

WHISPERING IN GOD'S EAR

TRUE STORIES INSPIRING CHILDLIKE FAITH

FEATURING STORIES BY

BETH MOORE

KAY ARTHUR

EUGENE PETERSON

GIGI GRAHAM

AND OTHERS

COMPILED BY WAYNE HOLMES

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*Dedicated to my children—
Brett, Melissa, Barclay, and Crystal*

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INTRODUCTION

Daddy, Daddy, come look,” Crystal squealed with excitement. She was at the age where coming home from work was pure joy for me because of the hugs and kisses she so freely gave. On this day she didn’t stop for affection. Instead she rushed around the corner and headed for her room, confident that I would follow.

As I came around the corner and entered her world, I saw her pull a musical instrument out of a case. “Look, Daddy,” she said as she proudly held up a violin and bow for my inspection. “Isn’t it neat?” She raised the violin and placed it under her chin. She then took the bow and pulled it across the strings, making a most unpleasant sound. Back and forth the bow ran across the strings. I made a concerted effort not to wince.

“Isn’t it great? I just got it today, and they said I could keep it.”

“That’s wonderful, honey.”

Though the sound was uninviting, the spirited performance was precious. Elation shone in her eyes and in her heart.

Crystal’s musical career faded a few months later. Like many young children, she lost interest in the instrument and found other activities to fill her days. But I will never forget the excitement and wonder of that moment. I witnessed pure joy—the kind of joy I had not experienced for quite some time—and I was deeply touched by the sound of ecstasy that flowed from her heart.

I could have reacted with indifference. I could have allowed the unpleasantness of the sound to spoil the moment. Fortunately, I listened

with my heart and heard the spirit that outplayed the instrument—and I was cautious not to crush her creativity.

As a child, and occasionally as an adult, I have experienced the joy and excitement of a new endeavor. Just as Crystal wanted to share with her daddy, I also want to share things with my heavenly Father. I am reminded that I can bring anything to Him in prayer, and He will listen—without wincing—no matter how it sounds to His ears. He is a more loving Father than I could ever hope to be, and He is always careful with His children—cautious never to crush their spirits or quell their creativity.

Nowhere is God's listening ear more keen than when it comes to kids and prayer. When children pray, they open up their hearts to the One who knows them best, loves them the most, and accepts them unreservedly. Kids love from their hearts. That is, they believe without doubt, trust without reservation, live without reluctance, sleep without worry, and laugh without restraint.

I miss the simple faith that trusts so readily and lives so simply. But, if we will listen to the prayers of our children, we just might learn to recapture some of the laughter and love that was once so commonplace in our own lives. *Whispering in God's Ear: True Stories Inspiring Childlike Faith* is a collection of stories about prayer that reveal spiritual truths through the eyes of children. In selecting and preparing the stories for this book, I discovered a simple, childlike faith that led me into a deeper prayer relationship with God. My prayer is that you will once again see the world through eyes of hope, love, and wonder.

—Wayne

PART ONE

“PLEASE LET ME SEE A FROG”

Children Praying

Dear God. It is about time! It sure has been ugly since the leaves fell. But are You going to be mad at someone for spilling all of that glitter?

—SAVANNAH, age four, after a walk with her mother through snow-covered woods

Help my mom and dad stop fighting, and help my brother to be nicer to me so they can all go to heaven with me.

—DANA, age four

God, I am having trouble sleeping! It sure would help if you would turn down that sun's volume!

—CAMERON, age four and having trouble falling asleep for his nap

No matter how bad life tastes, prayer makes it sweeter.

—ASHTYN, age six

Children praying. What instantly spring to my mind are images of kids kneeling beside their beds, heads bowed, eyes closed (sometimes), while parents and angels watch. Children's petitions are as varied as the kids who offer them.

Some children pray for personal things, such as passing a science test, seeing a frog, or defeating the class bully.

Some pray for pressing needs, such as the healing of a parent, food for the table, or a father for the family.

Some offer prayers of thanks: for the sunshine, for a mother's love, or for their country.

Some of my favorite prayers are for assistance: Help Mom not to be grumpy; help me not to be angry; help my dad not to be upset with me when he finds out what I did.

