



Prayers For Our Children
Leaving a Legacy

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2018

Praying God's Blessing

Numbers 6:22-27

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.' So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

Do you ever have trouble knowing how to pray for your children? I do. My prayers too often default into worn out requests that lack specifics. But today's passage gives great help in putting power into praying for our families.

The prayer was given to Moses for Aaron. It is called the "Priestly Blessing" or sometimes the "Aaronic Benediction." Notice that God's name Yahweh (LORD) is repeated three times in this short prayer. This repetition emphasizes the person and work of God. There are seven requests made. Let's consider three here and the remaining four in the next devotion.

"The Lord bless you".... The word "bless" means to "provide favor or benefit." *Father, we pray that for our children. You are the eternal God. Please place Your great kindness and advantage on those we love. May they be approved and favored by You.*

... "and keep you" ... The Hebrew word "keep" means to "watch, guard, defend." This is a prayer for protection. *Father, my children are not perfect. They are going to*

make mistakes. But please watch over them and guard them against mistakes that are unalterable. Please defend them against temptation. Protect them against Satan who desires to devour them.

*...“the **LORD** make his face shine upon you”... This is a request for God’s presence.*

Father, as a parent I know that I can’t be with my children all the time, but You can. Just like they feel the warmth of the sun shining, please allow them to experience Your presence. Thank You for being with them wherever they go. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Praying God's Blessing

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The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.' So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

Aaron's "Priestly Blessing" is a great prayer to pray for our children. Here are the final four requests.

...and be gracious to you... Grace is God's undeserved favor. He gives us what we don't deserve. *Father, thank you for your gift of grace. I pray that gift is poured out on my children. Following the great gift of salvation, please show them your kindness and love in all the endeavors of their lives.*

...the Lord turn his face toward you... Here is a request for God's fellowship. *Father, thank You, that because of their trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in my children. Please walk with them in a powerful way. Enable them to submit to the Spirit's control day by day and moment by moment.*

...and give you peace. The Hebrew word for peace used here is "shalom." It means "completeness, wholeness, and contentment." Lord, please calm my children's fears; soothe their anxious souls. Keep them complete and whole in their thoughts, emotions, desires, and actions.

“So they will put my name on _____” (the name of your child/children). This is a request of identification.

Lord, please place your holy mark on my children. Set them apart to be used by You. I love them but You love them more. You love them with an everlasting love. May they represent You well on their earthly journey. And when their journey is completed, welcome them home to live forever with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Curse of Compartmentalization

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Compartmentalization is a curse that impacts many Christians. This happens when our walk with Christ is separated from instead of merged with all the other areas of our lives. Jesus is the subject of the songs we sing on Sundays and the person in whose name we pray but is seldom invited into our marriages, families, businesses and recreation. But remember, Jesus lives in the believer! He is with us in every area of our lives.

Check out today's passage. I am to live out my walk with Christ whether at home or conducting business. The truth of God's Word and His presence should be woven into the interactions of my day from morning until night.

This spiritual wholeness is how God wants me to impress who He is on my children. They shouldn't see God as someone who lives in a church building. Spiritual wholeness teaches our children that God is alive and active in every area of life.

Lord, cure me from compartmentalization and grow me in wholeness. Don't allow me to leave You out of any part of my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Faith Is Not an Heirloom

Judges 2:10

After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.

After Joshua, “another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.” Unbelievable! A group of people passed from childhood to adulthood without effectively being taught about the person of God and without being exposed to the experiences that would allow them to see God’s power firsthand. How does that happen?

Well, a better question would be, is that happening in your home with your children? Are you teaching your children about the Lord and backing it up with your life? What you say becomes irrelevant when your walk and talk don’t jive. Are you placing your children in situations where they can experience God’s faithfulness - stretching experiences where they have to depend on God? Are you giving your children the opportunity to own their faith? Faith is not an heirloom that we pass down. A living faith must be personally and powerfully experienced.

