anything unto the Lord, save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul."

Because the spirit of God teaches us to pray. If we do not pray, then we are sinning. We need to pray to God for our soul.

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How to Pray:

Matthew 6:5-13 “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Your prayers are between the Lord and you.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

The Lord knows what you want and more importantly what you need. You don't need to repeat yourself over and over to get your point across. He understands.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. *Pray to God.* Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. *Give Him your will.* Give us this day our daily bread. *Ask Him to take care of your earthly needs.* And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. *Ask for forgiveness and help to forgive others.* And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: *Ask for help.* For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” *Give God Glory*

When and What to Pray:

Alma 16:218-222 Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye might begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you; yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save; Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him; cry unto him when ye are in your fields; yea, over all your flocks; cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening; yea,” *Pray everywhere and all the time.* cry unto him against the power of your enemies; yea, cry unto him against the devil, which is an enemy to all righteousness. *Pray for your enemies. Pray that the devil leaves you alone.* Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them: cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. *Pray over all you do that you may do it well and get gain.* But this is not all: ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and

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in your wilderness; Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those that are around you. *Pray with all your heart when you are alone and when you are not praying keep your heart in prayer that you and others are safe in the sight of the Lord.*

Psalm 55:16-17 As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. *He HEARS my voice. This is an important aspect of prayer to remember. The Lord will hear you when you pray. Even if your prayers are silent.*

Faith in Prayer:

Mosiah 11 : 169 Therefore for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith.

With faith your prayers will be answered.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Believe God will answer your prayers, then, He will answer them.

Activity: Prayer Criss-Cross

Find in the scriptures where these stories of prayer are. Use tools such as a concordance or the online Bible and Book of Mormon <http://cofcmmedia.com/scripture/index.cfm> Once you find the Book and chapter the story is located, you will have the answer to the puzzle. Be careful, there may be more than one scripture reference that will answer the question, but only one will fit in the puzzle. (hint: all answers are written out. example: 1 Timothy chapter one would be "FirstTimothyOne" or II Nephi chapter two would be "SecondNephiTwo")

Craft: "Remember to always... PRAY" document

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James 1:5

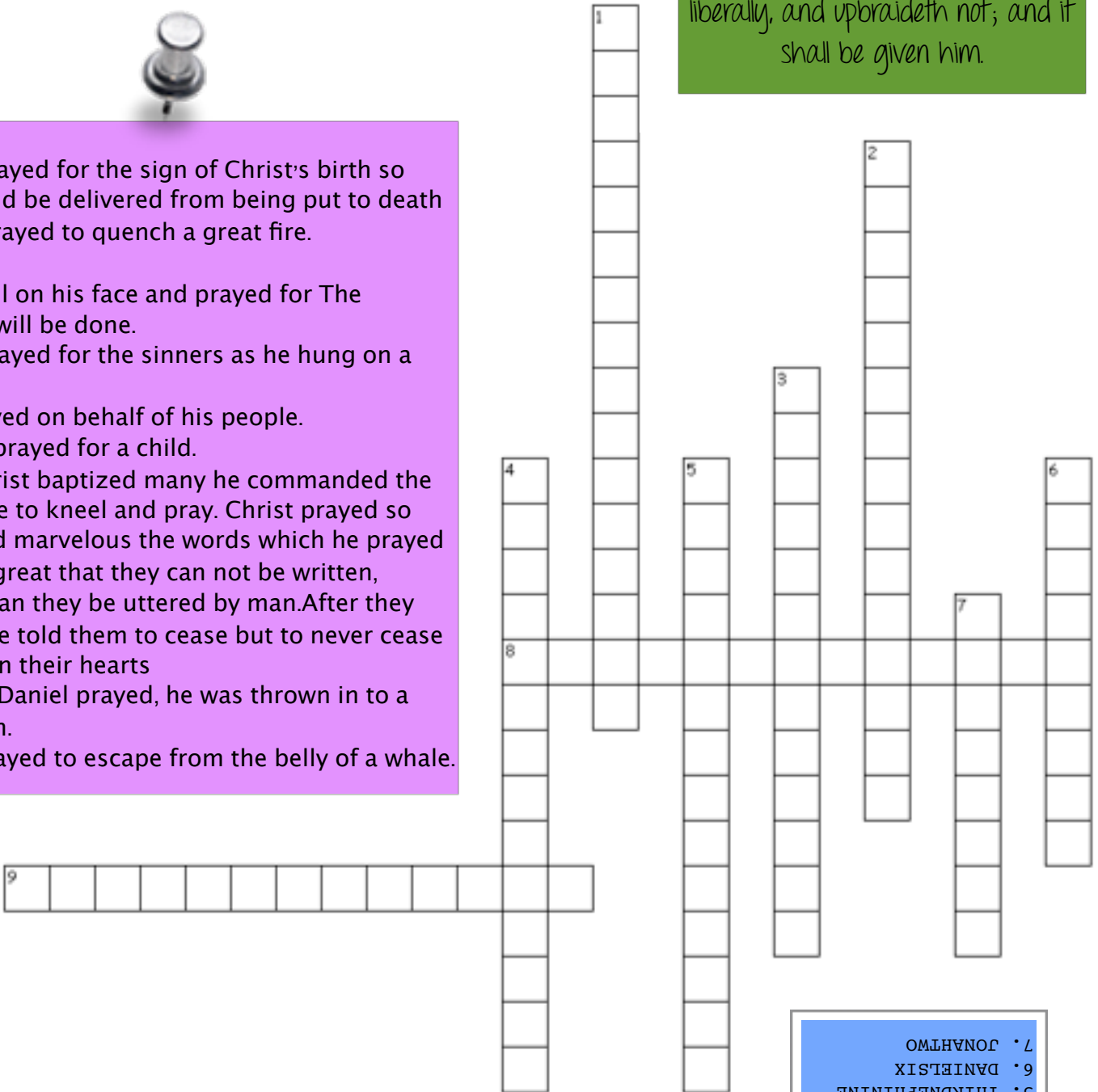
If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Across

8. Nephi prayed for the sign of Christ's birth so they could be delivered from being put to death
9. Moses prayed to quench a great fire.

Down

1. Christ fell on his face and prayed for The Father's will be done.
2. Christ prayed for the sinners as he hung on a cross.
3. Lehi prayed on behalf of his people.
4. Hannah prayed for a child.
5. After Christ baptized many he commanded the multitude to kneel and pray. Christ prayed so great and marvelous the words which he prayed were so great that they can not be written, neither can they be uttered by man. After they prayed he told them to cease but to never cease praying in their hearts
6. Because Daniel prayed, he was thrown in to a lion's den.
7. Jonah prayed to escape from the belly of a whale.



ANSWER KEY
ACROSS
8. THIRDNEPHIONE
9. NUMBERSLEVEN
DOWN
1. MATTHEWTEWENTYSIX
2. LUKETWENTYTHREE
3. FIRSNEPHIONE
4. FIRSAMUELONE
5. THIRDNEPHINE
6. DANIELSIX
7. JONAHSEVEN