

Praying for your Family

Introduction

Rachel Naomi Remen wrote in her memoir, entitled *My Grandfather's Blessings*, about her strict, rigorous, and very academically focused childhood. She states her favorite part of the week was when she went to her grandfather's house on Friday. Her grandfather was a very religious man and he would discuss her week with her. After she finished detailing the weekly events he would put his hand on her head and pray for everything she had told him about. ***The highlight of her week was her grandfather praying for her.*** The saddest day of her childhood was when, at age 7, her grandfather died. She was worried there was no one left to pray for her.¹

This month we have focused on God's Design for the Family. Throughout the month we have made five points:

- 1) Worship is a family activity
- 2) The family must pass on godly wisdom that leads toward God and away from sin
- 3) Our imperfect families provide opportunity to reflect the perfect love of God
- 4) Family is a defense against societal decay
- 5) Family is a place to learn sacrificial love

To close out the month, we want to discuss praying for our families. As Paul closes out the book of Ephesians, he begins to speak about the armor of God which every Christian should wear. Notice what he says to introduce this subject.

- Ephesians 6:10-12
- We are engaged in Spiritual warfare
- Not fighting flesh and blood but wickedness in the spiritual realm
- Paul calls us to prayer (6:18)

What do we pray for?

I know I could stand up here and say, "Pray for your families" and you all would agree and think that is a good idea. While that is a good, generic reminder I would like to discuss a few more specifics. What are some things we could pray for in our family?

1. Strength to follow Godly Wisdom

- Proverbs 3:13-20
 - 3:13-14: Blessed to find wisdom; great profit
 - 3:18: Wisdom is a tree of life

Wisdom is a blessing, but wisdom not lived out give no benefit. We not only need to know but have the strength to listen to godly wisdom! Sometimes we know the wisdom God has given but our desires conflict with what he has commanded. As one secular song says (Selena Gomez's *The Heart Wants What it Wants*): "Save your advice cause I won't hear..." This is sometimes our attitude toward God's wisdom. Lets pray our family clings to wisdom and has the strength to follow through with it.

¹ Joseph Telushkin, *Words That Hurt, Words That Heal: How the Words You Choose Shape Your Destiny*, Revised Edition (New York: William Marrow, 2019), 174-175.

2. Grace to endure and purpose in our trails

- 2 Cor 1:8-9

Paul speaks of a time in his life that was overwhelming, but the lesson he was supposed to learn was to trust in God and not his own strength. Your family might be dealing with something overwhelming and exhausting right now. I know a person who has surgery's about every 3 or 4 months. A reoccurring medical condition can cause a drain on the family in so many ways!

- 2 Cor 1:3-4

Not only do we need grace to endure, but also purpose in our pain. We face situations so that we can comfort others. Pray that God provide purpose in the midst of situation. That you might be able to use your hurt to comfort another. To bear another's load. That you might have the spiritual understanding to draw closer to God in the midst of trial and help others do the same.

Song # 80: Father, Hear the Prayer we Offer

3. Fruit of the Spirit

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul gives us the fruit of the Spirit. Obviously, all of these characteristics are things we should pray to have and seek to reflect. I just want to highlight two:

- a) Patience to endure each other (big deal in a family)

- No root of bitterness (Eph 4:31; Heb 12:15)
- These can easily pop up in a family

- b) Self-control

- Prayers to stop waiting time
- Don't get absorbed in petty things

4. Ephesians 5:22-6:4

Let's highlight a few things from this section of Scripture:

- a) Honor your role in the family

- Wife (5:22)
- Husband (5:25)
- Children (6:1-4)

Let pray we fulfill our role!

- b) Be united

- Gen 2:24
- Eph 5:31

Paul connects this truth of marriage to Christ and the Church (5:32). God wants marriage to be united and he wants family to be the same way. Let pray that our marriages are united as God designed them to be.

- c) Marriage and family are a faithful witness pointing to God

- Eph 5:32

5. Delight in God's word

- Psalm 119:16-17

Pray your family learns to delight in God's word as much as this Psalmist!

6. Good Friendships

- Prov 13:20

For children and mate. Those we spend time with greatly affect us!

7. Navigate Uncertainty

- Josh 1:8-9

Face uncertainty and fear anchored and confident in the God we serve.

Praying Through Psalm 121

Praying through scripture has a long Christian tradition. There are a lot of passages you could "pray through" (all of Romans 12 which we just covered in Bible class) but let me give one illustration:

1) Realize the power of God to handle their problems (121:1-4)

Pray they will not dwell on their problems which results in stress and worry, but focus on God's ability to provide assistance.

2) Will not let your foot slip (121:3)

Pray God will keep your family spiritually steady and firmly planted in Him!

3) The Lord protects (121:5-6) from evil (121:7); Keep your soul (121:7)

The Lord handles our problems and directs our spiritual life. We want God to keep us from evil and evil people. Pray to turn away from sin and protection from those who would defame your character.

4) Daily Direction

Pray God will guard your going out and coming in (121:8). In their daily route pray God protect, encourage, and give time for reflection on Him.