The fact is that we are not going to get out of this life alive. One day, all too soon, we will be gone. When our children leave our grave and walk to their cars, will they do so in the power of the Spirit or with meaningless religious remnants? What we say and do today will determine the answer to that question.

Only a Boy Named David

1 Samuel 17:33

Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

"Only a boy named David; only a little sling." Remember that song? "Only a boy named David but he could pray and sing." Sing it with me. "Only a boy named David; only a rippling brook. Only a boy named David but five little stones he took." Still singing? "And one little stone went in the sling and the sling went round and round (repeat this line and then sing round and round several hundred times). Finally David let the rock fly "and the giant came (slow and in a deep voice) tumb...ling... down!" One more time...this time with all the motions!

In our passage today, Saul sold David short. The statement "You are only a boy" while certainly a fact, was also Saul's assessment of David's ability. You're not big enough. You're not strong enough. You're not experienced enough. Goliath has been fighting since he was a boy and David, you are a boy! Let the men handle this situation. The trouble was, the men were not handling the situation. Every time the giant took one small step forward, they took one giant leap backward. So, God chose to work through a boy to demonstrate His mighty power.

Don't sell our children short. God does big work in small packages. Always has...always will.

Speed of the Leader

Psalm 21:8-13

Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes. When you appear for battle, you will burn them up as in a blazing furnace. The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath, and his fire will consume them. You will destroy their descendants from the earth, their posterity from mankind. Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed. You will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow. Be exalted in your strength, LORD; we will sing and praise your might.

Thanksgiving promotes thanksgiving. When we take time to thank God for His work in our lives, others are inspired to do the same.

After King David returned from battle he took the time to thank God for the victory. He didn't flaunt his win; he humbly directed the victory to God. The congregation followed his example. They praised God for delivering the king and his soldiers (their fathers, husbands, and sons). God brings the victory. Plots and wicked schemes cannot succeed when God is on our side. He is mighty to save.

The leader's thanksgiving and confidence produced the same results among the members of the congregation. This is an extremely important principle for parents. The speed of the leader will be the speed of the team. We must model what we believe. Our children will hear what we say; they will learn what we show them.

Show and Tell

Psalm 78:1-8

A maskil of Asaph.

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.

Remember the elementary school assignment of “Show and Tell?” It was a great time to bring a favorite toy, a special picture, or even a real live person to show your classmates and tell them about the thing...or person. “Show and Tell,” however, is not just a childhood exercise.

The tradition of spiritual instruction is to teach our children the essentials of the faith and demonstrate how it works. When we teach our children and they see how faith works in real life, they will, in turn, teach their children. Effective teaching today allows us to instruct “even children yet to be born.”

Eternal Impact

Psalm 89:1-4

A maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'"

Ethan, the writer of today's psalm, was a Levite (1 Chron. 15:17-18) and a wise person (1 Kings 4:31). He committed to never stop singing of God's great love and to proclaim God's faithfulness "through all generations." "I will declare," Ethan said, "that your love stands firm forever."

Realizing the brevity of life, how does a person vow to proclaim God's faithfulness "through all generations?" The answer is easy; the application is hard. We must live our lives before our children and grandchildren in such a way that they see the true difference Jesus makes and desire to live godly lives before their children and grandchildren as well.

How you live is what you leave. The impact of one life makes a difference for generations. What we do today echoes into the future. The next generation will stand on our spiritual shoulders...or not. The question is this: When you pass away what will you pass on?

Watch for God

Psalm 90:13-17

Relent, LORD! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.

All of us need renewed confirmation. We long to experience God's work...again and again. Once is never enough. God's activity in us and around us produces spiritual focus. It allows us to explain the splendor of God to our children. We need to see God at work today...and again tomorrow.

Moses was a man who saw God at work. The burning bush, the plagues, the Red Sea, manna from heaven, the Ten Commandments—Moses saw God up close and personal. But his experience also taught him how quickly we forget. As he closed this psalm he asked God to continue to show His deeds. God's work would be a review for some and needed first-time learning for their children.

