

BUILDING THRIVING FAMILIES: Praying for My Family part 1

READ plan

July 2, 2023

DAY 1 PRAYING FOR FAITH

Scripture: [Hebrews 11:1](#); [Ephesians 1:15-23](#); [Ephesians 2:8-10](#);

Reflection: Prayer is a fundamental component of the Christian faith. God, in His abundant love and grace, has invited every person into relationship with Him and has opened the lines of communication so that all who believe may not only receive His word but also speak to Him. Often, we pray for ourselves. Sometimes, we pray for others. Usually, we wonder if we're saying the right things! In this 2-part series, we want to provide a starting place for learning to pray for our families.

Every family looks different. The word family might bring to mind the people you lived with growing up or the people you're living with now. You might imagine the family you want to have someday. You might groan inwardly thinking about the hard people you currently call "family." Perhaps you call people "family" who aren't related to you. Whoever they are, they are *your* family, they are a part of *your* life, and God invites you to pray for them.

Ask Yourself:

-Who is your family? This may take a while but write down all their names!

-Who are the members of your family that do not yet have faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to pray for God to strengthen the faith of your family members who are Christians. Ask God to draw the other family members to the faith. Use this prompt to get started-

Father, family was your idea! For that, I am thankful. Today, I have all these names and faces in my mind. Some of them make me smile. Some of them make me sad. For all of them, I want your best for them! Thank you for the gift of faith in the lives of these family members... Remind them of Your immeasurably great power and care for them... For those who are far from You, who need the hope of Jesus, I ask that You draw them to Yourself. May I be a light and witness to them that You are good, that You are great, and that You alone can save us from hopelessness, despair, sin, and death... Amen.

DAY 2 PRAYING FOR LOVE

Scripture: [1 John 4:19](#); [Ephesians 3:14-21](#); [Philippians 2:1-4](#)

Reflection:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

For many Christ-followers, this verse describes how they were drawn to Jesus. The immense love of God enveloped them and caught them up in mercy and grace, rescuing them from their failures and bringing light to the darkness. God loves you so much. God loves every member of your family so much! It is

because of the love of God that we are able to express love, even to those who are difficult to like. Every person in your family needs to know they are loved, both by God and by you.

Ask Yourself:

- How would you describe your love for a favorite family member?
- How does that love compare to God's love for you and for that family member?
- Who in your family needs to know God's love? Who needs to see or hear your love?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to pray for each family member to know the love of God. Also, pray for your family to learn to love one another well. Use this prompt to get started-

Father, your love for us is so great! That you would sacrifice yourself for us is so hard to understand. We don't deserve it! Yet, you've given us this precious gift. When I look at my family, help me to remember how much You love them. When I look at my family, I want to love them. I want to learn to love them well. Lord, I need your Spirit to give me a heart full of love, compassion, and wisdom... Amen.

DAY 3 PRAYING FOR PEACE

Scripture: [John 17:20-23](#); [Romans 12:18](#); [Ephesians 4:31-32](#); [1 Peter 4:8-10](#);

Reflection: Like love, peace is something that we all desire. If everyone could just get along. If we could all just get over small quarrels and see the bigger picture. If we all believed in one another, had each other's best interests in mind, were slower to get angry, could be less likely to hold a grudge... But, alas, we are human, after all. Flawed. Broken. Sinful. The best we can do is practice forgiveness, work toward unity, and pray for peace. All while leaning on God's love for us and the power of the Spirit to do impossible things!

Ask Yourself:

- Where are there broken relationships in my family that I can begin to mend by asking for forgiveness?
- What do the best days of peace and unity look like for my family?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to pray for peace, forgiveness, and unity in your family. Use this prompt to get started-

Jesus, you started praying for unity among your people before you went to the cross. You must have known how hard it would be for us! Peace, forgiveness, unity- these are really hard. Here are the hard parts of my family... Jesus, I want to be humble enough to admit when I'm wrong, to ask forgiveness when I contribute to the brokenness. You have a big heart for this family; help my heart to love like yours and to work for peace... Amen.

DAY 4 PRAYING FOR FRUIT

Scripture: [Psalm 139:14](#); [Colossians 1:3-14](#); [Galatians 5:22-26](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:11](#)

Reflection:

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

Every single person in your family is uniquely created by God for good work, for good purpose. Their whole self- personality, talents, gifts, education, experiences, skills, etc.- make them unique, worthy of respect and honor. Many of them may not be Christ-followers yet, but you can still identify their unique talents and encourage them as they learn and grow and work and create. Everyone wants to know they their life has worth and meaning. Everyone thrives under encouraging words. By praying for your family to do good work, live lives of purpose, and bear good fruit, you will inevitably find ways to support and encourage them.

