

## INTRODUCTION

1. We are currently in a series on parenting.
2. For the last three weeks I have shared with you the greatest need your child has and what you should teach your kids about God.
3. Tonight I want to look further in what we are to teach our kids.
4. With that thought in mind I want to talk about prayer.
5. Prayer is essential in the Christian life.
6. It is necessary to live; it is needful to survive and “no Christian is greater than his prayer life.”
7. It should come as naturally for all of God’s children as is crying.
8. William Gurnal says, “The child is not learned by art or example to cry, but instructed by nature; it comes into the world crying. Praying is not a lesson got by forms and rules of art, but flowing from principles of new life itself (WILLIAM GURNALL, Puritan Quotations).
9. Thought it is and should be natural because it flows “from principles of new life,” it should also be taught, not by “a lesson got by forms and rules of art,” but by example.
10. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to prayer and not only did He give them a lesson but constant examples from His own life.
11. A.W. Tozer said that “we are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God.”
12. That’s what we have to pass on to our children.

13. Not only are we to teach them about the singularity and trinity of God and our devotion to love Him with every fabric of our being but we are also to teach them how important it is to be preoccupied with God.
14. So let's begin tonight with a simple definition for prayer: Prayer is "talking to God."
15. When we pray we are talking to God.
16. When we read God's Word, the Bible, He is talking to us.
17. If we don't pray then we're not talking to Him.
18. If we don't read His Word then we don't have a clue as to what He has to say to us.
19. So in order for us to have communication with God we must talk to Him and we must read His Word.
20. This is a basic truth you need to teach your kids.
21. Before we talk about what you should teach your kids about prayer, let me focus on what you should be praying for them.
22. No matter what stage of life our children are in, the most important thing we can do is to pray for them.
23. Before we have children, while they are in the womb, after they are born and in diapers, as toddlers and teenagers or adults, our most powerful and effective tool in parenting is fervent prayer over every aspect of their lives.

24. So what should you pray for your kids?
25. As we talked about their greatest need in the first message in this series, they need to be born again.
26. So we must pray then that they would come to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
27. When should you start praying for their salvation?
28. Before they're born, after they're conceived in the womb, after they're born—all the time until you see the fruit of salvation.
29. Next we should pray that they would honor and obey us as their parents as well as those in authority over them.
30. We should pray that they “obey [their] parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Eph.6:1).
31. We should pray that they “honor [their] father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with [them], and that [they] may live long on the earth” (vv.2-3).
32. We should also pray that God would surround them with godly friends and role models.
33. Proverbs 13:20 says, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.”
34. We need to pray that they “walk with wise men” and not “fools.”
35. Because “iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another”

(Prov.27:17), so we need to pray that they are sharpened by the right kind of friends and influences.

36. Next we need to pray that the Lord would implant into their hearts a hunger and thirst for him.
37. Psalm 42:1-2 says, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”
38. We need to pray that they’re heart hungers is filled with this unfulfilled desire for God that drives them to Him.
39. We need to also pray that the Lord would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they might know Him better.
40. We cannot know God apart from His Word, so we need to pray that they desire to read and study God’s Word.
41. Next we need to pray that the eyes of their hearts would always be enlightened in order that they might know the hope to which he has called them and that they not be caught up with the hopelessness that is portrayed in this world.
42. We need to pray that they would always follow the truth and reject the lies of Satan.
43. Proverbs 22:3 says “the prudent sees the evil and hides himself.”
44. He makes sure that his feet are on the right path and runs from evil.
45. We need to pray our children fear the Lord and hate evil as

Proverbs 8:13 says, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate.”