God is at work all around us. He is at work in the nations around the world and in the lives of the people in our world. We need to slow down and watch for Him. When we take the time to see His work, we can point it out to our children. We can help them become people who

watch for God. That renewed confirmation allows us to be confident in all we do as we establish the work of our hands.

Father, may Your deeds be shown to me. May I marvel at Your splendor. May Your favor rest on me. Please establish the work of my hands. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Cause You to Flourish

Psalm 115:14-18

May the LORD cause you to flourish, both you and your children. May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind. It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to the place of silence; it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. Praise the LORD.

Prosperity theology is a heretical teaching promising health and wealth to those who follow God. Some flavors of this errant belief system guarantee that God will take whatever you give and return the amount fourfold or even tenfold. While this teaching is scripturally out of bounds, praying for God's blessing is right in line with God's Word. In today's passage the psalmist prays that God will "cause you to flourish." Let's get practical and personal with this prayer.

Father, I pray that You will cause my marriage to flourish. Allow (name your spouse) and me to honor You with our commitment to each other.

Father, please cause my family to flourish—(name your children/grandchildren). Restore and heal broken relationships and estrangement. Develop them into men and women who will love and serve You.

Father, please bless those who are ill (name those struggling with illness). I pray that You will restore their health. Help their love for You to flourish in this challenging time.

Father, please bless my place of work (name your place of employment or the business you own). Help me to be a person of integrity in the workplace. Allow my reputation as a follower of Jesus to flourish.

Father, You are the Maker of heaven and earth. Please keep me close to You and cause my commitment to You to flourish until I see You face to face.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Bookends of Praise

Psalm 117

Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.

“Praise the Lord” begins and ends this short psalm of praise. In between these bookends is the call to worship the Lord. The invitation is to all nations and all peoples. Two reasons are given for this appeal: God’s great love and God’s enduring faithfulness.

God’s Great Love. God’s love is evident all around us. It is seen in the beautiful creation that provides all we need from oxygen to water to food. It is experienced through the people God places in our lives. The greatest act of God’s love is seen in the person of Jesus. God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die as our substitute on the cross. C. S. Lewis well said, “Though our feelings come and go, God’s love for us does not.”

God’s Enduring Faithfulness. God’s steadfastness never ceases. He never grows tired of loving us. He never forgets to send daily mercies (Lamentations 3:22-23). He gives us the nourishment we need—physically and spiritually. From Him comes meaningful encouragement.

Take time today to praise the Lord. Regardless of your circumstances, Jesus is the reason to spend time in prayerful thanksgiving. Bookend your day with “Praise the Lord.”

A Prayer for the “Hard Pressed”

Psalm 118:1-7

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: “His love endures forever.” Let the house of Aaron say: “His love endures forever.” Let those who fear the LORD say: “His love endures forever.” When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD; he brought me into a spacious place. The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies.

God’s presence is the game changer. Left to ourselves we are defenseless, there is no protection in sight. But the Lord is with us. He drives away fear. He is on our side giving us just what we need just when we need it.

Use the blanks to personalize the following prayer for someone in your life who is “hard pressed.”