The petitioners have at least one thing in common: All are doing business with the God of the universe.

The lessons we learn from our kids' prayers aren't necessarily profound. Usually they are basic ones. But we need a reminder that the basic lessons—God loves us, God hears us, and God answers prayer—are the ones we need to revisit.

—Wayne

FIVE IS NOT TOO YOUNG

Corrie ten Boom

from *In My Father's House*

In 1892, the year I was born, Holland was entering an exciting and important era. In a few years, Wilhelmina would be crowned Queen at the tender age of eighteen. There were signs which indicated that the stability of that latter part of the nineteenth century would soon be rocked by the rattling of German swords. Foreign policy was being shaped around lines of power, as young Kaiser Wilhelm II ruled the country which later played such an important part in my life.

History in the making means nothing to a child, but it was a world event for me when Mother or Tante Anna pinched a guilder hard enough to squeeze out some sugar and butter for those fat little sugar cookies I loved. The fragrance of baking would float from the iron stove into the shop, and tantalize the customers just as it put us in a happy mood.

When I was five years old, I learned to read; I loved stories, particularly those about Jesus. He was a member of the ten Boom family—it was just as easy to talk to Him as it was to carry on a conversation with my mother and father, my aunts, or my brother and sisters. He was there.

One day my mother was watching me play house. In my little girl world of fantasy, she saw that I was pretending to call on a neighbor. I knocked on the make-believe door and waited...no one answered.

“Corrie, I know Someone who is standing at your door and knocking right now.”

Was she playing a game with me? I know now that there was a preparation within my childish heart for that moment; the Holy Spirit makes us ready for acceptance of Jesus Christ, of turning our life over to Him.

"Jesus said that He is standing at the door, and if you invite Him in He will come into your heart," my mother continued. "Would you like to invite Jesus in?"

At that moment my mother was the most beautiful person in the whole world to me.

"Yes, Mama, I want Jesus in my heart."

So she took my little hand in hers and we prayed together. It was so simple, and yet Jesus Christ says that we all must come as children, no matter what our age, social standing, or intellectual background.

When Mother told me later about this experience, I recalled it clearly.

BUT, YOU'RE SO LITTLE

Does a child of five really know what he's doing? Some people say that children don't have spiritual understanding—that we should wait until a child can "make up his mind for himself." I believe a child should be led, not left to wander.

Jesus became more real to me from that time on. Mother told me later that I began to pray for others, as young as I was.

The street behind our house was the Smedestraat. It was filled with saloons, and many of the happenings there were frightening to me. As I played outside jumping rope, or joined with Nollie, my sister, in a game of *bikkelen* (ball and stones), I saw the police pick up these lurching, incoherent men as they slumped to the ground or slouched in a doorway, and take them into the police station.

I would stand before the *politie bureau* (police station) behind the

Beje, and watch the drunks being pushed in. It made me shiver. The building was made of dark red brick, and 'way at the top were turrets with small windows. Were those the cells, I wondered?

It was in that same police station years later that my father, and all his children, and a grandson were taken after being arrested for helping Jews escape from the German gestapo.

As a child I would be so concerned for those arrested that I would run into the house sobbing, "Mother...I'm afraid those poor men are going to be hurt...they're so sick!"

Bless Mother's understanding. She would say, "Pray for them, Corrie."

And I would pray for the drunks. "Dear Jesus, please help those men...and Jesus, help all the people on the Smedestraat."

Many years later I spoke on a television station in Holland. I received a letter after the program which said: "My husband was especially interested because you told us that you had lived in Haarlem. He lived in a house on the Smedestraat. Three years ago he accepted the Lord Jesus as his Savior."

I read that letter and recalled the prayers of little Corrie. That man whose wife wrote me was one person I had prayed for seventy-six years before.

DOES HE LISTEN?

At another time in my later years I was camping with a number of Haarlem girls. Around the campfire one evening, we were talking about the Lord and chatting about the pleasant events of the day.

"Do you know that I am a neighbor of yours?" one of the girls asked me. "I live in the Smedestraat."

