

Praying ^{the} Scriptures for Your Children

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

A Study Guide for
Small Group Discussion
and Personal Reflection

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“Don’t talk to your kids about God.”

I exchanged a look with the woman sitting next to me at the young mother’s Bible study. Where was the teacher going with this?

“Don’t talk to your kids about God,” she repeated, “nearly as much as you talk to God about your kids.” Ahhh. *That* made more sense. And over the years, as our four children became teenagers and then young adults, the value of that advice grew right along with them.

My husband and I wanted our kids to love Jesus. We wanted to showcase God’s attributes—his faithfulness, his mercy, his power, his love—so our children would know him. We wanted to talk about his Word, like Deuteronomy 6:6–8 says, sitting at home and walking on the road, from early in the morning until late at night.

We wanted to talk about God all the time—and there were plenty of days when our kids might say that we did.

But there were also plenty of days when they did not want to listen. Plenty of days when it felt like our children were out of our reach, emotionally and spiritually, even if they were sitting just across the dinner table. Plenty of days when all our best parenting wisdom fell flat.

The answer, those days, wasn’t to talk louder, or more. The answer was to talk to God, the One who, as the Bible puts it, “bends down to listen.”¹

And he did.

God heard our prayers.

And even though his answers have not always looked like what we expected (or wanted, sometimes), I can say with confidence that God has been faithful. He has been good. He has done “immeasurably more” than all we could have asked or imagined.²

And friend, he will do the same thing for you.

I’m so glad you’ve joined me for this little study, whether you’re working your way through the book on your own, or talking (and praying) through it with friends. The sections in this study guide are not long; each chapter includes only five questions or discussion prompts. You can do them all at once, spread them out over a week, or skip some altogether—whatever works for you.

¹ Psalm 116:2 NLT.

² Ephesians 3:20.

(I had four kids in six years. I get it.)

You'll also have a place to write a prayer the end of each chapter, using prompts from the book, insights from the video teachings, or the Holy Spirit's voice as your guide. Write your prayer in the space provided in these pages, or use your own notebook or prayer journal to record your petitions.

Again, do what works.

And as you do, come expectant. The more we get to know God through the pages of Scripture, allowing his Word to shape our perspective as well as our prayers, the more our desires will line up with God's plans. The more we will sense his steadying hand. The more we will know that he is carrying us, just as he carries our children, close to his heart.

"May the Lord cause you to flourish, both you and your children." (Psalm 115:14)

With much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop for the "J" and a small dash at the end.

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@JodieBerndtWrites



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He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Isaiah 40:11

³ My favorite prayer journal (and the one you'll see in the videos) is the Growth Book (www.growthrootsco.com).

Introduction: How to Use this Book

(Note: These questions correspond to the Introduction in Praying the Scriptures for Your Children. If you are using the video series available at JodieBerndt.com, please watch the Introduction video by yourself or with a discussion group.)

For Reflection and Discussion

1. “God’s giving is inseparably connected with our asking.” Andrew Murray based those words on his understanding of what Scripture says. Pick one (or more, if you’re feeling ambitious!) of the following verses and share how it enhances your understanding of prayer:
 - o James 5:13–16
 - o 2 Chronicles 7:14
 - o Matthew 7:7
2. Do you agree with Mark Batterson’s claim (page 3) that the Bible wasn’t meant to be read through but prayed through? How might praying through the Bible change how you approach or use Scripture?
3. Read Isaiah 55:8–11. How do these verses shape your perspective on prayer, both in terms of what you ask for and how God might answer? What do they reveal about the power of praying the Scriptures?

4. Does the idea that we can make idols of our children resonate with you? Ask God to reveal any areas in your parenting where you might be allowing your children—their accomplishments, their failures, their future—to take center stage in your heart. Confess any places where you have allowed pride, worry, or fear to replace your trust in the Lord, and rejoice to know that he will forgive you (1 John 1:9)!

5. Do any of the common hindrances to prayer—not sounding good enough, not knowing “how” to pray, not wanting to “bug” God with the little details of your family’s life—feel familiar to you? Do you wonder if prayer really works? (It’s okay to be honest!)

Read any (or all) of the following verses and tell how they encourage you:

o Psalm 116:2

o Hebrews 4:15–16

o Romans 8:26



Poised for Prayer:—

Use what you've discovered from these questions, the book's Introduction, or the video to write your own prayer. Ask God to open your heart to receive his grace for the places where you feel like you've fallen short and also to help you grow in your love for, and understanding of, prayer.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

Part 1: Praying for Your Child's Faith

(If you are using the video series available at JodieBerndt.com, please watch Session One: Praying for Your Child's Faith by yourself or with a discussion group.)