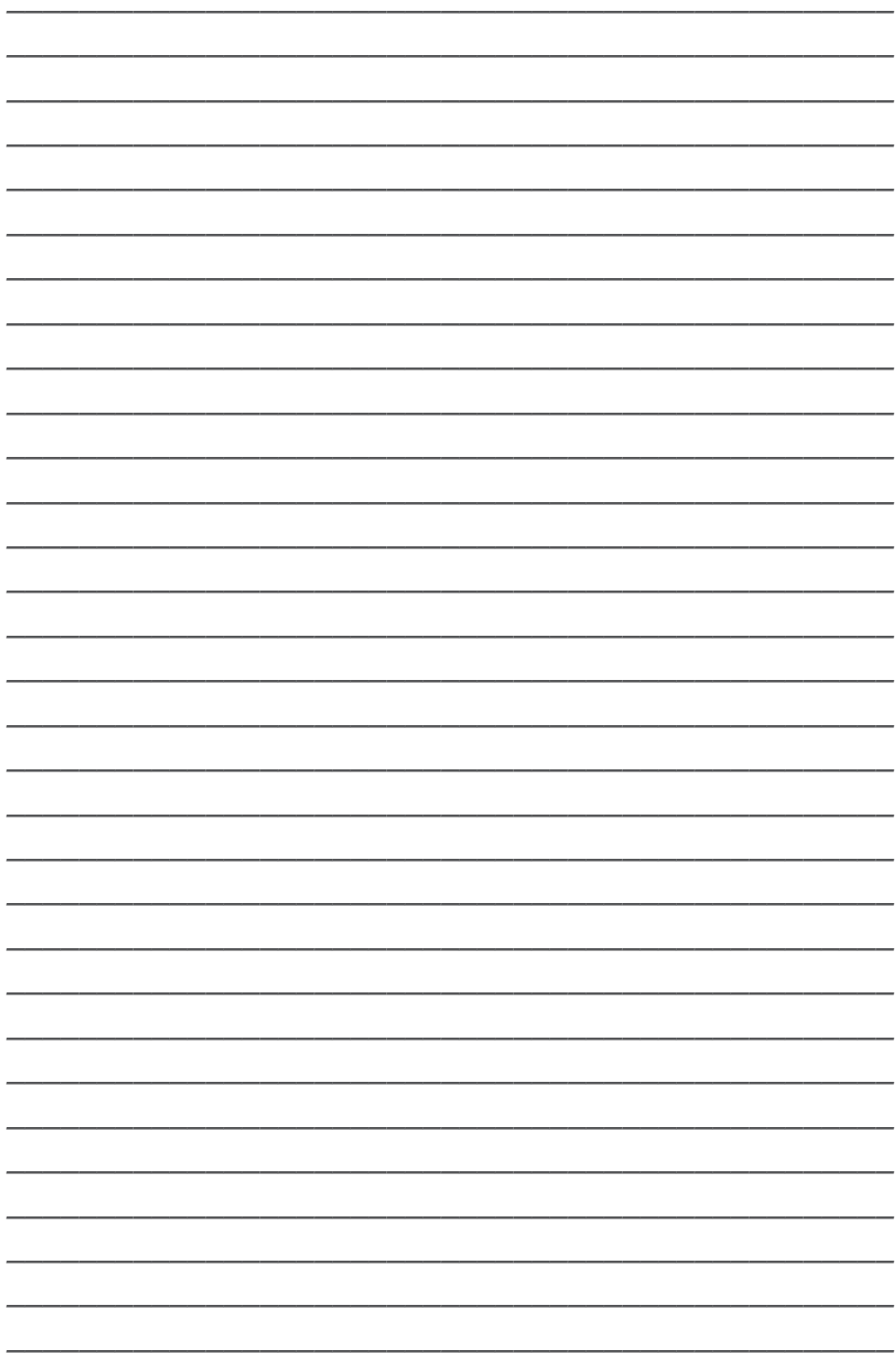
Heavenly Father,

Please be with _____. Help _____ to know that You are with them. Allow _____ to feel the peace of Your presence. Give _____ the assurance that You are on their side. Let _____ know that whatever is standing in their way is no match for You.

Take away dread and fear. Help _____ to cast all of their anxiety on You. Remind them that You are the Defeater of every enemy, even the last enemy. Calm the beat of _____ heart. Quiet _____ soul in Your presence.

In Jesus’ name.

Amen.



A Parent's Prayer

Psalm 118:8-14

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them down. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them down. They swarmed around me like bees, but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them down. I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me. The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.

The musical Annie has a song called "It's the Hard-Knock Life." The orphans sing about an "empty belly, rotten smelly, full of sorrow, no tomorrow" hard-knock life. While few of us can identify with the plight of orphans, everyone can relate to the hard-knocks that come in some form or fashion. As parents it's hard for us to watch our children take those hard-knocks.