"I lived there until five years ago," said another girl.

"My mother lived there," said a third.

We all began to laugh to discover that all eighteen of those girls, who were sleeping in the big camp tent, had lived on that street or their parents had lived there. They found it an amusing coincidence.

"Listen," I said, "I just remembered something that I had almost forgotten. When I was five or six years old, I used to pray every day for the people in the Smedestraat. The fact that we have been talking about Jesus, and that God has even used me to reach some of your parents, is an answer to the prayer of a little child. Never doubt whether God hears our prayers, even the unusual ones."

How often we think when a prayer is not answered that God has said *no*. Many times He has simply said, "*Wait.*"

PLUM PURPLE CITY LIGHTS

Janet Lynn Mitchell

Mom, I've found exactly what I want for Christmas! It will look great in my room!"

Wanting to buy my daughter what she truly desired, I went to the store to buy Jenna's 2000 Christmas present—a thirteen-foot wallpaper mural of Manhattan's skyline. In just weeks my sixteen-year-old daughter's bedroom took on a new look. The night lights of the Manhattan Bridge, the Empire State Building, and the Twin Towers stretched across her wall. Curtains, a bedspread, and a lamp were the added touches to convert Jenna's California hideaway into the glittering lights of New York City.

Truthfully, I did not share Jenna's taste in interior design. We had spent hours together shopping and contemplating different ways she could redecorate her room. I'd shown her flowers in pinks and yellows, and she again escorted me back to the store to take "one more look" at lower Manhattan at dusk, fashioned in plum purple and blues.

"It's cool. I love it! Can't you see? The city is alive, and its lights reflect a silhouette of the New York skyline on the water. Look. There are even two American flags flying."

I saw them. The two American flags were the size of small safety pins. To me, the mural reflected a busy city, full of action and little peace. But nevertheless, this was for *Jenna's* room.

Like many moms, each night since Jenna was born, I've eased my way into my daughter's room. I ask Jenna about her day and listen to her

dreams for the future. I've also sat waiting patiently for the results of her last blood test of the day—praying that her blood-sugar levels would be in the safety range for her to go to sleep, and then determining how much insulin she would need to get her through the night.

During our moments of managing her diabetes, we've often studied the skyline on her wall, pointing out different places we want to visit someday. Night after night Jenna and I surveyed different buildings and skyscrapers, pondering what their occupants might have done that day. I often pointed to the Twin Towers, sometimes even laying my hand across them saying, "Let's pray for the people who work there."

Jenna always responded, "I pray for them every night."

Life in New York City drastically changed after September 11, 2001, and so has the skyline. But Jenna's room remains unchanged. The Twin Towers still stand tall, attached to Jenna's wall. Those two little flags the size of safety pins remain—untouched—declaring our freedom.

I now see what wasn't clear when I purchased the wallpaper mural. It's more than okay for moms and daughters to differ in their likes. God gave Jenna her taste of interior design and her desire for a wall mural of Manhattan. And for an entire year, despite Jenna's own need for a healing touch from God, she prayed for people she didn't know and for a city she'd never seen.



I still find my way to Jenna's room each night. She tests her blood as we talk about her day and her plans for tomorrow. Just before I kiss her good night, a lump forms in my throat. I try to speak as I point toward Jenna's wall mural.

"I know, Mom," she whispers while gazing at her wall. "I'm still praying."

A MOTHER'S DAY PRAYER

Stacy Rothenberger

Reviewing the events of our day is something our kids expect as part of their nightly routine.

One night we were discussing an event that had happened that day at the mall. While trying on shoes, we had come across a cantankerous little girl. The first words out of her mouth were “I’m bigger than you.” She was speaking to my four-year-old daughter, Danielle, who was obviously a foot taller than she. I smiled one of those “Oh, aren’t you cute” smiles and turned away thinking that if we ignored her, she would just go away. No such luck.

“You’re dumb.”

Okay, now she was talking about my baby. Before Danielle could fire back a mean comment, I pulled her aside and suggested we ignore the little girl without retaliating. This proved to be quite a task because that kid wasn’t content with bad-mouthing Danielle, she also attacked my six-year-old son, Dalton.