Chapter 1: Praying for Your Child's Salvation

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Julie, Mollie, and Barbara (pages 13–14) came from very different backgrounds and had very different expectations and experiences. Do any of their stories remind you of your own faith or parenting journey? Are there places where you struggle with a sense of shame or inadequacy, or with the idea that you are not doing “enough” to shape your kids’ faith? How do the following verses encourage you? How might they impact how you pray?
 - o John 6:44
 - o Philippians 2:13
2. If you had taken my survey (page 15), how would you have answered the question I asked: “What do you want God to do for your children?”
3. Page 18 features several verses from the Bible, including Isaiah 54:13, Joel 2:23–26, and 2 Peter 3:9. As you pray for your child’s relationship with the Lord, which of these promises resonates most powerfully for you? Write it here, and spend a few moments asking God to fulfill it in your family’s life.

4. Colossians 4:2 says, “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” Where have you seen God at work in your children’s lives? Reflect on his faithfulness and, if you can, share one or more ways he has answered your prayers.

5. One of the best ways to build your own faith and equip yourself for doing God’s work (including prayer!) is to memorize Scripture. As you work your way through this study, consider setting a memory goal for yourself (one verse a week? one a month?), and then record the verses you’re learning in your prayer journal or a notebook so you can revisit them often.

Not sure where to begin? Here’s a verse that’s not hard to remember (even the reference—“12:12”—feels like God put the hay where the sheep could reach it):

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer (Romans 12:12).



Poised for Prayer:—

As you think about your child's faith, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 21-22 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

(1 John 5:14–15)

Chapter 2: Praying for Your Child to Love God's Word

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Psalm 119:105 says God's Word "is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." The former provides visibility for things up close; the latter allows us to see what's ahead. Can you think of a time when a verse or a passage in Scripture provided direction or wisdom for your life, or revealed something you needed to see?

2. The Bible says that the devil prowls around, "looking for someone to devour." Do you believe Satan is alive and active today? That he is real? How might a knowledge and love of Scripture equip your children to spot Satan's schemes, withstand his attacks, and provide protection for their lives?

3. What do you think when you hear the word obedience? The word carries a negative connotation for many people, evoking images of having to do something we don't want to do, or following a command or instruction that will limit our freedom. But obedience to God's Word has just the opposite effect. Read one or more of the following verses and share how they enhance your understanding:

- o 2 Timothy 3:16–17

- o Psalm 119:32

- o John 15:9–10

Poised for Prayer:—

As you pray for your child to love God's Word, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 31–32 and weave them into a prayer.

Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

As for God, his way is perfect:
The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.
Psalm 18:30

Chapter 3: Praying for Your Child's Gifts

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–7. Consider your child(ren). What unique gifts and talents do they have?
2. How might these gifts or abilities be used—as Scripture says—for “the common good” (v. 7)? How might they manifest themselves in negative ways? Ask God to help your children recognize their gifts and use them to bless and encourage others. (And as you see evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in your kids’ lives, let them know it!)
3. Read Jeremiah 1:4–8. When did God decide what gift to give Jeremiah? What was Jeremiah’s initial response to God’s call on his life? What did God promise him (v. 8)? How do these verses encourage you as you think about your child’s gifts and how God might want to use them?
4. In a world where parents can easily become captivated or consumed by a child’s talents or giftedness, what can you do to keep your focus on both the source of these blessings (James 1:17) and their purpose (Ephesians 4:12)? How can you encourage your children to use their gifts for God’s glory and for others’ good?

5. The Bible reveals a wide variety spiritual gifts (see, for instance, Romans 12:4–8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8–10). “All these,” Scripture says, “are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”⁵ How might that verse give your children a sense of purpose or destiny? How might it protect them from the comparison trap or from feeling envious of someone else’s gifts or abilities?

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:11.



Poised for Prayer:—

As you consider the gifts God has given your child(ren), choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 40–41 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others,
as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:10

Chapter 4: Praying for Your Child to Promote God's Kingdom

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Brandon and Eddie's story (pages 42–45) is one of my all-time favorite answers to prayer. Brandon grew up and continued to live out Ephesians 5:15–16, making the most of opportunities to share God's love with his classmates, his friends, and—today—his coworkers. God's answers often unfold long after we finish praying. Can you think of a time when God answered one of your prayers in a way that went “far more abundantly” (Ephesians 3:20 ESV) beyond anything you asked for or imagined?
2. The Bible commands us to “go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.”⁶ As you read about Hudson Taylor, Jim Fraser, and their mothers (pages 46–47), does the idea of your child sharing the Gospel inspire you? Frighten you? Both? Ask God to help you trust him with your children—whether going into “all the world” means sharing Christ's love with a next-door neighbor or with people on the other side of the globe.
3. Even the youngest children can be Christ's ambassadors.⁷ Use the discussion prompt and the verses on page 269 to explore this idea with your kids, and record any insights that might help you pray for them to promote God's kingdom.