Here's a prayer to pray for our children and grandchildren through the inevitable hard-knocks of life.

Heavenly Father,

Life will come with its hard-knocks. My children will be pushed back and pushed around by situations beyond their control. They will know what it means to stumble. Many times they will fall, and I won't be there to help them. But You will always be right by their side.

Father, be their strength against the influencing crowd. Be their refuge in the midst of life's inevitable challenges. Defend them against their strongest temptation in their weakest moments. Let them know that they are never alone. May this confession always be on their lips: "He has become my salvation."

In Jesus' name. Amen.

A Prayer For Our Children's Success

Psalm 118:15-25

Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things! The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!" I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done. The LORD has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. LORD, save us! LORD, grant us success.

Today's psalm reminds us that it is the Lord who does "mighty things!" He is the One who has opened the "gates of the righteous." Although He was rejected and put to death, now He has become the "cornerstone" that holds our relationship with God together.

The psalmist ends this portion with a prayer for something we all want—success. But sometimes God's view of victory looks a bit different than ours. Following is a prayer to pray for your children and grandchildren. Let's pray that God will grant them His success.

Father,

I pray that You would grant Your success to (say their names).

Give them success in the lessons of losing.

Give them success in serving others.

Give them success in befriending the lonely.

Give them success in caring for the unfortunate.

Give them success in choosing friends.

Give them success in using time wisely.

Give them success in reading Your Word daily.

Give them success in prayer.

Give them success in the pain of failure.

Give them success in the accolades of achievement.

Give them success in obeying Your Word.

Give them success in repentance.

Give them success in following hard after You.

Give them success in using the gifts You've given them.

Give them success in standing for You

...even if it means standing alone.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

A Parent's Prayer: God's Light

Psalm 118:26-29

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

The light of the Lord! It reveals the path ahead and illuminates our hearts. It lets us know when we are cruising on the right path and when we have taken a dangerous detour. We pray that God's light always shines on us. That's a great prayer to pray for our children and grandchildren.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you God, for making Your light shine on (children/ grandchildren).

Shine Your light on their hearts...let them see their sin and turn to You.

Shine Your light on their paths...let them see the right road to travel.

Shine Your light on their temptations...let them see the way to escape.

Shine Your light on their weaknesses...show them their desperate need for You.

Shine Your light on their failures...reveal the hard lessons.

Shine Your light on their successes...let them see that You cause each one.

Shine Your light on their education...let them find Your calling.
Shine Your light on their friendships...let them find iron-sharpener.
Shine Your light on their relationships...let them see the rewards of purity.
Shine Your light on their marriages...let them love and honor their spouses.
Shine Your light on their vocations...let them see how to minister at work.
Shine Your light on their disappointments...let them know Your encouragement.
Shine Your light on their loneliness...let them know Your presence.
Shine Your light on their doubts...reveal that You can be trusted.
Shine Your light on their sin...let them see the way back home.
Shine Your light on their fears...let them find Your strength and comfort.
Shine Your light on their lives...let them always follow hard after You.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Eternal Truth into Tender Hearts

Psalm 127

A song of ascents. Of Solomon

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.

The Israelites made the journey to Jerusalem at least three times a year to celebrate three annual feasts. As families, young and old, traveled together from the places they lived, these songs of ascent were a reminder of God's goodness and faithfulness to His children. This psalm expressed the blessing of children and the responsibility of raising them.

Children are a gift from God. What parents teach their children will stay with them always. What they fail to teach can be learned from no one else. Moms and dads can tenderly build into young minds and hearts an understanding of unconditional love, tender care, and a belief system that will provide direction for life.

I know that parents' lives are filled with exhausting demands and countless distractions. But in the midst of it all don't miss taking advantage of those God-given teachable moments. God has given parents the

Building Our Family

Psalm 127:1

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain.