“I don’t like you. You’re stupid.”

Before I lost it, the child’s mother intervened. “Samantha, you shouldn’t talk to people like that.”

Fortunately, they left before anyone could bring out the gloves.

That night Danielle was still upset by what had happened at the shoe store. “The next time I see Samantha I’m going to tell her to stop being so mean,” she said.

I suggested that maybe Samantha had been having a bad day. Maybe

there was something upsetting her, and the best thing we could do for her was to pray for her. So we did.

Danielle folded her hands, bowed her head, and in an angelic voice, whispered, "Dear Lord, please help Samantha not be so grumpy. Help her have a happy heart that is full of Jesus. Amen."

We were sharing a precious moment. Unfortunately, reality happened. After her prayer Danielle decided to run downstairs and kiss her daddy good night. As the kids were calling out their final good-nights, they woke ten-month-old Drew, whose crib is at the top of the stairs.

"Guys, be quiet! You just woke up Drew! Go to bed!" I stomped to my bedroom, fuming because they had messed up my schedule. (Instead of reading my new parenting book, I had to take care of Drew.)

Then I heard the patter of little feet. That made me angrier because it meant that someone was out of bed. I saw Dalton's impish face peeking in at my door.

"Mom, can I pray for you?"

"Of course, you can pray for me," I said as I felt the tension release from my mind and body.

I gave Dalton a hug and a kiss and watched as he returned to his room to pray for me. About five minutes later I heard Dalton return. This time I didn't have the anger I normally would have had when a child was out of bed.

"Mom, I just wanted to let you know that I prayed for you." Those words came from a kid who has never enjoyed praying aloud.

"What did you pray for?"

"I prayed that God would take away your grumpiness, that you would have a good night, and that you would have a great Mother's Day tomorrow."

I thanked him and assured him that God had already answered his prayer. Dalton had given me the best Mother's Day present.



The simple prayers of my children reminded me that God cares about everything in my life. Nothing is too trivial for Him to handle. When someone hurts my feelings by careless words, I can go to God in prayer. When my life is interrupted and things don't work out according to my schedule, I can take it to my heavenly Father. He responds to my child-like faith by bringing a smile to my lips and comfort to my life.

A SON'S PRAYER

Martha Rogers

Mothers aren't supposed to play favorites, and I don't. Each of our boys has a special place in my heart, but Mike, the youngest, and I have a closer relationship than I enjoyed with my older two sons. His delightful personality and corny sense of humor have cheered me up on more than one occasion. When Mike came along, both brothers were in school, and I could spend more time alone with him. I took the year off from teaching to stay at home during his first year.

One summer in particular stands out in my mind and fills my heart with love and gratitude for Mike's strong faith. Mike graduated from college, became engaged to a girl he met there, and landed a great job to begin in the fall. He came home to live with us until his wedding, which was to be on January 2.

For the first time in twenty-eight years I would not be returning to my high-school classroom that fall. My contract had not been renewed at the private school where I had taught for the past ten years. A difference in opinion with the headmaster resulted in my termination. My self-esteem fell to an all-time low. I moped around and felt miserable as well as angry toward the parents who caused the situation and the board members who supported them instead of me.

Mike spent the summer cheering me up and trying to take my mind off the approaching fall semester. His fiancée lived in Dallas, and he made trips to see her on the weekends, but during the week we spent time together. His oddball jokes served as just the medicine I needed.

I began looking on the bright side of the situation—I didn't have to spend long days preparing lesson plans and updating files for school. I attended a special week of noonday services with Mike at our church during the normal week of in-service at school.

Mike took me to lunch on several occasions, and I helped him select a wardrobe befitting a young businessman. At one particular store, he entered the dressing room, arms laden with suits, slacks, and jackets. I sat outside the area and waited for him to reappear. He put on quite a fashion show, and I laughed until I cried at some of the zany combinations he pulled together. How about a green and white stripe shirt with a black-and-white-check jacket, brown slacks, and purple tie?