Ask Yourself:

- What are some of the unique talents and skills you see in your family members?
- How can you share your unique gifts with your family?
- What do love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, patience, gentleness, and self-control look like in your life? How does the fruit of the Spirit flow from you to your family?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to pray for the Holy Spirit to bear good fruit in your family. Use this prompt to get started-

God, You are so creative! As I think about my family, I see your creative hand in each unique person... Holy Spirit, fill each member of my family with a deep sense of meaning and purpose, knowing that you gift and empower them to do all kinds of good work. Open my eyes to see how I am uniquely called to serve my family... Give me wisdom to encourage my family in their work and talents...

DAY 5 A PRAYER OF GRATITUDE & BLESSING

Scripture: [Numbers 6:24-26](#); [Proverbs 17:17](#);

Reflection: For a few days, you have been intentionally thinking about and praying for your family. Prayer is not easy. Family is not easy. Thankfully, God is for you and for your family. When we pray for people, God softens our hearts toward them. God opens our eyes to see His good work in their lives. He gives us hope for restored relationships, healed hurts, and redeemed hearts.

Ask Yourself:

- How has your attitude changed toward your family as you have prayed for them?
- What have you learned about God as you prayed for your family? What have you learned about yourself?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to express gratitude for your family. Use this prompt to get started-

Lord, this family thing is not easy, but I am thankful that family is your good design. Thank you for these family members who love me well... Thank you for those who encourage me... Thank you for the ones who have taught me so much... Lord, I ask that you would bless each one...

*The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.
Numbers 6:24-26*

Take a Next Step: Continue praying for your family! Look for “Praying for My Family part 2”

Find more resources at www.whoisgrace.com/READ.

BUILDING THRIVING FAMILIES: Praying for My Family Part 2

READ plan

July 9, 2023

DAY 1 Who is THE enemy?

Scripture: [Isaiah 14:12-15](#); [2 Corinthians 11:14](#); [1 Peter 5:8](#); [John 8:44](#); [2 Corinthians 4:4](#)

Reflection: In week 1 of this series, we started learning how to pray for our families. This week, we want to call out the Enemy in our families and pray that he would not have as much effect on them. This enemy wants to separate our families, break apart our team, and distract us from the mission to go where God is sending us. But who is this enemy?

The enemy is Satan and his demonic forces. Christian tradition teaches that Satan was a fallen angel who wanted to take the place of God and rule in his place, based on Isaiah 14. He first shows up in the Garden of Eden and tempts Eve to disobey God and eat the fruit of the tree God told them not to eat from. We learn that he tries to disguise himself as an angel of light. He continues to deceive us and encourages us to think that going against God's plan is going to be better. Eventually, we wake up from this deception and realize that our life and family are in ruins. In reality, Satan came only to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). He will do anything, even lying and murder, to work to pull us away from God and each other. If he is doing all these things, what hope do we have?

We know that God is more powerful than Satan. We know that one day Jesus will return from heaven and come down and destroy Satan forever. He will bring about perfect peace and a new world that will be free from Satan. Until that time, we need to be aware of Satan and how he works in our families so that we can stand firm in faith and be united in the purpose God has for our families. When we pray for protection against Satan's work in our families, we can know that God is faithful and powerful to respond.

Ask Yourself:

- How have I seen Satan's work affecting my family?
- How does knowing who Satan is help me to pray for my family?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to inform you about who Satan is and to pray specifically against his work in your family. Use this prompt to get started-

Lord Jesus, thank you that you are more powerful than Satan's work in my family. Please protect us from his lies and deception... Reveal to me situations where he is working and give me the strength to turn things around... Amen.

DAY 2 The enemy's tool: Discord

Scripture: [Romans 12:17-18](#); [Matthew 18: 15-17](#); [Matthew 18:21-22](#); [Ephesians 4:1-3](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31-33](#)

Reflection: Over the next 3 days, we will examine the tools that Satan uses to try to destroy our families. The first one is discord, which means "some lack of agreement or lack of harmony between people...that

can lead to active conflict and quarreling as a result”, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. We all know how this one feels: we get a pit in our stomach, or a tensing of our muscles when someone says something off. As the tension builds, it often leads to conflict or avoidance. In American culture, Satan uses our independent spirit and consumerism to create discord between members of a family. We are told it is all about ME, so why should I care about what someone else thinks, feels, or needs? Satan amplifies this and encourages it to keep us from forgiving, reconciling, and getting back on mission.