- Too many parents are convinced that they must provide all their children's wants, so they build and fill houses instead of building and filling lives.
- They are convinced that little Bobby is Division I material, so they make sure he's on every team, gets every lesson and goes to every camp regardless of the sacrifices of money and time for the rest of the family.
- They are still complaining that there is no prayer in school but seldom pray with their own kids at home, other than before meals.
- They leave it to Christian schools to instill Christian values.
- They want their teens connected to church without having them attend youth group.
- They work and save so that little Susie has an all-expenses-paid four years to the college of her choice.
- It's the teacher's fault if their child doesn't make the grade.
- It's the coach's fault if their child doesn't make the play.
- They play the "I work hard to provide for my family" card instead of the "I work long and hard to fill an inner need of satisfaction and meaning" reality.
- They still believe the "Oh, it's not 'quantity time' but 'quality time'" lie.
- They "fear" social media, but still provide their children with smartphones and Instagram accounts.
- They decry the "nanny state" but build "nanny families."

- They work harder to keep their bodies fit than they do to keep their marriages strong.

As parents, we need to be more concerned with the spiritual than we are with the athletics, academics, arts, awards and appearance. Unless we are serious and intentional about building our family according to the Lord's instruction, we will get stuck with a big house filled with small, self-absorbed, and self-saturated people.

Father, I acknowledge that unless You are the architect and builder of my family, I labor in vain. Don't let me labor in vain. Help me see what we need to change and give me the courage to change it. Give me the strength to be a godly leader for my children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

God's Gift

Song of Solomon 8:8-9

We have a little sister, and her breasts are not yet grown. What shall we do for our sister on the day she is spoken for? If she is a wall, we will build towers of silver on her. If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar.

The Song of Solomon pulls no punches regarding sex. But it is in no way crude or vulgar. Through exquisite poetry, this book vividly describes this beautiful gift from God, within the context of marriage. Today's passage explains that the training for biblical sexuality begins at home. The family asks, "How can we prepare our sister for God's gift?"

If she is like a wall, we will build towers of silver on her. The city wall was strong and protected those who lived within from enemies. The tower was where the battle gear was hung. The battle armaments gave a sense of strength and security. If the young girl remained strong like a wall - refusing to give in to sexual temptations - the family would encourage and honor her virtue.

If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar. If the young woman was promiscuous - open to the advancement of men -then the family would place restrictions on her in order to protect her from danger prior to marriage.

As the young person (this instruction applies to young men as well) matures and becomes sexually aware, it is

the parents' responsibility to encourage proper behavior and restrict improper behavior. This type of interaction is not easy. It takes time and energy that only those who love a person are willing to give. This is not the description of an overly strict family but one that cares enough to do their job in teaching sexual responsibility.

Father, I pray that you will give me the courage I need to teach and train my children in the area of sexuality. I know my children will learn about sex. I pray that You would help me so that this learning takes place in a healthy way in the healthy environment of our home. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Childlike Faith

Luke 18:15-17

People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

I wonder why the disciples tried to stop parents from bringing their children to Jesus. Maybe it had to do with the value of children in that day. Maybe the disciples were trying to guard the Lord’s busy schedule. Maybe only the people who could “make a difference” were given the disciples’ approval. Whatever the reason, Jesus didn’t agree. He called the children to Himself. In fact, He said that the kingdom of God has to be received like a little child. What does that mean? I believe childlike faith has these five characteristics.

1. Children come without pride. They have nothing to prove. They come as they are.
2. Children demonstrate dependence. They can’t make it on their own. They have to depend on their parents.
3. Children demonstrate trust. They will jump off a ledge into their parent’s outstretched arms. They are certain their parents will catch them.
4. Children are open and frank. They haven’t learned to hide behind masks yet.

5. Children are sincere. Yes, they are sinners at birth. Yes, they will learn the art of manipulation soon enough. But the requests of children are straightforward and genuine.

The faith of a child. It's not just refreshing; it's required. It's sad when people get too big for Jesus, isn't it?

