



# THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine

Mar., Apr., May 2017 • Vol. 21, No. 3

St. George Orthodox Cathedral • Charleston, WV



## Pastor's Corner

### The Sacrament of Confession and Absolution in the Orthodox Christian Church

By Rev. Fr. Christopher Eid

Since the early days of Genesis, God forgave His people, generously, multiple times for "He loved the World". He sent mankind prophets to speak, teach, preach to His flock and bring them back to the promise land where they live under the shelter of God. Yet, people kept walking away from God and His protection and they ended up living in sin. Yet, God's love and compassion towards mankind did not cease. God sent us, His Son, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to save us and to bring us back to the house of the Father where His loving kindness is abundant for those who believe.

The Son of God came to the world, lived among us, taught and interpreted the Scriptures, had followers and disciples, performed miracles and was baptized by John the forerunner. Jesus taught love, kindness, charity and forgiveness; not only that God the Father forgives us, but also that we should do to others what we wanted others to do to us, fulfilling what we pray in the Lord's Prayer and reflecting what God had been doing to us.

Jesus Christ's disciples were confirmed in His ministry; in preaching the Word of God and His Salvation, in visiting, ministering and healing the sick.

In preparing His disciples, Jesus gave them authority to continue His ministry to mankind. Jesus said to them: "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mat 18:18). Also in the Gospel of John: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John: 20:23).

The Church in obedience to the Lord and following His teachings found that

it is absolutely necessary for the life of mankind and their restoration to the Love of God the Father, to structure the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution; "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1Jn 1:5-10)

We ought to be perfect as God is perfect. We confess our faith in Christ that requires us to do what Christ showed, taught and instructed us to do. That means that our Love to our neighbor MUST be a perfect Love as Christ's Love to us is perfect; as Christ fulfilled The Commandments, we are called to fulfill them as well. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Mat 5:48)

All of the commandments of Scripture sum up the Perfection of God. Therefore, we are to love others in the same love with which God Loves us. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (Joh 13:34)

The original destiny of man was to always be with God and in His love and protection. God wanted that the whole world to be filled with His Love and all creation to be filled with His Divine Pres-

ence. That means that we all continually be changed towards God and His Perfect Image. This means continual confession and repentance. This is a major eye opening for our salvation that our continual confession and repentance is meaningful. We should practice giving confession to our priest as often as needed; so we are ready to receive the body and blood of Christ without condemnation. ✠

## Congratulations

to St. George's 3rd and 4th grade basketball team who came in second place in their division.



You are cordially invited to honor the Patron Saint of our Church at our annual

**St. George's Day Luncheon**

**Sun. April 23, 2017**

(immediately following the Divine Liturgy)

**St. George Conference Center Ballroom**

**Mark your calendar and make plans to attend!!**

## ANCIENT FAITH RADIO

In the new year, Fr. Stephen's bible study sessions can be heard on the Internet through Ancient Faith Radio. ✠



## To Love God

By Subdeacon George M. Damous

Through the power of the Holy Spirit adults and children may be moved to attend and “behold” this glorious season with their families through the services of the Holy Orthodox Church. To behold something, means to be fully centered and to embrace that something in that moment; “...He saith unto His mother, Woman behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother!” (John 19:26-27). “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Proverbs 15:3). “I behold thy bridal chamber...” (Exaposteilarion of the Bridegroom Service). Once we understand what “behold” truly means, it helps us to embrace and contemplate more fully what is being presented to us. “Behold the coming of Holy Pascha!” If only we would embrace and be fully centered or focused on the coming of Pascha, we may live a different life. “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelations 21:5). Yes, the Son of God came to renew His creation, to restore it to its former dignity.

For some people it may be difficult to “behold” such things. How can we learn to “behold” the Orthodox faith? St. Theophan teaches that a great influence is exercised on the child by frequently taking the child to church, by having the child kiss the holy Cross, the Gospel, and the icons. At home, frequently place the child under icons and signing the child with the sign of the cross, sprinkling the child with holy water, burning incense, making the sign of the cross over the child’s bed and food, and everything connected with the child. Also the blessing of the priest and everything connected with the Church is needed. In addition to this visible protec-



tion of the child, there is an invisible one, the child’s guardian angel placed by God to protect the child at the minute of baptism. St. Theophan warns all this can be dissolved and made fruitless by unbelief, carelessness, impiety, and the bad life of the parents.

