

## Family Lesson 8I

**Principle:** Prayer is powerful. God protects his people.

**Bible Character(s):** Peter

**Scripture Reference:** Acts 12:1-19

**1. Worship** - Choose your favorite songs from the [Spotify playlist](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

**2. Bible Lesson** - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

### Bible Lesson

Today, we will focus on prayer. We will talk about how powerful prayer is, that God hears our prayers, and the value in praying together.

A few weeks ago, we read a passage from Acts 10 about Peter and a man named Cornelius. Who did we learn can be saved? Everyone can be saved from their sin, even those who we think are different from us. Peter learned this after he saw a vision. Does anyone remember what that vision was? (“Unclean” food on a sheet; the food represented the Gentiles.) God showed that Peter understood salvation is for all people, not just the Jews. Jesus died for everyone, and God wants us to share his Good News with everyone. Peter continued talking to everyone around him about who Jesus was and what he did on the cross.

This week, we will continue studying in Acts about Peter. We will see what happens as Peter keeps telling others that Jesus is the true King.

In Acts 12, we learn that King Herod Agrippa is persecuting some believers. This King Herod is the nephew of the king who had been in power

when Jesus was crucified. Like his uncle, he wants all the power. He does not want anyone teaching that Jesus was the true King, as James and Peter are doing. Herod has James killed and puts Peter in prison.

Let’s read in Acts 12 to see what happens to Peter.

#### Acts 12:4-5

*<sup>4</sup> Then he (King Herod) imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover. <sup>5</sup> But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.*

The people in the church know that Peter will probably be killed once he has his trial. They begin to pray “earnestly” for him; this means they pray very seriously and with great purpose. The people do not know how God will answer their prayer, but they continue to pray for Peter and believe God will answer.

Before the trial, Peter is chained up, and there is a group of people with swords guarding him. The other group has nothing—no tools to remove the chains, no swords to fight the guards. Which group do you think is more powerful? (The group with the swords/chains.) The swords seem a lot more powerful than these people who are praying. Do you think prayer is powerful? (Allow responses.) Does God hear your prayers and answer them? (Allow responses.) Does God protect us? (Allow responses.)

Let’s see what happens to Peter.

#### Acts 12:6-11

*<sup>6</sup> The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains*

between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. <sup>7</sup> Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, “Quick! Get up!” And the chains fell off his wrists. <sup>8</sup> Then the angel told him, “Get dressed and put on your sandals.” And he did. “Now put on your coat and follow me,” the angel ordered.

<sup>9</sup> So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn’t realize it was actually happening. <sup>10</sup> They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him.

<sup>11</sup> Peter finally came to his senses. “It’s really true!” he said. “The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!”

inside and told everyone, “Peter is standing at the door!”

<sup>15</sup> “You’re out of your mind!” they said. When she insisted, they decided, “It must be his angel.”

<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. <sup>17</sup> He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers what happened,” he said. And then he went to another place.

<sup>18</sup> At dawn there was a great commotion among the soldiers about what had happened to Peter.

**If you were Peter, how would you have responded to all of this?** (Allow responses.) **Would you have been sleeping if you had been in prison?** (Allow responses.) **The angel has to hit Peter to wake him up. Would you have thought you were dreaming?** (Allow responses.)

**Prayer is powerful. Swords and chains seem powerful, but prayer was more powerful than both of these strong things. God answers the prayers of the church in an amazing way. How does this make you feel about prayer?** (Allow responses.)

Let’s continue reading.

### **Acts 12:12-18**

<sup>12</sup> When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. <sup>13</sup> He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. <sup>14</sup> When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back

**These people are praying for Peter when he knocks on the door. If you were a part of that church praying for Peter in prison, how would you have responded if you found Peter outside the door? Would you have been surprised to see him?** (Allow responses.) **Everyone is excited to see him, but they are also amazed that he is there. God has answered their prayers.**

**Do you have anything that we can pray for today? What is it that you would like God to do?** (Allow responses.) **Help your child remember the power of prayer. Have them write Acts 12:5 on a strip of paper. “But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.” Then write their prayer request on the back of the verse.**

**Prayer is powerful! God answered the prayers of the church in Acts, and he freed Peter from prison. They prayed earnestly for Peter, yet they were still amazed to see the power of God at work! Can you think of any prayer requests that God has answered in your life?** (Allow responses. Parents, this is a great time to talk about how God has answered your prayers.) **We can pray to God for our own needs and for the needs of others. We can also praise him for who he is.**

**It is important for us to pray not just for ourselves and our family, but also for our church and for**

the world. Prayer helps us to depend not on ourselves, but on God. There are believers all over the world, and we are all connected as one body of Christ. It is important to remember that everyone in the body of Christ needs prayer, and also everyone in the world who does not know Christ needs prayer.

## Prayer

The purpose is to pray together, just as the church did for Peter. Spend some time praying with your child.

**It is important for us to pray together, but it is also important for us to pray on our own. Prayer should become a central part of our life. We can pray when we are at home, at school, or in church for example. It does not have to be a long, involved prayer—it can be a quick prayer asking for help before you take a test, or thanking God for something he did for you. You could hear of a friend who is sick, and you might spend a few minutes praying for him or her before you go outside to play. You can pray anytime, anywhere. Prayer is powerful.**

## Activity

Prayer Chains - the purpose is to remember the power of prayer.

### Supplies:

Plain strips of paper

Pen or pencil

Stapler or tape

Ask your child to give ideas of different general topics of prayer. Some examples are soldiers, people who are sick, family members, the church (Grace Church, and the church throughout the world), people in need, etc. Have your child write something they can pray for on each strip of paper. Use the strips to make a chain. You can also add in the Acts 12:5 strip from earlier. You can hang this chain in your house to remind you to pray for the items you wrote down.

**Prayer is powerful! God answered the prayers of the church in Acts and freed Peter from prison. They prayed earnestly for Peter, yet they were still amazed to see the power of God at work! Can you think of any prayer requests that God has answered in your life?** (Allow responses. Parents, this is a great time to talk about how God has answered many of your prayers.) **We can pray to God for our own needs and for the needs of others. We can also praise him for who he is. We need to pray for each other's requests. This chain will help us remember to spend time praying together and for each other.**