46. Next we need to pray that they would bear much fruit for God’s glory.
47. Jesus told His disciples in John 15:5, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”
48. We need to pray that they abide in Him; that they walk by His Spirit and produce the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.
49. Next we need to pray that they would flee temptation.
50. Not only that they would see it when it comes but see the dangers associated with it and look for the way of escape that God provides knowing that He is faithful “not [allowing them] to be tempted beyond what [they] are able” (1 Cor.10:13).
51. We need to pray that they would use their gifts and talents to honor the Lord.
52. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (NKJV).
53. Next we need to pray that they would have freedom from fear as they trust in the Lord.
54. Psalm 56:3 says, “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.”
55. We need to pray that our kids trust God at all times knowing that He has not given them “a spirit of fear, but of power and of love

and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).

56. Next we need to pray that they would keep themselves sexually pure for their future mates knowing that this is God’s will, their “sanctification; that is, that [they] abstain from sexual immorality; that...[they]...know how to possess [their] own vessel in sanctification and honor” (1 Thess.4:3-4).
57. Hebrews 13:4 says, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”
58. In that regard we need to pray then that God would bring godly mates into their lives.
59. 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 says, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.”
60. Pray that they choose a mate that is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and has a life manifesting this rather than just lips that profess it.
61. Next we need to pray that they would take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ—that they would think on things

that are “true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things” (Phil.4:8, NKJV).

62. And last, we need to pray that they would become more like him.
63. Ephesians 4:24 says, “And put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”
64. In every situation, we must learn to trust in the Lord and lean not on our own understanding...and we all know that with children, there are going to be some situations!
65. So, we must realize that every blessing, every trial, and every heart-breaking event has been filtered through His hands of love.
66. We must have full confidence in God’s sovereignty.<sup>1</sup>
67. We have heard *what* we would pray for our children, let’s now ask *how are we to pray for our children?*

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<sup>1</sup>Ginger Plowman, Don’t Make Me Count to Three, (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2003). 147-50.

## I. How We Should Pray for Our Children

### A. We Should Pray Humbly

1. Ps.10:17 says, “LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear.”

That’s the only kind of prayer He hears—those that come from the humble in heart.

2. Jesus illustrated this in Luke 18:10-14

According to verse 9, Jesus told “this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt.”

Jesus says, “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. 11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

Augustine said the Pharisee was “so full of himself and his own righteousness that he stands in need of



nothing—not even from God. The Pharisee was so right in his own conceit that he had no petition whatever to place before the Lord. In all his words you may look for any single thing he asked of God and you will not find it. He went up to pray, yet he had no mind to pray, but rather to praise himself. Indeed, it is only a small part of it that he did not pray but rather praised himself; he even mocked the one who did pray.

The other man, however, kept his distance (Luke 8:13). Hear still more about the humility of the tax collector. It is but a small matter that he stood afar off, not even daring to raise his eyes to heaven. He did not dare look upwards; his conscience pressed him down, though his hope raised him upwards...all he did was beat his breast and say: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”<sup>2</sup>

William Barclay said, “The gate of heaven is so low that none can enter it save upon his knees.”<sup>3</sup>

It’s clear in this passage that humility gets God’s attention. In fact, it is only those who are, as Jesus said in Matthew 5:3, of a poverty of spirit who can enter the kingdom of heaven.

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas A. Hand, *Augustine on Prayer*, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1986). 87-88.

<sup>3</sup>William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, *The Daily study Bible series*, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975). 224.

3. An even more revealing passage is the one found in Isaiah 66:2. Here is where the Lord says to Israel what He desires from them. He says, “But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.”

What does it mean to be “humble”?

Here’s a definition from Charles Spurgeon. He says, humility is “a sense of your own unworthiness”; “an inwrought feeling of its own nothingness.” “True humility is forming a just estimate of oneself to bring oneself down where one ought to be.” “A humble man mourns over his pride daily.”

A.W. Tozer adds, “True humility is a healthy thing. The humble man accepts the truth about himself. He believes that in his fallen nature dwells no good thing. He acknowledges that apart from God he is nothing, has nothing, knows nothing and can do nothing. But this knowledge does not discourage him, for he knows also that in Christ he is somebody. He knows that he is dearer to God than the apple of His eye and that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him; that is, he can do all that lies within the will of God for him to do.”