For adults, St. Theophan teaches there are three stages to the Christian life: 1) Turning to God – when we decide to turn from the darkness of Satan’s domain to the Light of God; 2) Purification – the cleansing of our heart from impurity; and 3) Sanctification – communion with God in which God abides in our hearts. So the first stage may also be seen as repentance, which we have been taught in the last several weeks during the Triodion and Gospel teachings in Church. The second stage may be accomplished by Great Lent through fasting and prayer and almsgiving. This brings us to the third stage, Holy Pascha, the coming of the Lord to abide in our hearts.

The word “passion” is derived from the verb, “pascho” – “to suffer.” (Pascha is a noun which is the Greek word for Passover). Of course through Holy Week we remember the Passion of Christ, i.e. His Suffering. Sin can become a passion to mortal man; but in Christ it could not since He is sinless and He is God. Christ is the Perfect example of how to control our passions.


The first step in ridding ourselves of sinful passions is self-knowledge. Ignorance of our “illness” makes us permanently incurable. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1Jn: 1:8). “We must be ever on our guard against yielding to the mere thought that we have achieved any sort of good” (St. John Climacus).

The next step is repentance and confession. The first stage of repentance is knowledge of our sins and the expression of our repentance is to confess our error. By understanding these two things we see why we cannot be forgiven if we have not repented. We will not change our wicked deed unless we realize it is wicked. It is not enough to just acknowledge the wicked deed, but we must confess it to demonstrate our true repentance. “...if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in a day, and turns to you seven times and says “I repent,” you must forgive him.” (Luke 17:3-4). The soul can contradict sin but only with God can evil be uprooted and conquered. Confession begins the healing stage of our soul and body. St. John Climacus teaches “Lay bare your wound to

the healer. This is my wound, Father, this is my injury. It happened because of my negligence and not from any other cause. No one is to blame for this, no man, spirit, or body or anything else. It is all through my negligence.” Then the soul may be healed by Divine Grace. “If we do not confess as we should, we shall be seized with an ill-defined fear at the hour of our death” (St. Diadochos).

We often hear that God is love but we may not truly grasp what this means. First we must understand that God is always Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God loves within Himself; i.e. the Trinity. Because God is Love, He created the world to share His love. All is created because God loves. Jesus is the perfect self manifestation of God being love. As Christians, we identify with Christ as our Lord and Master. Jesus is the Word of God, the Icon of God, Who shows us the face of God. “He who sees Me, sees God.” Jesus is God’s Son, not just beloved Son but the actual translation is the Son of God’s love. Jesus exists because of the love of God and shows us what love is by being crucified. In the crucifixion, the Love of God is unconditionally given. God has done all He can do. He has revealed all. St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, and St. Gregory say with the crucifixion God has done everything He could do as Love; manifested everything He can as Love; revealed what He can reveal as Love. God has accomplished everything and there is nothing left for Him to do. He has poured out all His Love, emptied Himself of all Love and He has given it to us through the crucifixion. God saves us by loving us by the blood of Christ. God loves us to the point of dying on the cross.

God loves us first and we receive His love. If we love God then we obey God. God’s love for us is an intense and aggressive love that makes it difficult to reject because it is never ending. Do we truly believe in the love of God? Do we truly love Him above all else? Do we love God more than our children, our spouse, our parents, our position, etc.? If we truly love God then He is Who we love the most. Some may be surprised at this statement. If we love God as we are supposed to then we MUST love our children, our spouse, our parents and our fellow men and women. If we do not then we cannot love God; for to love God is to obey Him.

God shows His limitless love for us through the crucifixion and blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we do not love, then we cannot know God. God wants us to love each other just as God loves us. 

### THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine

St. George Orthodox Cathedral • 304-346-0106  
P.O. Box 2044 • Charleston, WV 25327

A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian

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Pastor: Fr. Christopher Eid

Editor: Maryann Skaff

Design: Rita Damous Kee

Produced by Fellowship of St. George, to promote activities and events about and for parishioners of St. George Orthodox Cathedral. For only list events as they are reported to us by organization reporters. We reserve the right to edit copy for space. Contact your church organization reporter for news or send your comments to The Grapevine, c/o St. George Orthodox Cathedral, Attn. Editor or email ritakee@aol.com. <http://www.stgeorgecharleston.org/>

The St. George Grapevine is published every three months and is mailed during the first week of the month.



## Congregation Meeting Results

Congratulations to the 2017 Parish Council members elected in January for a two-year term. The new members are: Bruce Cassis, David Cassis, Louis Cassis, Nicholas Cassis, George Damous, Andre Haikal, Diana Shdeed, Doug Skaff and M.G. Skaff.