His final purchases, though, were more in keeping with his position as an accountant for a well-known firm. He even talked me into buying a few things for myself. The closeness we developed brought me joy at a time when I greatly needed it. Although my anger and resentment toward the school board remained, my time with Mike pushed it out of my mind.

The week before Mike was to begin his job, we made a few last trips to the mall for shirts, ties, and other accessories. Loaded down with shopping bags, we decided to stop for lunch in the food court.

After paying for our food selections, we meandered toward a table overlooking the ice-skating rink in the center of the mall. We made small talk and commented on the skaters gliding across the ice below us. I noticed that Mike seemed nervous about something, but I attributed it to the jitters about beginning a new job.

Finally, when I could no longer ignore the fidgeting and napkin shredding, I shoved my empty plate aside and leaned my elbows on the table. "Okay, out with it. What's bothering you? Your job? The wedding?"

Mike averted his gaze and worked his mouth in that funny little way

he did when he had something to say that he didn't want to say. I waited patiently for him to either share or decide it was time to leave.

After a few minutes, he turned to face me. "I have a confession to make, and I hope you won't be mad at me."

I frowned. My mind raced with ideas. He'd broken up with Sloane. He didn't have a job. "Mad at you?"

He twiddled a plastic fork with his fingers. "Yes." He shrugged his shoulders. "Remember last spring when I was home on break?"

Yes, I did remember. Our break times did not coincide, and I was so involved with grading tests, averaging grades, and getting report cards ready, I hadn't been able to spend any time with him. In fact, my late-night work on the computer and printer in the room next to his kept him awake—something he mentioned several times.

I nodded. "We didn't do the things we'd talked about doing, did we?"

"No, you were too busy with school stuff. You were tired all the time too. How could you stay up so late and still go to work the next day?"

"Well, I was used to it. Did it all the time." I shook my head. "But that's not your confession. What's really going on?"

He grinned. "It's not really so bad. I just didn't expect the results to be what they were."

"Okay, now you're making me nervous. What did you do?"

"Well, I kept thinking about how tired you were and how tied up with schoolwork you were. I prayed for God to somehow get you out from under the load." Then he took my hand in his. "I didn't mean to pray you out of a job."

I sat in stunned silence, and the anger and resentment I had stored up for the past few months disappeared. Peace and calm filled the space. "I'm not angry with you for that. You love me enough to pray for me, and

that's a blessing. God must have something great in store for me this year to answer your prayer in such a way."

His lopsided grin brought a smile to my heart. No matter what came my way in the next few months, nothing would surpass knowing that my son loved me enough to pray for my load to be lighter.

Looking back I realize that the only way God could get me out of spending more time with students and grades than I did with my own family was to hit me with the termination.

A son's prayer offered for a tired mother opened up the opportunity for God to begin a new work in my life. I went on to teach eight years at the college level and to pursue a writing career I never would have had otherwise.

NIKES AND MUSTARD SEEDS

Susanna Flory

They were Nike baby shoes. Little, white leather athletic shoes with a sky blue “swoosh” on the sides.

The cost? Forty-seven dollars. I really couldn't afford the shoes, but I bought them anyway, which made them more precious. I cleaned them. I polished them. I loved those little Nike shoes.

One day my kids and I decided to go on a hike. My son was five. My daughter couldn't walk well yet, so I carried her in a backpack. I laced the prized Nike shoes tightly onto her squirmy, soft feet, and we set off on a beautiful fall day, taking a hilly trail through a grove of oak trees. We hiked up and down, and my daughter laughed and pointed her fat little fingers at the birds and butterflies as she bounced along in the backpack. My legs strained as we climbed the steep, hilly trails, and the air grew warmer as we passed through bright breaks in the forest.

Finally we came to the trail's end, sweating, tired, and ready for a break. As I stood in the shade, taking a few deep breaths, I felt my daughter's little, squirmy foot rub along my back. That felt strange. It was soft. Too soft. I looked down, and my heart gave a jolt. I saw a little pink leg, a soft, white sock. No shoe.

I turned around, craning my head from side to side, frantically scanning the ground around and past us on up the trail. Nothing. The dirt was a dusty red, so the polished white shoe would easily stand out. I should be able to see it, but I couldn't. I began to breathe a little harder. What if I couldn't find it?

