

Special



By Brad Wilcox
(Based on a true story)

The prayers of the faithful shall be heard
(2 Nephi 26:15).

You pray funny!” Lucia said after Whitney finished saying a blessing on their lunch.

“No, I don’t,” Whitney said. “Why did you say that?”

“We don’t say prayers like that at my church,” Lucia said.

“What do you mean?” Whitney asked as

*Why do we pray
with fancy words?
Whitney is about
to find out!*

Words

she picked off the crusty part of her grilled cheese sandwich.

“When you pray it sounds old-fashioned.”

“It’s just the words you read in the scriptures,” Whitney said. “I don’t think it’s weird.”

A car horn honked outside. Whitney looked at the kitchen clock. “That’s probably your mom to take us to soccer practice.”

The girls grabbed their sandwiches and raced out the door. “Bye, Mom,” Whitney called. “See you after practice.”

Whitney didn’t think much about what Lucia had said about her prayer until later that evening when Dad gathered everyone for family prayer.

“Whose turn is it tonight?” Dad asked.

“I think it’s Russell’s turn,” Mom said.

Russell bowed his head and began to pray. He thanked Heavenly Father and asked for blessings. Whitney listened closely as Russell prayed. His words *did* sound different from the way people usually talk: “We thank *Thee* . . . We ask that *Thou wilt* bless . . . Help us follow *Thy* prophet . . .” Russell finished and everyone stood.

Whitney went to get ready for bed. She changed into her pajamas and brushed her teeth. Then she opened her closet and chose one of her best dresses for church the next day. She took it off the hanger and laid it across the back of her desk chair.

“Hey, Whit,” Dad said as he came into her bedroom with a stack of folded clothes. “Mom told me what Lucia said at lunch. Did that bother you?”

“No, not really,” Whitney said. “Well, kind of. Why *do*

we pray with fancy words? Why not just talk the way we usually do?”

Dad picked up Whitney’s soccer uniform from off the floor where she had dropped it earlier that day. “Why don’t you wear this to church tomorrow instead of that dress on your chair?”

“Very funny, Dad,” Whitney said as she grabbed her shorts and shirt. “This is what I wear to soccer—not to church.”

“There’s a difference?” Dad asked.

“Of course,” Whitney replied.

“Right,” Dad said. “The reason we wear our Sunday best to church is to show respect and reverence for Heavenly Father. We dress differently than we do for other occasions. It’s the same way with the words we use when we pray. The words we say show love and respect.”

“So when we say those words, Heavenly Father knows we are treating Him in a special way?”

“That’s right,” Dad said. “I’m sure Heavenly Father listens and understands either way, but when we use words like *Thy blessings* instead of *your blessings* and *Thou hast seen* or *Thou seest* instead of *you have seen* or *you see*, it’s kind of like . . .”

Whitney lifted the dress from the chair. “It’s like our prayers are all dressed up in their Sunday best!” ♦

“When we address our Heavenly Father, we should . . . clothe our prayers in special language of reverence and respect.”¹

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