Members remaining on the Parish Council for another year are: Tom Barrick, Ray Browne, Steve Cassis, Mark Choueiri, Loretta Haddy, Ganim Howard, Michael Jarrouj, Alex W. Skaff, and Phil Michael. Voting members who are representatives of parish organizations are: Church School, Layla Michael; Ladies

Guild, Gigi Michael; and Choir, Anne Marie Haddy. The new officers are: Chairman, Loretta Haddy; Vice-Chairman, Michael Jarrouj; Secretary, Louis Cassis; and Treasurer, Doug Skaff.

Paul A. Skaff and Edward Howard were voted by acclamation to fill two vacancies to serve a four-year term on the St. George Foundation Board. Remaining members on the Board are David Cassis, Moses Skaff, Ronald Murad, Alex W. Skaff and Andrew Teeter.

May God grant all of you strength and guidance in serving St. George Cathedral. ✕

## “To Sit Or Not To Sit In A Pew, That Is The Question”

By The Editor

Whether to sit in any pew of one's choosing and be willing to accept the consequence of being crowded in by the regular pew sitters of that pew, or receive icy glares from the "regulars", or perhaps receive a friendly smile that says welcome to the pew, these are issues parishioners may face on any Sunday morning.

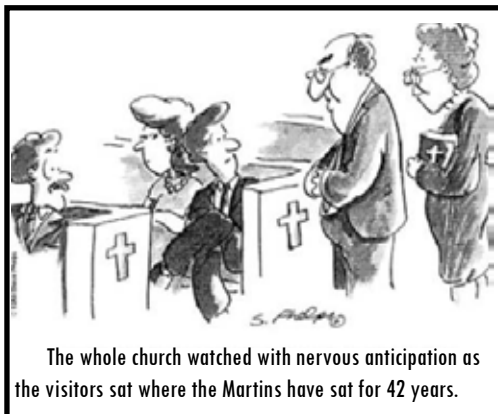
We have heard the priest remind us on numerous occasions that there are no reserved pews in church, except for the first row for altar boys and on Sundays when a family has a memorial service for their loved ones. And, once in a while, pews are reserved for special guests visiting St. George. Otherwise, the pews are open to everyone.?

We, parishioners, who have attended church faithfully for many years, tend to sit in the same pew each Sunday out of habit and some because our parents and grandparents always sat there. This is true of parishioners in all churches! We are “creatures of habit” and prefer to sit in the same pew each Sunday, perhaps,

because it gives us a sense of security and a sense of keeping order and less disruption during services to know we have a place to sit, especially for our Seniors. Our golden parishioners do not always adjust to change very well, and may not be able to handle changing seats every Sunday!

Think of it as though you were a student in a class such as exercise or dance, you tend to sit or stand in the same spot every week. But during the Feast of the Nativity or Holy Pascha, church services are attended by more parishioners and seating is harder to find, especially when extended family and friends are in attendance. Do not be surprised if “new people” sit with you or happen to take your “not reserved pew.” Just take a deep breath, be respectful in God's house, and join them in the pew or graciously move to another pew during that liturgy. SHARING a pew is a friendly gesture that God would approve.

And, of course when new members join the church, they do not know you have been sitting in that pew on a regular basis, so may sit in your “not reserved pew” We need to be mindful of the situation, and perhaps if the new members become regulars attending church every Sunday, they may continue to join you in your pew if there is room, or find a “not reserved pew” of their own to share. Just remember that “the early parishioner gets the pew of his choice” and “to sit or not to sit in a pew” should not be a question. ✕



The whole church watched with nervous anticipation as the visitors sat where the Martins have sat for 42 years.

## Congratulations to all graduates!

*“Trust in The Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”*

-Proverbs 3:5-6

## Graduation!



Your diploma is your ticket to the adventure of life. It's your certificate saying that school days are past and that now you are qualified and ready for whatever the future holds.

What a thrill to leave the known for the unknown, to push off into the mystery and excitement of tomorrow. Yours is the challenge to go places and do things and become someone in the thriving world. Congratulations - and God go with you all the way.

Norman Vincent Peale ✕

## Honor thy Mother on May 14. A Mother's Love

There are times when only a Mother's love

Can understand our tears  
Can soothe our disappoints  
And calm all of our fears.

There are times when only a Mother's love

Can share the joy we feel  
When something we've dreamed about  
Quite suddenly is real.

There are times when only a Mother's faith

Can help us on life's way  
And inspire in us the confidence  
We need from day to day.