⁶ Mark 16:15 NLT.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:20.

Poised for Prayer:—

As you pray for your child(ren) to promote God's kingdom, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 50-51 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

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We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Part 2: Praying for Your Child's Character

(If you are using the video series available at JodieBerndt.com, please watch Session Two: Praying for Your Child's Character by yourself or with a discussion group.)

Chapter 5: Praying for Wisdom and Discernment

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Read James 3:17 and list the attributes of wisdom that this verse highlights. How might one or more of these traits help you respond wisely to a situation you are currently facing? How might they equip you to help your children know what to say, think, or do?
2. The Bible says, "Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do!"⁸ Can you think of a time when your child demonstrated wisdom or discernment? Did you affirm that? Ask God to give your child wisdom this week—and be prepared to celebrate when he answers that prayer.
3. "The reason godly wisdom is so important is that it opens our minds to the way God works and allows us to respond to life with God's perspective" (page 60). Is there an area in your parenting where you need godly wisdom right now? Do you worry that you might have "blown it" by something you said or did? James 1:5 says we can ask God for wisdom, and that he gives "generously to all without finding fault." Ask God to open your eyes to how he might be working, and trust him to give you the wisdom you need.

⁸ Proverbs 4:7 NLT.

4. Is there a relationship or circumstance where your child needs godly wisdom? Use the discussion prompt and verses on page 259 to talk about it. And if you want a child-friendly prayer card on this topic, “When You Need to Know What to Do” is one of the free bedside prayer cards you’ll find at JodieBerndt.com.

5. The book of Proverbs, which is divided into 31 chapters, includes hundreds of short insights about what it looks like to live wisely and well. Turn to the chapter that corresponds to whatever day of the month it is today (if you are reading this on October 17, for example, read Proverbs 17). Record any verses God uses to speak to you.



Poised for Prayer:-

As you ask God to give your children wisdom, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 63-64 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 1:5

Chapter 6: Praying for a Heart for Service

For Reflection and Discussion

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word “servant”? How do Christ’s words in Matthew 20:26–28 change or enhance your perspective
2. “Having a heart for service means you get excited about seeing other people flourish” (page 67). How might you come alongside a friend or coworker to help them succeed? Consider sharing this definition with your children and encouraging them to identify an opportunity to serve a neighbor, a sibling, or a classmate this week.
3. Opportunities for service can be inconvenient or hard. Read Luke 1:26–38. How did Mary respond to the angel’s news? Record any specific things she said, along with anything you imagine she might have thought. Ask God to give your children a heart like Mary’s, willing to serve—even when doing so means risking their reputation, changing their plans, or putting someone else’s needs ahead of their own. (See Philippians 2:1–4 for more insight.)

⁶ Mark 16:15 NLT.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:20.

4. The Bible exhorts us to have the same attitude as Jesus did when it comes to serving others.⁹ Have there been times (like when my daughters unloaded the dirty dishwasher, page 71) when your children have tried to be helpful but it actually made life harder for someone? Next time that happens, remember to commend them for their *attitude*, even if their *accomplishment* isn't so praise-worthy. (And if you want to know what sort of attitudes God values, see Galatians 5:22–23 and look for opportunities to affirm these attributes in your kids' lives.)
5. Serving others can be exhilarating—and exhausting (especially when you don't feel like your efforts are appreciated or you can't tell that they are making a difference). Is there an area where you find your strength faltering, or where your children struggle to do the right thing? Read Galatians 6:9 in at least three different Bible translations (visit BibleGateway.com to see a host of options), and share how this verse encourages you.

⁹ Philippians 2:5 NLT.



Poised for Prayer:-

As you ask God to give your children a heart for serving others, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 73–74 and weave them into a prayer.

Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

Hebrews 6:10

Chapter 7: Praying for Kindness and Compassion

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Colossians 3:12–15 lists nine positive attributes God wants to develop in our characters. Pick one of these traits and share how you see it being manifested in your child's life.
2. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3–4. Where have you experienced God's compassion and comfort? How has that equipped you to comfort others? How might you encourage your children to rely on God in their own hard places and to look for ways to show kindness and compassion to others?.
3. Going out of your way to show kindness and compassion can be inconvenient, awkward, and costly. Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37) with your children. Why didn't the Levite and the priest help the injured man? What do you think motivated the Samaritan to be so kind? How does 1 John 3:17–18 add to your understanding?

4. The Bible says we are made “in God’s likeness.”¹⁰ How might teaching your children to see God’s image in other people equip them to demonstrate kindness and compassion? Compare what you read in 1 John 3:17–18 with what God says in James 3:9–10. Do you think words matter as much as actions?
5. It’s been said that kindness is like a muscle: the more we exercise it, the better we are at it. If you don’t see yourself as a naturally kind or compassionate person (or if your kids could use a little help in this area), ask the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of kindness (see Galatians 5:22) in your lives and be alert to the opportunities God gives you to “work out.”