I took a few hesitant steps up the trail as my daughter joyfully kicked. She thought we were continuing our hike. Feeling distinctly joyless, I felt my throat tighten and my chest hurt as I realized how difficult it would be to find her shoe if she had kicked it off into the thick ivy that wound along the sides of the trail.

My mind took off in endless whirls, a new worry with each heavy step. *What if I can't find the shoe? I love those shoes! There's no way I can afford to buy new ones. What will my husband say?*

Then I stopped. Stood. Fretted.

That's when five-year-old Ethan spoke. His clear, earnest gaze smoothed away my frown. "Mommy, why don't you pray?"

That was it. So simple.

Ethan and I held hands and prayed together in the woods: "God, we lost Thea's shoe. We can't find it anywhere. We don't know what to do. Please help us."

If my son's faith was a mustard seed, then mine was a dust mite. I said the words, but I didn't trust. Ethan did. We grownups play at faith while children practice it.

Besides being practical, Ethan's faith was also immediate. A friend once told me he was asking God for "now" faith. The phrase caught my attention; I didn't recall ever seeing "now" faith in the Bible. Smiling, he'd read Hebrews 11:1 to me: "*Now* faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (emphasis added). If we live by faith, we must be ready to act on it. God calls us to immediate, ready-for-battle, "now" faith.

Back in the woods, I didn't have "now" faith. After Ethan and I prayed, I opened my eyes, outwardly calm but with worry hiding underneath the surface of my emotions like an oily river tainted with unbelief and cynicism.

Then, in the dark of the woods, I saw something. Fifty yards away, a column of light broke through the trees—a ray of sunshine that penetrated the tangled branches of the old oak forest. The ray gleamed, transfiguring the slowly rising dust into particles of floating gold. It was so bright that the surrounding forest grew even darker.

But it was what the dazzling ray of sunlight illuminated that caught my eye. The lost shoe. It lay on its side in the red dust, gleaming, the center of a golden circle.

I was speechless, at once amazed at the miracle and ashamed of my doubts. I ran toward the precious shoe, my heart full. My five-year-old wasn't fazed. He of the towering faith thought it was no big deal. It was as if he knew the shoe would be there, lying on the red dirt, cradled in a circle of light.

I needed to know, that day, the smallness of my faith. I needed to see "now" faith in action. I needed a miracle that day, and I got one, thanks to Ethan.

I LIFT UP MY EYES TO THE HILLS

Jeanne Zornes

The heart-stopping *bam!* beneath my side of the car meant my fears had come true.

“Flat tire!” my dad grumbled as he wrestled the steering wheel of our limping car. As he brought it to a stop at the edge of the narrow mountain road, I looked out my passenger window and panicked. Below us yawned a deep chasm.

“Everybody out on the driver’s side,” my dad demanded. Mom slid across the front seat as my sister and I, shaking, slid across the back. Any second I expected our car to go tumbling down the side of the mountain.

I was eight years old, anticipating a fun family vacation. My mother wanted to see her cousins who lived in a remote little town in southern Washington, right above the Columbia River. We could have gotten there by taking a highway down to Oregon, then east to a ferry. Or, as Mother suggested, we could take some back roads that wound through Washington’s Cascade Mountains.

Even though the map showed just two thin lines for part of the route—meaning “primitive road”—Dad felt we could do it. At first ascending into the mountains was fun. Our old blue and white Oldsmobile kicked up dust behind it as the gravel road snaked higher and higher. Trees spiked to the sky, seeming to snag the cottony clouds overhead.

But after a while, all the curves made me feel nauseated. We’d closed our windows because of the dust, and the stuffy air in the car made me

feel sicker. I didn't like how Dad drove close to the right-hand side of the narrow road, next to the drop-offs.

"Don't drive so close to the edge," I pleaded.

"I can't drive in the middle," he replied. "Some car might come around the next corner. We'd have a crash."

But we hadn't seen another car for miles.

Then came the flat tire, with our car stopped precariously in the soft gravel.

