

# Prayer Partners

FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

**Truth:78**



Dear Partner in Prayer,

*A friend of mine and of Truth78 recently shared her thoughts on praying for children who have walked away from God. I asked her to write them down for use in this quarter's newsletter in hopes of helping parents and grandparents who find themselves in this situation. May the following encourage you in the Lord as you pray for the faith of the next generation.*

You thought you knew your first-year college student, but he seems to be drifting away relationally. Raised in a Christian home, he professed Christ and was baptized, but now there's something wrong, something missing. In your parenting heart, you know the joy of the Lord is lacking in your son. After a few conversations, the reality is made clear that your son is forsaking Jesus Christ. This heartbreaking scenario has become all too common in our homes and churches. Those of us who care about the outcome of the faith of the next generation must dedicate ourselves to pray for children who are walking away from God.

## **Considerations for Parents**

As a parent, you may begin earnestly praying for your lost child, but it can take time to recognize the trauma to your own soul that needs examination before the Lord, as well. Depths of sorrow in prayer may disguise heart conditions that first need to be dealt with before effectual prayer for your child can take place. Here are a few questions you can ask to gauge the condition of your own heart:

- 1. Have I taken this troubling news as a personal failure? Do I blame myself?** Am I guilt-ridden? The Lord will help you. Turn to Him and trust in Him and His sovereignty. Even in this difficult situation, He will bring forth goodness and glorify Himself in it. God reminds us in Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Confess any known sin and receive His mercy and forgiveness. Then wait on the Lord, whose work it is to save, actively serving Him and His people. Your heart is broken for your lost son or daughter, but God will enable you to extend His grace and love to him or her.
- 2. Is my sorrow so deep I seem unable to find joy in the Lord?** Beware of a root of bitterness taking hold in your heart. When we fight for joy, bitterness cannot easily grow in us. We are warned in Hebrews 12:15 "...that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled." Ask the Lord to protect your soul from the sin of bitterness and give you His joy, even in the midst of this loss. This will also help you cultivate a thankful heart.

3. **Am I angry?** Having a child who turns away from Christ can be the heaviest burden a Christian parent will bear. Not only is there a threat of hell for a dear loved one, there is also a breaking of fellowship and disunity within the family. 1 Peter 2:21-25 reminds us that Jesus has set an example for us in suffering: “when reviled he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” When you look to Christ, you will be able to understand that fleshly anger accomplishes nothing godly.

## **Prayers for the Child**

When you have poured out your heart to the Lord and resolved to follow Him even on this unknown path, you will find that instead of self-centered prayers, your prayers are more God-centered and Spirit-filled. One pastor recently admonished parents of lost sheep to remember that we are on Christ’s mission and it is a mission of mercy and truth. Here are a few reflections on praying for lost sheep:

1. Pray that God would awaken your loved one(s) from the dead (Ephesians 2:1-5), and by grace give them the gifts of repentance, faith, and new life in Jesus Christ. Pray the promise of the covenant in Ezekiel 36:26-27: “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”
2. Ask God to give them a taste of His joy and a yearning for Him and His Word. Pray Psalm 16:11 for them: “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”
3. Pray that God would break down every barrier that has been erected against Christ in their hearts. Ask Him to protect them from harm and the snares of the devil (2 Timothy 2:22-26).
4. Pray that God would bring Christians into their lives at school, in activities and events, and at work. Ask Him to give them wise and tenacious Christian friends.
5. Pray that they will be treated with Christ-like kindness and love by Christians they encounter.

6. Pray that they would notice the glory of God displayed in the tender mention of Jesus' name by those who love Him and His Word.
7. Pray that God would give them receptive hearts and providential intersections with the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ while in conversation, or with music, the internet, social media, youtube, TV, and the books they read.

## Our Prayer for You

May the Lord give you fearlessness for the sake of the gospel as you interact with your child, along with tenderness, humility, and compassion that can draw your son or daughter closer in relationship with you and ultimately to relationship with Jesus. May God grant you wisdom to know when to speak, what words to speak, and when to remain silent. May He cause you to shine with His glory and grace so that the fragrance of Christ will be evident at all times.

We hope these reflections on praying for the lost sheep in your lives will be only the beginning of many more prayers. For more fuel for prayer, check out *Big, Bold, Biblical Prayers for the Next Generation* and *Praying for the Next Generation* from Truth78.



Thank you for committing to pray for the next generation,

**Marcia Olynyk**  
*Board Member, Truth78*

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