¹⁰ James 3:9



Poised for Prayer:—

As you ask God to produce kindness and compassion in your children, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 83–84 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

Chapter 8: Praying for Self-Control, Diligence, and Self-Discipline

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Read 2 Peter 1:5–8. Practically speaking, how might things like self-control and perseverance contribute to productivity? What do you think it means to be “ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”?
2. Why might praying for your kids to be caught when they do something wrong be better, in the long run, than praying they never do anything bad? How does the fact that one of God’s names is “Redeemer” (Isaiah 47:4) enhance your understanding of how this prayer can work?
3. Disciplining our children often takes courage and a willingness to be unpopular (especially when other parents wink at sin). Reflect on one or more of the following verses. How might they equip you to make hard calls in your kids’ lives?
 - o Proverbs 19:18
 - o Proverbs 5:22–23
 - o Hebrews 12:11

Poised for Prayer:—

As you ask God to equip your children with things like self-control, diligence, and self-discipline, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 94-95 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:11

Part 3: Praying for Your Child's Safety

(If you are using the video series available at JodieBerndt.com, please watch Session Three: Praying for Your Child's Safety; by yourself or with a discussion group.)

Chapter 9: Praying for Physical Health, Safety, and Security

For Reflection and Discussion

1. God created angels for many purposes, including our protection. How do the following verses encourage you as you trust God to take care of your children?

o Psalm 90:11–12

o Exodus 23:20

o Hebrews 1:4

2. It can be easy to wonder what God is doing when our children are sick or hurting. In what ways might Susan's experience (pages 101–102), along with the blind man's story in John 9:1–3, impact your understanding and shape how you pray?

3. The Bible says God does not change, that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.¹¹ How do stories like God's protection of Moses as a baby or Daniel as a teenager equip you to pray for your children's safety and protection?¹² Are there any similarities in their stories to things your kids might be facing today?
4. It's been said that God's wise and redeeming love are not incompatible with bad things happening in your life. Can you think of a time when God turned what looked like a tragedy into a triumph?
5. "We can't always see God's hand, but we can trust his heart." Do you agree with those words (page 107)? In your own experience, what attributes of God have been particularly helpful in terms of providing an anchor for your trust or a shield against worry and fear as you pray for your kids?



Poised for Prayer:—

Choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 108-109 and weave them into a prayer for your child's physical health, safety, or sense of security.

Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous;
you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

Psalm 5:12

Chapter 10: Praying for Spiritual Protection

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Have you ever prayed for your child's *spiritual* protection? (If you've ever prayed the Lord's Prayer, you have.) See Matthew 6:13 and explain what that verse means to you.
2. Read the following verses. How do they shape your perspective on praying for protection from evil? What do they say about the effectiveness of our prayers in thwarting Satan's schemes?
 - o Ephesians 6:10–12
 - o 1 Peter 5:8
 - o Luke 22:31–32
3. C. S. Lewis (page 111) pointed to two “equal and opposite errors” we can make when it comes to our beliefs about demons. Do you lean toward either of these ideas? What has contributed to your understanding of who Satan is and how we can respond to the dark threats we cannot see?

4. If you're familiar with Hannah's story, you know that taking her son Samuel to live with Eli the priest at the temple was a bit dicey. Eli's sons were wicked fellows who spent their time "ripping off the people and sleeping with the women who helped out at the sanctuary."¹³ As you raise your own children in an increasingly dicey world, how do Hannah's words in 1 Samuel 1:27–28 strengthen your faith? Are there any particular phrases in her prayer (1 Samuel 2:1–10) that resonate with you?
5. Read Ephesians 6:10–18 and consider the purpose of each piece of armor (as described on page 116, or in any commentaries or study notes you might have). Think about the hard things your children are facing right now, or that you can envision unfolding in their future. How might the armor of God equip them to "be strong in the Lord" and take their "stand against the devil's schemes"?