Charles Spurgeon said, “We are never safer, never healthier, never in a better position than when we are right flat down on the ground before the cross.”

So then, “humility is honesty assessing ourselves in light of God’s holiness and our sinfulness. That’s the twin reality that all genuine humility is rooted in: God’s

holiness and our sinfulness. Without an honest awareness of both these realities, all self-evaluation will be skewed and we'll fail to either understand or practice true humility."<sup>4</sup>

## B. We Should Pray Boldly

1. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."

G. Campbell Morgan said, "I am never tired of pointing out that the Greek phrase translated "in time of need" is a colloquialism of which "in the nick of time" is the exact equivalent. "That we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the nick of time"-grace just when and where I need it. You are attacked by temptation. At the moment of assault, you look to Him, and the grace is there to help in the nick of time. There is no postponement of your petition until the evening hour of prayer. But there in the city street with the flaming temptation in front of you, turn to Christ with a cry for help, and the grace will be there in the nick of time."<sup>5</sup>

You should pray about everything—even those things you struggle with or fear.

Ginger Plowman, in her book, *Don't Make Me Count to*

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<sup>4</sup>C.J. Mahaney, *Humility: True Greatness*, (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah, 2005). 22.

<sup>5</sup>G. Campbell Morgan, *Choice Calendar Gleanings*.

*Three!* says, “Pray about little things (like a lost toy) as well as big things (like Daddy’s lost job). Tell them of God’s faithfulness in answering your prayers on their behalf...Prayer will not only draw you closer to God, but it will draw you closer to your children. Encourage your children to pray about everything. Assure them that God will faithfully meet their every need!”<sup>6</sup>

2. 1 John 5:14-15 speaks of boldness by the term “confidence” when it says, “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

### C. We Should Pray Trustingly

1. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”
2. Since we can’t please Him apart from faith, our prayers must be asked in faith. James 1:5-7 says, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.”

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<sup>6</sup>Ginger Plowman, *Don’t Make Me Count to Three*, (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2003). 151.

If we doubt God will answer our prayers, we will not pray and we will pass that on to our children.

When we pray we must trust God with what we have prayed and we must teach our kids the same thing.

They will learn more by seeing your trust in God and do the same!

D. We Should Pray Sincerely

God is interested in our integrity not our hypocrisy. To think that we can hide something from Him is foolish.

He wants us to come to Him “in truth” and not with “deceitful lips.”

1. Ps.145:18 says, “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.”
2. Ps.17:1 says, “Hear a just cause, O LORD, give heed to my cry; Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.”

Teach your kids to be honest when they pray. To be sincere. To hold back nothing and not be hypocritical.

E. We Should Pray Persistently

1. Colossians 4:2 says, “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (NKJV).
2. Rom.12:12 - “...continuing steadfastly in prayer”

(NKJV).

3. Genesis 25:19, 26 reveals that Isaac prayed for 20 years for his wife to have a baby.

Verse 21 says, “And Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived.”

Not only should we pray humbly, boldly, trustingly, sincerely, and persistently, but we should also teach our kids...

## II. What Hinders Our Prayers

### A. Unconfessed Sin

1. David said in Psalm 66:18 “If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.”

To “regard wickedness” or “iniquity” (NKJV) is to “be bent on the practice of iniquity” (Calvin).

Charles Spurgeon said, “If we tolerate the least sin, it is a burning drop in the veins of the soul.”

A.W. Tozer said, “You will never have inward peace until you have acknowledged your guilt. This is something you cannot dodge and evade, because you have a conscience and your conscience will never let you rest until you get rid of the guilt!

Guilt must be dealt with and taken away! Oh, you can be smoothed over and given a little theological massage,

patted on the head and told that it is alright, but that treatment will not take away guilt and condemnation. Sins that you thought we absolved by religion will always come back to haunt you.”