But God’s way is better. He encourages us to live peacefully with everyone and to forgive seventy times seven, as many times as necessary. Families are to live in unity and work to uncover and resolve discord. Praying over discordant situations is an essential step toward unity and forgiveness. When we see a family that takes this seriously and is working faithfully to resolve conflict and root out discord, they look different. They are a team that enjoys each other! It is contagious and is a witness to the truth of God, and can help bring others to know Him!

Ask Yourself:

- What are some of the things that Satan uses to create discord in your family (i.e. missed expectations, gossip, etc.)?
- Is there anyone in my family that I need to seek to resolve discord with and seek forgiveness and unity?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today’s scriptures to pray against discord and for unity and forgiveness in your family. Use this prompt to get started-

Father, help me to see where discord is happening within my family...give me the courage to go talk to them about how to resolve it...Please bring forgiveness and unity within my family...protect us from discord and help us to see it early and address it quickly.... Amen.

DAY 3 The enemy’s tool: Distraction

Scripture: [Hebrews 12:1-2](#); [Philippians 2:12-13](#); [Philippians 3:12-14](#); [1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#)

Reflection: The second tool that the enemy uses in our families is distraction. Satan wants us to look away from the goodness and guidance of Jesus to the flashy things off to the side of the road. These flashy things could be entertainment, sports, phone usage, work, and social media. In and of themselves, many of these things are neither good nor bad, but they can serve Satan by distracting us from building relationships with and meeting the needs of our family. He wants to keep us busy and running from one thing to the next instead of building deep and good relationships with our family. He is distracting us from helping each other grow in faith and reminding each other of the work and power of the gospel in our lives.

But God wants us to keep our eyes focused on Jesus. He encourages us repeatedly to be faithful and look to him, and he will even give us the strength to do this! As we pray, we can keep our heart, mind, and focus fixed on Him, and through prayer, we can more easily see the things that distract us and turn back to Jesus.

Ask Yourself:

- What are some of the common distractions for me? For other members of my family?

- How can I prayerfully set aside these distractions and work towards building better relationships with my family?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to pray against distraction and for you and your family to stay focused on Jesus. Use this prompt to get started-

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the ways that I am distracted from my relationship with you...help my family and me to keep our eyes focused on you and on building strong, healthy relationships with each other...thank you for how you continue to call me back to you... Amen.

DAY 4 The enemy's tool: Devastation

Scripture: [Job 1:8-22](#); [Romans 8:18-39](#); [2 Corinthians 4:7-18](#)

Reflection: The third tool that the enemy uses in our families is devastation. This refers to the things that happen in our lives that are often out of our control, such as a medical issue, a car accident, or a natural disaster. It could also be the fracturing of a marriage or the scorn of a child toward their parents. These things leave us feeling devastated, like there is no hope and that we are alone. Families can be torn apart from one devastating moment, and Satan loves when this happens.

But God is always present with us in our suffering. He is in control of every situation, and he can redeem everything for his glory. It is so hard to remember these truths in the moment, but he is not afraid of our feelings, and he welcomes us to come to him in prayer when we are devastated, and he will care for us and carry us through those times. If a family isn't currently in this type of season, we can pray for preparation and for the strength to turn to the Lord in those times.

Ask Yourself:

- How have I responded to devastating circumstances in the past? How has Satan used them to try to destroy my family?
- How can I remind myself and my family that God is in control even when it doesn't feel like it?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to pray for times of devastation and for you and your family to turn to Jesus. Use this prompt to get started-

Lord God, I know that you are in control even in times of suffering...help my family to trust you when we feel devastated by... remind me of the promise of heaven and your presence with us in these circumstances... Amen.

DAY 5 Our fighting response: Stand firm

Scripture: [Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

Reflection: In all of the schemes and tools of Satan, we learn in Ephesians that the best way to fight back is to stand firm. This seems counterintuitive, but Jesus is the one who fights our battles. He defeated sin on the cross, and He will return again for Satan's final defeat! Jesus asks us to stand firm in the truths of who God is and who we are in Him as our way to fight against Satan. Paul gives us the visual of the Roman soldier's armor but changes the pieces to represent elements of our faith that help us to stand

firm and offer us protection. Let's pray that we and our families would put on the armor of God and stand firm in our faith, in the hope that we can see victory in our lives and that our families would grow stronger together and closer to the Lord.

Ask Yourself:

- How do the elements of the armor of God help my family to stand firm against Satan's attacks?

Pause to Pray for your family: Use today's scriptures to pray that your family would put on the armor of God and stand firm against the enemy's attacks. Use this prompt to get started-

Lord Jesus, we need your protection against the enemy through the armor of God to stand firm...may we put on the belt of truth, knowing who you are and who you have made us to be...and put on the helmet of salvation, always remembering the victory in Jesus... Amen.

Find more resources at www.whoisgrace.com/READ.