¹³ 1 Samuel 2:22 MSG



Poised for Prayer:—

As you pray for your child's spiritual protection, choose two or three verses from the prompts on pages 118–119 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:7

Chapter 11: Praying for Your Child's Identity and Emotional Well-Being

For Reflection and Discussion

1. "A child's sense of self-worth, their feelings of love and acceptance, and their overall emotional well-being . . . have more to do with their identity in Christ than anything else" (page 121). Do you agree? What can you say or do to let your children know they belong to God and he is crazy in love with them?
2. What about you? Do you struggle to believe you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" and that nothing you've ever done or could ever do will disillusion God about who you are or diminish his love for you? Read the following verses and ask God to help you live in your identity as his *Beloved*.

o Psalm 139:1–14

o Romans 8:38–39

o 1 John 3:1

3. Bitterness and anger can eat away at our emotional well-being, whereas a having a forgiving spirit opens the door to emotional freedom. Which attitude do you model for your children? How would you explain the link between forgiveness and freedom to a child? Do you encourage your kids to be quick to forgive?
4. Our children will face rejection, disappointment, bullying, and any number of other threats to their emotional well-being. How might having a certain knowledge of their identity as God's "special possession" equip them to enjoy lasting peace and security, even in the midst of temporary pain?¹⁴ What can you do to help foster this sense of identity?
5. Use the discussion prompt on page 257 to talk to your children about their place in God's family. Choose one of the verses in the "What God's Word Says to You" section and write it on a card to help your family learn it by heart. If you want a child-friendly prayer card that can help your kids know how much they are loved, visit JodieBerndt.com to access the colorful "You are Loved" card in the collection of Bedside Prayer Cards.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 2:9.



Poised for Prayer:—

As you pray for your child's identity and emotional well-being, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 128-129 to ask God to let them know how much they are loved. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp
how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17–19

Chapter 12: Praying for Kids in Crisis

For Reflection and Discussion

1. What stands out to you about the Shunammite's story in 2 Kings 4:8–37? How might you have handled a similar situation? (You can use Video Session 3, pages 130–131 of the book, or just your own Bible to shape your answer.)
2. *Experiencing God* author Henry Blackaby says that what we do in a crisis—how we decide to respond—reveals what we believe about God. Do you agree? If you've ever weathered a crisis, what got you through the storm? If you've ever watched another Christian navigate a hard season well, how did their faith-filled response impact you?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. How might acknowledging your weakness or inability to “fix” things in a crisis equip you to depend on God? How might it open the door to feelings like freedom and peace instead of anxiety, frustration, or fear?

4. Read Job 42:2. How does this verse encourage you with in your family is facing right now? Write this verse here or in your prayer journal and try to memorize it as a safeguard against worry or panic, now or whenever the next crisis presents itself. (Seriously. When you wake up in the middle of the night worried about whatever “it” is, repeat Job 42:2 to yourself. Thank God . . . and then go back to sleep.)
5. Consider what, specifically, the Shunammite woman did in response to her family crisis. Which of the action steps on page 137 feels easiest, or most natural, for you? Which one(s) would be hard? Where (or who) is your “place of faith”?

¹⁴ 1 Peter 2:9.



Poised for Prayer:—

As you ask God to protect your children (and help you trust him) in a crisis, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 139–140 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

Call on me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will honor me.
Psalm 50:15

Part 4: Praying for Your Child's Relationships

(If you are using the video series available at JodieBerndt.com, please watch Session Four: Praying for Your Child's Relationships by yourself or with a discussion group.)

Chapter 13: Praying for Your Child's Relationship with Friends

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Author Chuck Swindoll says, "Close friends become the people you emulate." Consider your children's friends. Are you grateful for how these relationships are impacting your kids? Concerned about them? What can you do to identify and nourish life-giving friendships in your kids' lives?
2. "God rarely meets our expectations when we pray; he exceeds them" (page 144). How has God exceeded your expectations? If he was to do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20) in your child's friend group, what might that look like? What would make you say, "THAT was God"?
3. Can you think of a time when you had to wait for God to answer your prayers? What happened during the waiting period? Looking back, what benefits can you see?

4. Read Mark 2:1–12 and picture yourself in the scene. What do you think the paralyzed man was thinking? What motivated his friends? As a bystander in the crowd, what would have been your reaction? Has a friend ever gone above and beyond on your behalf, or on behalf of your children? If so, briefly describe what happened.
5. Do you find yourself asking God to help your child be a good friend to others, or are you more apt to pray that he/she will have good friends? What is one thing you can do to encourage your child to be a good friend to someone this week? Read Matthew 7:12. How might putting this verse into action help prevent loneliness?

¹⁴ 1 Peter 2:9.



Poised for Prayer:-

As you pray about your child's friendships, choose two or three verses from the prompts on pages 149–150 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17