My mother and teenage sister scrambled for big rocks to secure the other tires, while my dad lifted luggage out of the trunk.

"Get over by the hillside," my dad told me. He wanted me out of danger. And I was too scared to be of much help anyway.

What could I possibly do? I watched my sister and mother frantically dig out trenches for the tires with flat rocks. Dad tried to jack up the car, but it began sliding down the soft shoulder. Quickly he released the jack.

And while all this happened, I prayed. I prayed like I never had before. Until now I'd considered prayer something you did at mealtime and bedtime. Oh yes, I also prayed certain times at church. But would God care about what was happening to our family on a remote road in the mountains?

"O God, help us," I managed through sobs. "Send somebody to help us."

Within minutes another car came from the opposite direction. Then another arrived behind us. The men devised a plan to save our slipping car and helped Dad change the tire. Then we went on our way, finally reaching a paved road and our cousins' tiny town.

That trip changed my child's perception of prayer. I realized I could pray to God anywhere, anytime, for anything. God wasn't too busy to

hear a child's prayers, even when they came from a lonely road in the mountains.

Later I learned that a psalmist experienced something similar:

I lift up my eyes to the hills—

where does my help come from?

My help comes from the LORD,

the Maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)

A SIMPLE PRAYER

Kathryn Lay

Please let me see a frog tonight, in Jesus's name, amen."

I gave a good-night hug to Michelle, my four-year-old daughter, and tucked her into bed with her favorite books to look at. We had been talking about frogs and lizards and turtles that day, three of her favorite creatures.

"When will the frog come?" she asked.

I smiled. "Well, I haven't seen any frogs yet this year; we'll just have to wait and see." I felt bad that she would be disappointed.

"God can do anything," she announced. "Just like my daddy."

A lump filled my throat. She trusted in her father *and* her heavenly Father. Difficult times had made me wonder if God still answered prayers.

I went into the kitchen to do the dishes. With my hands immersed in hot, soapy water, I closed my eyes. *I know it's a silly request, God. But there's something about the way she truly believes that You'll answer her prayer. Do you hear her? Do you hear me?*

Later my husband returned home from his volunteer job at church teaching English as a Second Language classes for refugees. Michelle had been asleep an hour.

Richard and I talked over our day and how the classes had gone that night.

"Oops, laundry," I said, jumping up to move the wet clothes from the

washer to the dryer. I turned on the garage light, startled by movement near the open door that led to the backyard.

Our dog barked at the corner of the garage, stopping to sniff at something.

I took a careful step forward, ready to run if one of our giant, fast-moving water bugs should suddenly head my way.

Near the back door sat a large, bug-eyed, brown frog.

“Outside,” I ordered the dog, who reluctantly padded to the backyard.

After a momentary chase, with the frog two hops ahead, I held the bulging, squirming creature in my hands and carried my prize into the house. “Hey, look,” I said, holding the frog out to my husband. “I think Tippy was about to have a late-night snack of frog legs.”

“Wow, it’s too bad Michelle’s not awake,” he said.

My mouth dropped open when I remembered her prayer.

“Quick,” I said, “Follow me.”

My surprised husband stared at me as if I’d done one too many loads of laundry. He followed me down the hall to Michelle’s room. I held the frog carefully, this prize that God had slipped into our garage.

I stood beside her bed, not wanting to wake her, but desperately wanting her to see the frog.

My husband and I stared at her a moment until she stirred. I cleared my throat, and she blinked her eyes.

“Mama?”

I moved closer. “I have something to show you,” I whispered, holding the frog out for her to see.

She smiled and petted it, more sleepy than interested, and not the least bit surprised that her prayer had been answered.

But I was overwhelmed at the quick response to her simple prayer.

What a loving Father, to see how important such a small child's request was, a chance for her to see the power of an earnest prayer.

My faith took a leap that night as I set the frog free in our front yard. Sometimes my daughter teaches me more than I teach her.



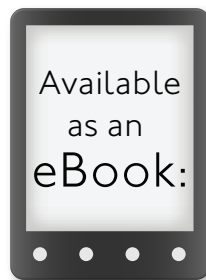
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