For a Mother's heart and a Mother's faith

And a Mother's steadfast love  
Were fashioned by the Angels  
And sent from God above...

- Author Unknown

*Her children arise up and call  
her blessed; her husband also, and  
he praiseth her.”*

Proverbs 31:28 ✕





## Church School News

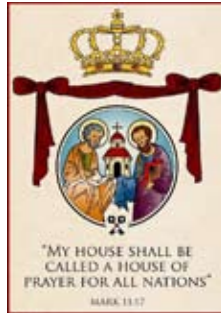
By Layla Michael

This time of year our Church School students are very busy preparing for the creative arts festival. We strongly recommend that parents please support their children by bringing them to Church School regularly. The students are learning about this year's theme and we don't want them to miss out on anything.

Make sure to ask your child and or teacher, what they are learning so that you can work with them at home. The theme for this year's creative arts festival is Mark 11:17 "My House Shall Be Called A House Of Prayer For All Nations"

For more information about the Creative Arts Festival go to <http://www.antiochian.org/festivals/cf>

Lastly, an exciting event for the students during the Lenten season is celebrating Lazarus Saturday, April 8, 2017. All the children will be participating in the Diving Liturgy by singing the responses to the petitions, or by serving in the Altar. Breakfast will follow Liturgy, and there will also be fun activities in the gym to end the morning. There will be arts and crafts



and candle making, Palms so the children can make Crosses for Palm Sunday, and a scavenger hunt for the middle and high school children. We hope to see everyone in attendance! The end of the year party will again be held at our annual church picnic in June. If anyone would be interested in helping with our church school, please contact me. [Lmichael1978@yahoo.com](mailto:Lmichael1978@yahoo.com)

## Senior Fellowship

Tuesday, May 2, 2017 at 5:30 pm, Bingo/Birthday/Dinner get-together. Donation \$5.00/person. See bulletin for details after Pascha.

## Thank You!

Thank you to M.G. And Vicky Skaff for donating two icons to venerate by our senior parishioners who may need to exit the sanctuary at the door by the chanter's stand.

## Doubting Thomas

Thomas, the twin, was one of the most loyal Apostles, But his doubts about Christ's Resurrection were colossal. He did not believe, until Christ's wounds he felt, "My Lord and my God," he cried as he knelt. Then spreading God's word as a faithful follower, The people of India learned from Thomas the Doubter.

-The Editor

### Bible Bowl Theme:

## The Gospel of Mark From the Orthodox Study Bible

T/F or Short Answer.

1. Mark, the Apostle, was also known as John Mark. T or F.
2. "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and \_\_\_\_\_."
3. "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the \_\_\_\_\_."
4. He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed and \_\_\_\_\_."
5. "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God?."
6. Another name for "Father"?
7. After His Resurrection, Jesus first appeared to whom?

## Antiochian Women (Ladies Guild)

Newly elected President Gigi Michael conducted her first meeting on Feb. 6 followed by refreshments she provided to all ladies present. Plans were made for the women of St. George to participate in the Liturgy by passing the tray, reading the Epistle and ushering the communion lines during the month of March. During Lent, which begins on Feb. 27, the Guild will be collecting monetary donations after Liturgy for our annual Pascha greeting card to support the Antiochian Women's annual project this year which is "Strengthening the ministry of our church". So please give generously.

On Sunday, April 23, we will be celebrating St. George's Day which is the 23rd with a luncheon after Divine Liturgy. Donations will be accepted during the luncheon in honor of our patron saint. Our annual dinner will be on Sunday, Oct. 22.

We urge all women to attend our monthly meetings the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Please support our new officers and volunteer to assist with any of our projects.

## The Golden Parishioners of St. George Cathedral

Join friends and family

on

Sunday, May 7, 2017

12:30 PM

as we honor our Golden Parishioners at a Tribute Luncheon

Watch bulletin for Ticket Donation Info Golden Parishioners (80 and older) are free

St. George Conference Center Ballroom Charleston, West Virginia

Answers: 1. True 2. Loose 3. Gospel 4. Go to your house. 5. A mustard seed. 6. Abba. 7. Mary Magdalene.





