

welcome to the
Altar of Grace



HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY

By Sherry Shepherd



The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

JAMES 5:16

Global Media Outreach was established on a foundation of prayer. Our team comes together daily to pray, and we often ask our community to share their joys and concerns with us. When we do, the majority of prayer requests center on one thing: family. More often than not, the concerns are related to a child or grandchild who has gone astray or left their faith entirely.

In these pages, we hope you'll find inspiration, guidance, and heartfelt prayers crafted to strengthen your family's bond of love and faith. We pray that as you use this guide, hearts will be opened, minds renewed, and relationships restored through Christ.

When a child or grandchild walks down a path that is opposite of what we know to be God's best—or completely abandons their relationship with Jesus—it can cause a lot of confusion, grief, and doubt. We wonder why. We grieve and sometimes even question our parenting abilities and decisions. ***But please know that you are not alone if you relate to this.***

As we read Scripture, we discover that sin is nothing new. The first family, Adam and Eve, chose to disobey God, willfully ignoring His instructions, convinced that they knew better than He did. By challenging His authority, they set swift, severe, and enduring consequences in motion. Sin entered the world, bringing brokenness and jealousy into their family. The consequences impacted not only them but their children's lives—and the whole of humanity.

Until we are reunited with Christ, we will face adversity. But fear not! Jesus tells us, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. MARK 11:24

THE CHALLENGE

Day 1

What do we do when our children abandon their faith, enter dangerous lifestyles, and no longer desire a relationship with Christ?

Like us, our children and grandchildren have both a sinful nature and free will. There will be times when they step away from God's teachings and make poor choices. But while we do not love their sin, we always love them.

Scripture tells us that children are a heritage (Psalm 127: 3–6), a crown of the aged (Proverbs 17:6), and a reward. The Lord knows how special our children and grandchildren are to us. Perhaps that's one of the reasons that His Word is filled with so much hope as it pertains to the prodigal child.

The prodigal son story, told in Luke, is about a young man who demands his inheritance from his father before his father's passing. He leaves his family and squanders all his money in a distant land. He becomes destitute and desperate, willing to return home and work as one of his father's servants. However, his father welcomes him back with open arms and even a celebration. His joy over the return and repentance of his child—instead of anger at his behavior—highlights the power of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

No matter the circumstance, hope is always found in the Lord, even when things don't work out how we expect. The story of the prodigal son shows that reconciliation is possible no matter how bad things are, the depth of the pain you are experiencing, or the grief gripping your heart (Luke 15: 11–32).

We, too, can have hope that rebellious, wayward children and grandchildren can return home to us and the Lord. Therefore, we should be fervent in prayer, always looking to the horizon for our child or grandchild's return.

Day 1

REFLECTION

When our sons and daughters go off on their own—assuming they are of legal age to do so—and make choices that we know will bring difficult consequences, what do we do?

We allow them to leave but never stop loving them or praying for their safe return. We don't follow after them, begging or arguing. We don't interfere in the consequences that come. Instead, we faithfully and consistently pray, waiting and watching for a change in direction and a heart shift back toward Jesus.



WHEN FACED WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

While every family situation is unique, certain situations require intervention (especially if the life of your child or grandchild is in jeopardy). The truth is, we aren't always equipped to handle every situation. However, with wise counsel comes understanding. And through prayer comes love, grace, and a commitment to what is best for our child or grandchild. If your child or grandchild is struggling with addiction, mental disorders, or any suicidal thoughts or ideation, they need your help. **This is the time to intervene and get doctors and counselors involved.**

CALL OR TEXT THE U.S. SUICIDE HOTLINE (988) FOR IMMEDIATE HELP. AVAILABLE 24/7. FOR INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES, VISIT WWW.IASP.INFO/.

Day 1

FOR FURTHER STUDY

When we don't know what to do, we should do the next best thing—turn to God, pray, and listen for His voice. His voice is always consistent with His Word. See **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18** and **Ephesians 2:10**. For the prodigal child/grandchild who has gone astray, we trust them to Jesus, speaking God's truth in love over their lives—remembering God will use this circumstance for their good. It might even become part of their testimony. **See Romans 8:28, Ephesians 3:14–15, and Mark 12:30–31.**

PRAYER FOR MY LOVED ONE

Dear Jesus,

thank you for loving my child/grandchild beyond what I could think, ask, or imagine. Your ways are high above all others. Forgive me for trying to insert myself into situations that You have under control. Thank you for giving me this child/grandchild. I ask You to protect them from evil and temptation. I pray that You open the eyes of their heart and help them to see how far from You they have wandered. I ask you to bring them back to You.

Amen.

HOW TO PRAY:

Pray for your child's return to faith:

Jesus, I ask You to help my child/grandchild desire to seek You and return to a right relationship with You again. I ask You to draw them into a personal relationship with you (Proverbs 20:11).

Pray for your child's divine encounters:

Jesus, I ask You to bring people into my child's/grandchild's life who can speak truth and love to their heart, guiding them back to You (Psalm 1:1).

Pray for spiritual awakening:

Lord, please open my child's/grandchild's heart and mind to the truth of Your Word and the reality of Your love (Proverbs 4:25-27).

THE CHALLENGE

Day 2

What do we do when our children or grandchildren choose sexual immorality?

We live in a time when so much has become hyper-sexualized—from advertisements to movies to books. But sexual sin and lust are nothing new. King David and Bathsheba's ancient story could easily be pulled from an episode of the latest television show. And it's just as pertinent today as it was then.