Chapter 14: Praying for Your Child's Relationship with Siblings

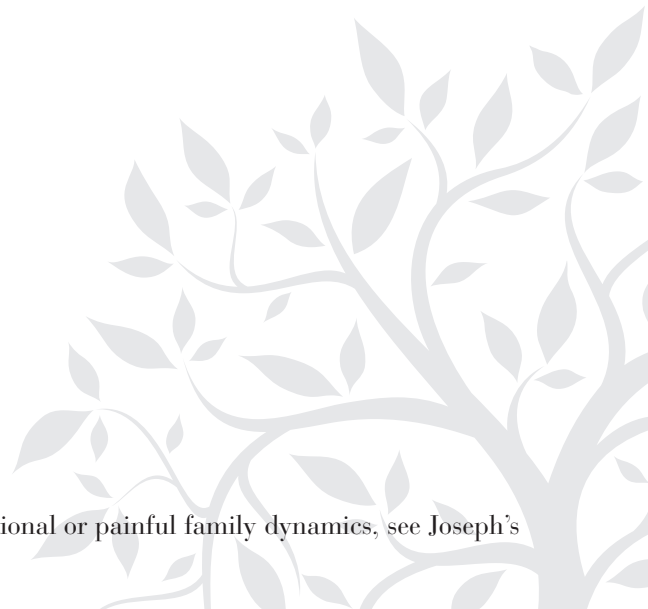
For Reflection and Discussion

1. Read Matthew 20:20–28. What is your gut reaction to the mother's request? Do you see yourself—or your desires for your children—in her? How does knowing that the disciples argued about stuff like seating arrangements encourage you as you regard your own family dynamics?
2. Given that Jesus would have to suffer and die before he came into his kingdom, do you think James and John and their mother had any idea what they were asking? How does their story—including Christ's reply—enrich your understanding of how God works in answer to our prayers?
3. In many families, some kids are more compliant or cheerful than others and—in any given season—it can be easier to “like” one child more than another. (It's true, even if nobody talks about it.) If that's your family dynamic right now, what can you do to guard against showing favoritism? How can you let each of your children know they are loved?¹⁵

¹⁵ For more information on showing and receiving love in different ways, see *The 5 Love Languages of Children* by Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell

4. How might challenging sibling relationships be valuable in terms of shaping a child's character? How does knowing that God is the Redeemer in every family—nuclear families, blended families, single-parent families, you name it—equip you to trust God to bring about good things in your children's lives?¹⁶
5. Do your children pray for each other? Don't beat yourself up if you answered "no"; sibling prayer is not a common practice (or at least it wasn't in our house, when the kids were growing up and fighting over who got to sit where in the car). But do think about ways you can encourage your kids to love and support one another through prayer. Prayer jars or baskets (where family members put in a request and pull out someone else's), family group chats or text threads for older kids, and even the Happy-Hope game (see page 250) can take what might sound intimidating (or even impossible) and make it doable. Even . . . fun.

¹⁶ For further study on how God can bring good out of even the most dysfunctional or painful family dynamics, see Joseph's story in Genesis 37–50.



Poised for Prayer:—

As you pray about your child's sibling relationships and ask God to create a climate of unity and love in your home, choose two or three verses from the prayer prompts on pages 161-162 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

Psalm 133:1

Chapter 15: Praying for Your Child's Relationship with Teachers and Coaches

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Does your child have a teacher whose methods you don't particularly like? What do you think of the way Ned and Drew (page 168) responded to their coach? How might an attitude of humility foster better communication? How might it equip you to honor Christ?
2. Read Colossians 4:6. What do you think it looks like to have words that are "full of grace" and "seasoned with salt"? How, specifically, might you put this verse into practice as you talk with your child's teachers or coaches? How might you help your children understand what this looks like in the classroom?
3. The Bible says we should seek the peace and prosperity of the city where we live (even if it's a place we never wanted to be), and that we should pray for our city, because "if it prospers, you too will prosper."¹⁷ How might you apply this verse to a school? How can you and your children invest in the lives of teachers and coaches to help them prosper?

¹⁷ Jeremiah 29:7.

4. Read the following verses. How might they help you appreciate the job your child's teachers and coaches do? How can they help you pray?

o Psalm 139:1–14

o Romans 8:38–39

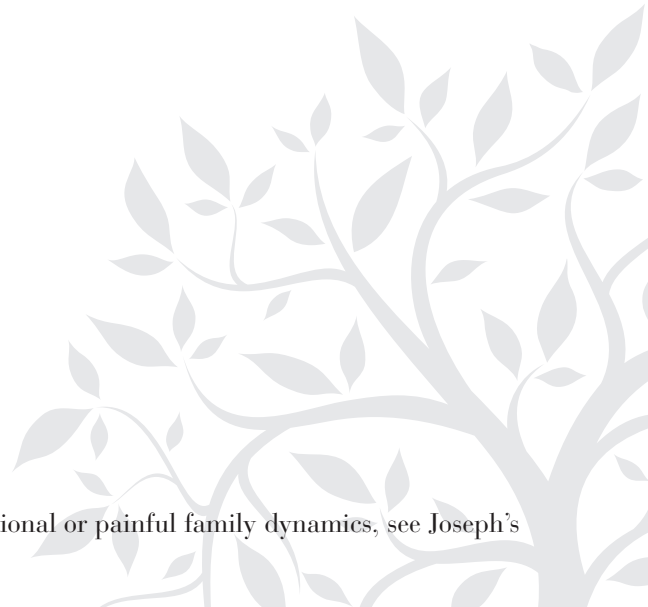
o 1 John 3:1

5. As a teenager, Daniel found himself in a “classroom” that neither supported nor encouraged his faith. Read Daniel 1 and jot down any verses that can help you pray for your children as they go off to school. For example:

-Verse 4 – May they have aptitude for every kind of learning, be well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve.

