



The Prayer & Praise Bowl

It is all too common to “just know” that God answers prayers, and to sing praises to our Heavenly Father. However, all too often it is easy for us to forget just how many prayers He answers, and how deserving He is of our continuous praise. Seriously, stop and think about it. How many times did you praise God this past week? None? Some? Plenty? We might come up with a general idea, but I doubt we could have a true count.

This really isn't about keeping count, but being AWARE. Taking seriously my duty to guide my son in his spiritual formation, I wanted to give him a visual of how God is always there listening and answering. I wanted him to have more than just a vague notion. When he was 7 years old we began what we call our Prayer & Praise bowl. To add to the coolness, we use a fishbowl that looks just like the one in *Cat in the Hat*. I first heard of this idea at my hairdresser's (thanks John!) He had a client who had done something similar and I thought it was so great, I copied and elaborated on the idea.

We drop in a small stone for every answered prayer, a colored stone for every praise, and a white bead for every blessing. Do we catch them all? Absolutely not, that would be impossible. However, we do try to account for everything each day. It has become a bonding time as we drop them in all the while talking about the answered prayer or extra blessing God has given us and our praises for Him. This also brings a pause for reflection of how He's been with us through the day.

We have large stones for the “big” things that just blow us away. We started with large colored heart shaped glass pieces. When we could no longer find those we switched to large stones with a cross etched on one side. On the other side of the large stones I've written the date and provision. What constitutes a “big” thing? In two years, we've been blessed with 13 of them. To give you an idea, one was when our 20 year old vehicle needed maintenance and there was no room in the budget to cover it; we were blessed with a vehicle given to us. When I picked up my son from school that day and told him about it, he looked up and said “Thank you God!” Let us never forget where all good things come from.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (KJV)

It's been great as another reminder too: am I remembering to praise my Heavenly Father? When the bowl is a sea of answered prayer stones with few praise rocks in sight, have I been truly grateful and sung my praises to Him?

While the intent was a teaching lesson for my son, it has been wonderful for myself as well. There is great emotion looking at these reminders of God's provision, love and faithfulness. And while each provision is a memory itself, seeing so many reminders together is an overwhelming presence of His love.

Jehovah Jireh: The Lord Will Provide