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Prayer is the forerunner of mercy. Turn to sacred history, and you will find that scarcely ever did a great mercy come to this world unheralded by supplication. You have found this true in your own personal experience. God has given you many an unsolicited favour, but still great prayer has always been the prelude of great mercy with you. When you first found peace through the blood of the cross, you had been praying much, and earnestly interceding with God that he would remove your doubts, and deliver you from your distresses. Your assurance was the result of prayer. When at any time you have had high and rapturous joys, you have been obliged to look upon them as answers to your prayers. When you have had great deliverances out of sore troubles, and mighty helps in great dangers, you have been able to say, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Prayer is always the preface to blessing. It goes before the blessing as the blessing's shadow. When the sunlight of God's mercies rises upon our necessities, it casts the shadow of prayer far down upon the plain. Or, to use another illustration, when God piles up a hill of mercies, he himself shines behind them, and he casts on our spirits the shadow of prayer, so that we may rest certain, if we are much in prayer, our pleadings are the shadows of mercy. Prayer is thus connected with the blessing to show us the value of it. If we had the blessings without asking for them, we should think them common things; but prayer makes our mercies more precious than diamonds. The things we ask for are precious, but we do not realize their preciousness until we have sought for them earnestly.1

—Charles Spurgeon

¹ Charles Spurgeon. Morning and Evening. "Morning, February 19," spurgeonmae.com/devotional/2012-02-19-0/

The Legacy of Prayer

What kind of legacy do we want to leave for our children and grandchildren? Often as we get older and anticipate leaving this world, we diligently make plans for what we will be leaving behind. Some people label their possessions indicating who is to receive each item after their death. Others make strategic investments calculating how much they will leave to their heirs. Most people draw up wills signed by witnesses. Some get all their photos in order, and on and on it goes.

But how often have we thought through the spiritual inheritance we want to leave our children? Do we pray faithfully not only for them, but also for their children and our grandchildren's children? What better legacy can we leave than prayers prayed for future generations? What better "mark" can we leave as we pass from this life into the next?

In this world our children face a formidable foe. Satan "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Only God has the power and authority to rescue our children from their own sinful hearts and the attacks of the enemy. But God often works through His people in His work of salvation and sanctification of the next generation. He has given us the mighty weapon of prayer to be one of our children's greatest defenses against Satan's attacks.

Though our world seeks to destroy the faith, moral integrity, and values of our children, our prayers can be an effective safeguard and hedge around them.

This is not just wishful thinking on our part, but it is anchored in the very Word of God. God has promised in James 5:16b that our prayers bear fruit—"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." This should be incredibly motivating for us! Yet in spite of this glorious promise, we often neglect to pray as we should. Why is this?

The reality is that, when we pray for the souls of our children, we are standing on a battleground. We are wrestling "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places"²

² Ephesians 6:12

...And this is hard work! We are not up to this task on our own. Only by God's grace are we able to be steadfast in prayer. So our first prayer must be for our own hearts.

Another problem in praying for our children and grandchildren is that we are easily distracted. For this reason, I have found it very helpful to pray with an open Bible. Many Scripture passages can easily be turned into prayers. By turning key ideas in a passage into prayer topics, prayer can become both focused and very powerful. As we pray Scripture, we discover God's heart as revealed in His Word and can confidently pray for God's purposes.

This booklet has been written with the hope that you will not only faithfully pray for your children but also for the generations to come. It is intended to serve as a tool to help focus your prayers. The first section uses Psalm 1 to model praying through Scripture. The second section includes other Scriptures to pray regularly for the coming generations. This is followed by 12 topics for prayer and some appropriate Bible passages for each topic. As you read the Bible, you may discover other passages that God lays on your heart for your children and their children. For this reason, some blank space has been left at the end of each topic for your own notes.

May God bless you as you strive for the faith of the next generations in your prayers,

Sally Michael

3. Love for the Word

Pray that they will have a growing desire to read the Word and a growing confidence in the truth, have wisdom to understand the Word and to discern truth from untruth, receive the Word not just in their minds but that it will have a transforming power in their hearts, and be free from deception and have a boldness in standing for biblical truth.

Psalm 1:1-3—Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Psalm 119:103—How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Jeremiah 15:16—Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts.

Psalm 119:47-48—for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. ⁴⁸I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.

Psalm 119:97—Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Psalm 119:129-136—Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. ¹³⁰The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. ¹³¹I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments. ¹³²Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name. ¹³³Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me. ¹³⁴Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts. ¹³⁵Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. ¹³⁶My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.

Psalm 119:4-20—You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. ⁵Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! ⁶Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. ⁷I will praise you with an upright

heart, when I learn your righteous rules. ⁸I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me! ⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. ¹⁰With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! ¹¹I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. ¹²Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! ¹³With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. ¹⁴In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. ¹⁵I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. ¹⁶I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. ¹⁷Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word. ¹⁸Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. ¹⁹I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me! ²⁰My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.

Psalm 119:33-37—Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. ³⁴Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. ³⁵Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. ³⁶Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! ³⁷Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.

Psalm 119:167—My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly.

- **2 Timothy 2:15**—Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**—All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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