-Verse 9 – Give them favor in the eyes of their teachers.

¹⁶ For further study on how God can bring good out of even the most dysfunctional or painful family dynamics, see Joseph's story in Genesis 37–50.



Poised for Prayer:—

Choose two or three verses from the collection on pages 172-173 to add to the prayer prompts you found in Daniel 1 and weave these words into a prayer for your child's relationships with teachers and coaches. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned...

Titus 2:7–8

Chapter 16: Praying for Your Child's Relationship with You

For Reflection and Discussion

1. The Bible is bursting with instruction and insight about how parents are to treat their children (and vice versa). Why do you think the parent-child relationship is so important to God? How has having children shaped your relationship with your heavenly Father?

2. Some people associate obedience with negative things: restricted freedoms, unpleasant duties, and even harsh punishments for those who disobey. And yet the Bible says that obeying our parents comes with a *positive* promise. Read Ephesians 6:1–3. What's the promise? Have you seen the link between obedience and enjoyment played out in your own life—either when you honored your own parents, or when your kids honored you? Share an example if you can.

3. It's clear that God wants children to honor, respect, and obey their parents. But parents have responsibilities too. What do the following verses say:
 - o Deuteronomy 6:6–7

 - o Ephesians 6:4

 - o 2 Corinthians 12:14

4. “It’s a good thing I’m not perfect,” says author Lisa Robertson in *The Path of Life*, “because then my children would be tempted to worship me.” How might letting our kids see our failings—as well as our prayerful dependence on God in the midst of our imperfections—help shape their own faith or their willingness to rely on the Lord?

5. Are there days (or even seasons) in your parenting journey when you wish you could have a do-over? Words you wish you could un-say? Times when you worry you’ve totally ruined your kids? Pick one or more of the following verses and reflect on God’s love for you, as well as his power to restore and redeem:

o Romans 8:1

o Joel 2:25–27

o Isaiah 48:17



Poised for Prayer:—

As you trust God to help you build a strong, healthy, and loving relationship with your children, choose two or three of the verses from the prompts on pages 183–184 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents.

Malachi 4:6

Part 5: Praying for Your Child's Future

(If you are using the video series available at JodieBerndt.com, please watch Session Five: Praying for Your Child's Safety by yourself or with a discussion group.)

Chapter 17: Praying for Your Child's Use of Technology

For Reflection and Discussion

1. From a parenting perspective, what do you think about the “easy everywhere” nature of technology? Does it scare you? Does it complicate your parenting? Are you excited by the benefits technology affords (accessing information quickly, staying connected with friends and family members, etc.)?
2. Have you established guidelines or rules for your kids' screen use? What factors shaped your thinking about these safeguards? How might Philippians 4:8 provide a framework for how your family thinks about, and uses, technology?
3. What have you done, or what can you do, to make your home a place where off-line creativity and conversation can flourish?



4. Phones, computers, and other gadgets will undoubtedly color our children's future. How might your family use technology to strengthen faith, build character, promote health, and enhance relationships? Share any specific ideas that come to mind

5. Think about your own social media use. Does it interfere with your opportunities (or your willingness) to talk or play with your children? How do your scrolling habits impact your emotional or mental state? Ask God to show you any attitudes or habits that might be akin to "secondhand smoke" (page 195), and trust him to help you put technology in its proper place.



Poised for Prayer:—

As you pray about your child's use of technology, choose two or three verses from the prompts on pages 197–198 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:5

Chapter 18: Praying for Your Child's Marriage

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Do you pray for your child's eventual marriage partner? If so, what are you asking God to do or provide?
2. Read the account of Abraham's servant finding a wife for Isaac in Genesis 24. Why do you think he prayed as he did (verses 12–14)? Do you think it is wrong to be this specific with God?
3. It's been said that "more is caught than taught." If you are married, how do your children see you treat your spouse? If you are a single parent, how might you help your children develop a positive view of marriage?

4. Proverbs 18:22 says, “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.” Clearly, God regards marriage as a blessing. But the Apostle Paul was a single man. What does he say about his marital status in 1 Corinthians 7:7? How might singleness be a gift from God?
5. In today’s culture, it can be easy to look to human relationships to provide a sense of fulfillment, identity, and belonging. What can you do to prepare your children to look beyond singleness or marriage and ground their identity and self-worth in Jesus rather than in the love or acceptance from another person?