When King David sees Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, bathing on a rooftop, he lusts after her. Even though he knows she is married, he sends for her and sleeps with her. She becomes pregnant, and King David tries to cover up his sin by attempting to manipulate Uriah into sleeping with Bathsheba—hoping to pass his child off as Uriah's. However, Uriah is a loyal soldier and refuses to participate in marital privileges while his fellow soldiers are at war. So, King David tries another approach. He sends Uriah to the front lines of battle to be killed, and he then marries Bathsheba.

Later in the story, Nathan, David's close friend, confronts David about his sin. David realizes his wrongdoing and confesses, asking God for forgiveness. Scripture tells us that David and Bathsheba's baby dies, causing unspeakable heartbreak. But God restores David, and he and Bathsheba later have another son, Solomon, who becomes David's successor and one of Israel's greatest kings.

REFLECTION

What do we do if our children/grandchildren make poor moral choices? Despite David's sin, he remains a man after God's heart because he turned from his sin and sought God's forgiveness. God specializes in restoration and redemption. He can bring new life into a broken one. **There is always hope for your child/grandchild.**

Day 2

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Each family will have its own response to a child or grandchild who makes immoral decisions. However, our actions should be based on the age of the child or grandchild. Speaking truth, setting boundaries, and allowing consequences are all important. All decisions should be weighed carefully and sifted through Scripture, prayer, and wise counsel while never withdrawing our love. **See Isaiah 26:3-4, Matthew 22:37, and Psalm 119:37.**

PRAYER FOR MY LOVED ONE

Dear Jesus,

my heart is so heavy. Yet, You can turn any life around. I ask You to please intervene in my child's/grandchild's life so that he/she might turn from their sin and return to You.

Amen.

HOW TO PRAY:

My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes: keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh.

Proverbs 4:20-22

Pray for God to restore your child to a right relationship with Him:

Jesus, please remind my child/grandchild that You called them to stand apart from the world. Please help them to remember they are a child of the one true King (Genesis 1:27).

Pray for God to bring your child back to who He created them to be:

God, I ask that You restore my child's/grandchild's relationship with You. Draw them to their purpose in You (1 John 1:3-4).

Pray for God to help your child not be afraid to stand apart from their peers:

Lord, I pray that You remind my child/grandchild that You designed them. Please help them to remember who they are in You (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

THE CHALLENGE

Day 3

What do we do when our children or grandchildren choose differently than we imagined or planned?

No family is perfect. Families often struggle with brokenness, influenced by generational patterns of sin and behaviors we have seen modeled and which can continue to perpetuate. But that doesn't mean God can't work amidst our mistakes or misgivings. One of the most beautiful examples of this in the Bible is the story of Joseph.

Joseph was the youngest of the 12 sons of Jacob. He was his father's favorite, so much so his father gave him a special coat—a huge honor. Jacob's favoritism caused extreme jealousy among Joseph's brothers, which led to them faking Joseph's death and then selling him into slavery. Despite this, Joseph's integrity and God-given abilities benefited him. Even when imprisoned under false pretenses, Joseph's gift of interpreting dreams ultimately led him to Pharaoh's court. He was appointed vizier of Egypt, interpreting dreams that foretold seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine.

This is where the story gets exciting. Guess who comes to Egypt seeking food during the years of famine? Joseph's brothers! Joseph forgives them and orchestrates a reunion with their father, Jacob, in Egypt. Though Jacob thought Joseph was lost forever, God was working out His perfect plan: caring for the family, leading them to prosper and multiply during the years of famine until the time of the Exodus.

Despite our efforts as parents and grandparents, we sometimes fall short. But thankfully, God can turn our failures into opportunities for beauty in our children's and grandchildren's lives, just as He did with Joseph and his family!

Day 3

REFLECTION

If my children/grandchildren have distanced themselves from me, how can I ensure they choose what is good and right? How do I restore our broken relationship to a healthy one?

Seek wise counsel. There is much to learn from talking to a pastor, a faith-filled counselor, or a trusted friend. Relationships can be healed through time, amends, and relating in love.



FOR FURTHER STUDY

One of the most challenging things as a parent/grandparent can be watching our children/grandchildren make decisions that differ from what we had hoped or planned. Even if their choices aren't sinful, it can be tough to see them create a life for themselves in contrast to what we had imagined. Yet, God can (and does) use those choices to lead our children/grandchildren in the direction He has for them. **See Joshua 1:9, Ephesians 4:29, and Matthew 18:19-20.**

Therefore, we must stay in God's Word daily to stay aligned with the Lord and how He desires us to live. The Bible also tells us that there is victory in seeking wise counsel. When we are struggling and don't know what to do next, listening to our children/grandchildren and attending counseling and prayer can help tremendously. **See John 13:34-35, Numbers 6:24-26, and John 3:16.**

PRAYER FOR MY LOVED ONE

Dear Jesus,

my heart hurts. Words fall short at times, and I am so very discouraged. Please heal any broken places in my relationship with my child or grandchild and bring healing to our family. Put Your loving arms of protection around my child or grandchild. Lead them in the way they should go and keep them from harm.

Amen.

HOW TO PRAY:

“For by wise guidance, you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory. Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the gate, he does not open his mouth.

Proverbs 24: 6-7

Pray for God to heal strained relationships:

Jesus, thank You for being my constant friend and the great healer. I ask that You heal those parts of my relationships where my sinful nature has caused issues (Exodus 15:26).

Pray for God to restore what was lost:

Jesus, You are the great counselor. Thank You for Your promise to restore what the locusts have eaten (Joel 2:25).

Pray for God to put your child/grandchild on the path of righteousness:

Jesus, I ask You to direct my child/grandchild in the way they should go. Please help me to be open to Your plans and what You have for them (Proverbs 5:21).

Finally, hold onto hope; God’s love is relentless, and His power to redeem is boundless. Trust that in His perfect timing, your child will find their way back to Him.

*“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” **Isaiah 40:31***