Father, please keep my heart childlike before You. When it comes to faith help me depend on You as a child depends on their parents. And help me demonstrate this faith to my children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Praying Purposefully

Ephesians 1:15-23

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Sometimes prayers for my children and their families become wooden and repetitive. "And Lord, help them have a great day" hardly scratches the surface for my daughters and son, their spouses, and grandchildren God has graciously given me and my wife, Lori. The apostle Paul gives us a guide that we can follow to pray more purposefully.

This passage lists nine things that we can pray every day for our children and grandchildren.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for the gift of your children (and their spouses!) and grandchildren.

Wisdom: Ask Him to give them spiritual wisdom to make godly decisions.

Know Him better: Ask God to grow them deep in their knowledge and love for Christ.

Future Hope: Pray that they live today with eternity in mind.

Glorious Inheritance: Thank God for the eternal inheritance He has in store for them.

Great power: Ask God to give them the power to live obediently.

Strength: Ask the Holy Spirit to provide strength to resist temptations.

Established in love: Pray that they demonstrate a 1 Corinthians 13 love.

Grasp the love of Christ: Pray that they know and live in the freedom of the unconditional love of Jesus.

Lord, to You who is more than able to do immeasurably more than I can think to ask, to You who is able to do even more than I could ever dream, Father, according to Your power that is at work in me and in my children - to You be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Intentional Work

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Here is a great passage for parents! Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul likens his dealing with the believers to a father's interaction with his children. We learn from this passage that there are three things parents should be doing.

- 1. Encourage.** The Greek work here is *parakaleo*. It means "to call to one's side," "to summon," "to invite." The purpose of the invitation is to build confidence and courage into the heart. Many times the word is translated "comfort." Parents, what a great reminder of what we should be doing. Let's build up our children!
- 2. Comfort.** This word means "to console." It is used in John 11 when Lazarus died. Many friends came to "console" Mary and Martha. Sometimes our children don't need more instruction or a lesson on how we handled a similar situation. Sometimes we need to replace our "walking uphill both ways in the snow" stories with sympathy. Parents, let's demonstrate needed compassion.
- 3. Urge.** This word means "to insist" or "implore." You are the parent! There are some things that you must be adamant about. Being firm is not a fault. Being

resolute is not wrong. Leaders lead...but don't miss the goal: "to live lives worthy of God." We're not talking about batting averages here. We are talking about deliberately building into our children the framework of spiritual urgency that will allow them to make an impact with their lives in their sphere of influence.

Parenting is intentional work. Let's pray that God gives us the strength and courage to lead our children well.

Father, give me a passion to be the parent You desire me to be. May I encourage, comfort, and urge my children on to be those who have a burning desire to follow hard after You. In Christ's name. Amen.

Legacy

2 Timothy 2:1-2

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Our oldest daughter calls it the “death box.” It’s a metal box that contains our birth certificates, important papers and our will. We have told Brittany, “If anything ever happens to us, be sure to go through the box.” Every once in a while she’ll ask, “Where are you keeping the death box these days?” Now, believe me, when we go, we aren’t leaving much behind, but we want to give certain items that remain to our children. However, the most important “things” we can entrust to them don’t fit in the box.

In this passage, Paul gives Timothy instruction about legacy. Paul passed on the things that he received so that the recipients could continue the “passing on” process. Timothy, Paul’s spiritual son, had heard the truth from Paul’s lips and watched it being worked out in his life. Now it was Timothy’s turn to entrust the truth to faithful and reliable people who in turn would do the same. The future of the Gospel depends on this process of entrustment.

So, parents, how are you doing? What are you passing on to your children? Your good looks? Your sense of humor? A nice little inheritance? All that is fine, but it’s temporal. Our job is to pass on the eternal. Don’t you want your children and grandchildren and

great-grandchildren to have more than the family business and the vacation home?

Lord Jesus, drill deep into my soul the conviction of what is eternally important and help me be deliberate about passing that on to the next generation. In Your name. Amen.



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