Poised for Prayer:—

It's never too early to pray for your child's eventual marriage, or to ask God to bless their future spouse as he or she grows. Choose two or three verses from the prompts on pages 209–210 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

Marriage should be honored by all.
Hebrews 13:4

Chapter 19: Praying for Your Child's Management of Time and Money

For Reflection and Discussion

1. "The Bible contains more than 2,300 references to money and possessions, and Jesus talked about money and money management more than any other single issue" (page 213). Why do you think the way that we handle our money matters so much to God?
2. Do you agree with Ron and Judy that every spending decision is a *spiritual* decision (page 214)? How might you communicate this principle to your children? How does the idea that "God owns it all" (see Psalm 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 29:14) shape your perspective on spending? On tithing?
3. Whether you are talking about money or time, there will always be unlimited ways to allocate limited resources. What can you do to equip your children to make wise decisions about how they use these things as they grow? Are there "big picture" principles you can use to help your kids know what to prioritize?

4. In Psalm 90:12, Moses prays, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” This request suggests that time management does not happen naturally; it has to be taught and learned. Every child is different (some love calendars and to-do lists, others operate well with jobs and rewards, etc.); brainstorm ideas about how you can teach your children the value of time and how to use it wisely and well.

5. Read Ephesians 5:15–17. Some translations tell us to “make the most of every opportunity”; others say make “the best use of the time.” What might that look like in your child’s life? How important do you think it is for your children to spend time with God? How important is it for them to see you making that a priority?



Poised for Prayer:—

How our children manage time and money matters to God. Choose two or three verses from the prompts on pages 219-220 and weave them into a prayer for your children to handle these resources wisely and well. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

[illegible]

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

1 Timothy 6:18

Chapter 20: Praying for Your Child's Purpose in Life

For Reflection and Discussion

1. "Our job is to equip them; God's job is to call them." What do you find freeing about Susan's perspective (page 226) on preparing our children to fulfill their future purpose? What do you find challenging?
2. Think about your children and how they are wired. Are there any particular gifts, talents, interests, or personality traits you can envision God using to shape their future career or ministry opportunities? Ask God to show you your children through his eyes, and record your impressions.
3. As you endeavor to align your desires for your kids with God's plans for their lives, which of the steps on page 227 is hardest for you to do? Which one(s) come easily?

4. Have you ever crafted a family mission statement? If so, what is it? If not, use the information on pages 228–229 to help you develop one and record it here. Don't worry about making it perfect; you can always revisit your statement later and make changes. And if your kids are old enough, solicit their input so they will have a vested interest in your family vision and goals.

Family Mission Statement:

5. Think about the way your family spends time and money—your activities, your friendships, your entertainment, etc. Look at your calendar or your schedule this week. How do the things you are pursuing align with the vision and goals you have for your family? Are there things you should add? Activities or relationships where you might want to cut back? Prayerfully commit your calendar, your finances, and your relationships to the Lord, and trust him to fulfill his purposes in your family.



Poised for Prayer:—

Job 42:2 promises that God can do all things and that no purpose of his can be thwarted. As you pray for your children's future, thank God for the ways he has already accomplished his purposes in their lives. Choose two or three verses from the prompts on pages 230-231 and weave them into a prayer. Write your prayer here or in your prayer journal, and plan to return to it in the weeks to come to see how God is answering your request.

Heavenly Father...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Conclusion

(If you are using the video series available at JodieBerndt.com, please watch Session Six: Praying the Scriptures WITH Your Children by yourself or with a discussion group.)

Building a Prayer Legacy

For Reflection and Discussion

1. How would you describe your spiritual background or legacy?
2. Read Deuteronomy 6:10–12. What do these verses indicate about God’s ability (and willingness) to provide a heritage for us, even if we did nothing to deserve it? What do they say we need to do when God blesses our families?

3. Regardless of how comfortable you are with prayer or how familiar you are with the Bible, you can teach your children to depend on God's promises as they use Scripture to help shape their prayers. Choose one of the free resources available at JodieBerndt.com—monthly prayer calendars, coloring pages, bedside prayer cards, lunchbox cards—or any of the prayer topics or Bible character studies you'll find on pages 257–281, and set aside a time to share this material with your children. (And if what you picked doesn't resonate with your kids, don't be discouraged; just try something else. Teaching kids about the Lord can be like the “done” test for spaghetti: you keep throwing pieces against the wall until something sticks!)

4. Go back through the pages in this study guide. Review the prayers you wrote here or in your prayer journal. Reflect on any ways you have experienced God's faithfulness. Write a prayer of thanksgiving (use the following page or your journal) and date it. And then, as your children grow, be alert to opportunities to keep pointing them toward God's goodness, power, and love!



Date: _____

[illegible]

Psalm 78:4