**CALENDAR**



**March**

2: Great Compline 6:30pm; Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm  
 Fri. 3, 10, 17, 31: Akathist 6:30 pm  
 5: Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers w/Pot Luck 6:00 pm  
 6: Great Compline 6:30 pm; Ladies Guild 7:00 pm  
 7: Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm  
 Wed. 8, 15, 22, 30: Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 pm  
 9, 16, 23: Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm  
 13, 20, 27: Great Compline 6:30 pm  
 21: Foundation Board Meeting 7:00 pm  
 24: Sixth Hour / Confessions 12:30 pm; Great Vespers w/Akathist Hymns 6:30 pm  
 25: Festal Orthros 9:00 am; Divine Liturgy - Annunciation 10:00 am; Great Vespers 5:00 pm  
 28: Fellowship of St. George Meeting 7:00 pm (Meetings last Tuesday of each month)  
 29: Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 6:30 pm



**April**

3: Great Compline 6:30 pm; Ladies Guild 7:00 pm  
 4: Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm  
 5: Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 pm  
 6: Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm  
 7: Little Compline Canon of Lazarus 6:30 pm  
 8: Lazarus Divine Liturgy 10:00 am; Great Vespers 5:00 pm  
 9: Palm Sunday Matins 9:30 am; Divine Liturgy 10:30 am; Bridegroom Matins 6:30 pm

10: Bridegroom Matins 6:30 pm  
 11: Bridegroom Matins 6:30 pm  
 12: Holy Unction 6:30 pm  
 13: Vespers Divine Liturgy w/ Foot-Washing 6:30 am; Holy Passion Gospels 7:00 pm  
 14: Royal Hours 10:00 am; Un-Nailing Vespers 3:30 pm; Lamentations Service 7:00 pm  
 15: Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 10:00 am; Paschal Services 10:00 pm  
 16: Great and Holy Pascha Agape Vespers 12:00 pm  
 18: Foundation Board Meeting 7:00 pm  
 23: Feast of St. George; Junior Choir 9:15 am; Matins 9:30 am; Church School 9:45 am; Divine Liturgy 10:30 am; Bible Study 6:30 pm  
 26: Vespers/Family Night 6:30 pm  
 27: Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm  
 29: Manna Meal prep 9:30 am; Great Vespers 4:00 pm



**May**

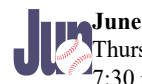
1: Ladies Guild 7:00 pm  
 2: Senior Fellowship Get-together 5:30 pm; Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm  
 Wed-3, 10, 17, 24, 31: Vespers/Family Night 6:30pm  
 Thurs-4, 11, 18, 25: Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm

March 2017							April 2017						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4							1
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30						

May 2017							June 2017						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	

15: Sixth Hour / Confessions 12:30 pm  
 16: Foundation Board Meeting 7:00 pm  
 27: Manna Meal prep 9:30 am; Great Vespers 5:00 pm



Thurs 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm  
 4: Symphony Sunday 12:00 pm; Bible Study 6:30 pm  
 5: Ladies Guild 7:00 pm  
 6: Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm  
 Wed 7, 14, 21, 28: Vespers/Family Night 6:30 pm  
 11: Church Picnic 12:00 pm  
 20: Foundation Board Meeting 7:00 pm  
 24: Manna Meal prep 9:30 am; Great Vespers 5:00 pm





## Traditional Easter Greetings

Christ Is Risen - Truly He Is Risen

Al Maseeh Qam - Ha'An Qam (*Arabic*)

Kristos Anesti - Alithos Anesti (*Greek*)

Christos Voskrese -

Vo Istinu Voskrese (*Slavonic*)

## Deadline for the next Grapevine issue

June, July, August, 2017, is May. 1, 2017. Place articles in box outside Church office or email ritakee@aol.com

## Ten Rules for Lent

- Worship at divine services every Sunday.
- Attend special Lenten services whenever possible.
- Pray often-briefly but sincerely.
- Meditate often on dependence on God.
- Read Bible passages from the Psalms and New Testament daily.
- Read one or more religious books or biographies.
- Use moderation in food, drink and entertainment.
- Prepare carefully for Confession and Communion.
- Practice Christian charity with greater zeal.
- Refrain from criticism of others and from boasting of personal exploits.

*Faith of Our Fathers, The Eastern Orthodox Religion*



**May You Have A Happy And Blessed Easter**

## Kids Corner Q & A

### Q. Why do we call it "saying grace"?

**A.** ;The word grace means "thanks to God." It can also be used to mean "I ask for God's favor." This is how the apostle Paul used it to close some of his letters, such as Galatians, 1 Timothy, Philemon, and others. When we pray before meals, we are thanking God for the food and asking for his blessing on that time of eating. So this prayer is called grace.

Praying before meals is a way of showing that we depend on God. It reminds us that all we have comes from God. This is an important part of prayer—thanking God for life and everything else he gives us.

**Key Verse:** Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it. (Hebrews 4:16)



*From 102 Questions Children Ask about the Bible.* 

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