2. God told Israel in Isaiah 1:15-17, “When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. 16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless; Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.”

## B. Insincerity

Matthew 6:5 says, “And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.”

Jesus was telling His disciples, “They should not purposely position themselves in public areas so that others will see them praying and be impressed by their piety. If the love for prominence is the only motive in prayer, then, Jesus declares, the prominence gained is the only reward.”<sup>7</sup>

Charles Spurgeon said, “The bended knee is nothing, the prostrate heart is everything.”

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<sup>7</sup>William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Mt 6:5.

### C. Wrong Motives

James 4:1-3 says, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

The word “quarrels” (polemos) refers to a strong verbal or written attack.

The word “conflicts” (mache) is a specific fight or battle.

“Both words describe violent verbal disputes” (Moo).

James says these verbal disputes come from “among you.”

You have uncontrolled desires that cannot be fulfilled so you “commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.”

When they ask from God they ask out of their own lusts. James says it’s asking with “wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures” (v.3).

Selfishness will always hinder our motives when we pray. We need to teach our kids to pray that God receives the glory in what we ask for not to fulfilled our selfish desires.

John Calvin said, “Though they sought, yet they were deservedly denied; because they wished to make God the



minister of their own lusts. For they set no bounds to their wishes, as he had commanded; but gave unbridled license to themselves, so as to ask those things of which man, conscious of what is right, ought especially to be ashamed. Pliny somewhere ridicules this impudence, that men so wickedly abuse the ears of God” (Calvin's Commentaries: James).

#### D. Domestic Problems

1 Peter 3:7 says, “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered” (NKJV).

#### E. Refusing to Submit to Biblical Teaching

Proverbs 28:9 says, “One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination” (NKJV).

We should pray for our children humbly, boldly, trustingly, sincerely, and persistently. We should also teach our children that unconfessed sin, insincerity, wrong motives, domestic problems, and refusing to submit to biblical teaching hinders our prayers.

Before we close, we need to help our kids understand...

### **III. What Biblical Prayer Looks Like**

As we began tonight, I said that prayer is simply talking to God. Notice how that definition is described in Scripture:

#### A. It is Described as Bowing the Knees

Psalm 95:6 says, “Come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

B. It is Described as Looking Up

Psalm 5:3 says, “My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up” (NKJV).

C. It is Described as Lifting Up the Soul

Psalm 25:1 says, “To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul” (NKJV).

D. It is Described as Lifting Up the Heart and Hands

Lamentations 3:41 says, “We lift up our heart and hands Toward God in heaven.”

E. It is Described as Pouring Out the Heart

Psalm 62:8 says, “Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”

F. It is Described as Calling Upon the Lord

Psalm 118:5 says, “From my distress I called upon the LORD; The LORD answered me and set me in a large place.”

G. It is Described as Crying to God

Psalm 27:7 says, “Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me.”

H. It is Described as Drawing Near to God

Psalm 73:28 says, “But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Thy works.”

I. It is Described as Seeking the Face of the Lord

Psalm 27:8 - When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek" (NKJV).

## CONCLUSION

1. Are you praying for your children?
2. What are you praying for them?
3. Are you teaching them how to pray?
4. Are you showing them what hinders they're prayers when they pray?
5. Are you showing them what biblical prayer looks like?
6. Charles Spurgeon said, “If this were the last word I had to address to this congregation, I would say to you; ‘dear brethren, abound in prayer, multiply the petitions and the fervour with which you present them to God.’”
7. If you're here tonight and have not been forgiven of all your sin, “a thousand sermons would not prove [you] to be a Christian, but

one genuine prayer would” (Spurgeon).

8. Will you pray to Him now.
9. Romans 10:13 says, “for ‘WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.’”
10. If this describes you, call on Him now as we pray.
11. Let’s pray.