

**PRAYERS FOR**

# **OUR NATION'S FAMILIES**

*AN 8-DAY DEVOTIONAL*



**ABSTINENCE CLEARINGHOUSE**



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## PRAY FOR PARENTS TO BE WISE AND ENGAGED

*Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. - Psalm 127:4*

We now have a generation of young people who are not only being taught to rebel against their Creator, they are being indoctrinated in our nation's public education system to redefine freedom as the ability to live any way they choose without consequences. We have specifically seen this ideology represented in radical sex education initiatives.

**It is God's plan that the honor of passing on the truth about life and how it begins should come from a child's parents.** Teaching children about sex is never a teacher's role. Although the teacher is, in theory, endowed with the parents' authority to educate their children, there are certain things that only parents have the authority or right to discuss with their children: sex is chief among those things. A teacher violating that boundary and having those discussions with children usurps the role of parents who are the ultimate trusted authority figure in that child's life.

Whether or not your own parents were proactive in teaching you about development and healthy relationships, it remains your God-given responsibility to guide and direct your child's life. Deuteronomy 11:19 says, "Teach them to your children, talking about them as you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." **God would not give parents this duty without equipping them.** God's Word holds all the knowledge needed to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). It is the revelation of a God who has infinite knowledge and is abounding in truth. God's Word presents an accurate and comprehensive picture of children, parents, family life, values, training and discipline—all you need to be equipped for the task of parenting.

If you are hesitant to talk openly with your child about reproductive anatomy and related bodily functions, recognize that the pause you are experiencing may just be overwhelming awe in recognizing how wonderful God's design is. Through a husband and wife, as one flesh in the covenant of marriage, God brings new life into the world. There is certainly nothing shameful or wrong about the subject, but it is important to know how God addresses life, love, marriage and children in Scripture.

The way you live out purity in your own life speaks volumes to your child. You show your child, by your manner, dress and speech, the level of virtuous behavior you expect from them. When the time comes, you should be the one to explain reproductive parts and the way they operate. Do not put off these discussions with your son or daughter. **Starting these conversations early provides the best chance for your child to receive information in the proper Biblical context.**

Conversations about sex and development are not "one size fits all" conversations. There is no formula, and each child is different. Honor each of your children, recognizing that some may be further along than others in their emotional development. The biggest need is that you are prepared for conversations when questions and opportunities arise.

Radical sex education attempts to change moral codes to match behavior rather than change behavior to fit a fixed moral code. At its core, the agenda of radical sex education promotes using graphic material and explicit language to teach highly sexualized content, starting in kindergarten.

Parents are to be the primary sex educators of their children. Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." **Pray that God would equip you to be your child's first, and most trusted, source for conversations surrounding sexual integrity and relationships.**

Pray for parents to be engaged in the lives of their children. Pray for parents to rise up and be pro-active in joining school boards and other decision-making positions in an effort to protect children.



# PRAY FOR PROTECTION OVER THE EYES, EARS AND MINDS OF CHILDREN

*Do not grant the wicked their desires, Lord; do not let their plans succeed. – Psalm 140:8*

Purity is a message that culture is not communicating with young people. Discussing difficult topics with your child early provides the best chance for your child to receive information in the proper Biblical context. **Look for natural opportunities to teach your child to identify the lies culture teaches.**

If you are watching a movie or TV show that portrays a couple living together outside of a marriage relationship, press pause and talk about that lifestyle choice. If you are in the car and a song comes on the radio that is demeaning towards others or uses offensive language change the station and embrace the opportunity to talk about the issue discussed in the lyrics. If you see a commercial with an immodestly dressed person on the screen, turn off the TV and talk to your child about the message that the individual is portraying by what they are wearing. What are some consequences that could result from communicating that message? Is the outfit he or she is wearing encouraging respect from and for others?

As you engage in conversations with your child, **be prepared to answer difficult and sometimes unexpected questions.** A thoughtful, age-appropriate answer to your child's question is better than not answering at all. If a child is asking a specific question, chances are they are ready to hear an age-appropriate answer, though there are exceptions. Most children become even more curious when a parent does not offer an answer to a question. The child will likely go looking for an answer elsewhere. For that reason, a parent must always be prepared to respond to challenging questions: take a deep breath, gauge your facial expression and think through a thoughtful response. If necessary, let your child know you need to wait until their other parent is present, or for a chance to gather more information to fully respond to their question. Then make sure to set a time to come back together and continue the conversation.

**There is no specific age to address difficult topics, and each child is different.** Recognize that a level of sheltering and protection is warranted in a young child's life. St. John Paul II called this time the latency period, stating that during this stage most questions do not require extreme detail or direct answers.

While it is important to protect young children from hearing or seeing too much too soon, many children are not offered that protection. In today's world, even parents who are proactive in teaching online safety to children will be confronted with unforeseen circumstances online. The U.S. Department of Justice states, "Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible by so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions." According to the American Psychological Association, the average age a child is exposed to pornography is between eight and ten years old. **With technology so readily available, many children are unintentionally exposed to harmful content.**

If your child has been exposed to pornography:

- Do not blame your child or yourself.
- Be sure to acknowledge that this situation is not his or her fault. Despite your child's curiosity, he or she likely was not seeking the reality of what pornography is.
- Be a team. Use terms like "we" and "us" when discussing your child's experience.
- Seek professional counseling for your son or daughter if needed.

As you commit to praying for children who are exposed to harmful content through radical sex education and pornography, pray for Christ-like wisdom to rule and reign in the hearts of parents as they engage in difficult conversations. Whether a child is online or in a classroom, may God graciously extend protection over the young hearts, minds and souls of children in our nation.

### PRAY FOR GODLY FRIENDSHIPS AND THE COURAGE TO STAND AGAINST PEER PRESSURE

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! – Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

When you think of people who have spoken into your personal life, you will likely come to find that their influence was significant because they told you what you needed to hear, not what you wanted to hear or what would make you happy. **Their willingness to speak truth, despite the tension it could cause in your relationship, was a gift.**

In 2 Samuel 11, David, the king of Israel, hit a low point. He had an affair with Bathsheba, a married woman. In an effort to cover his tracks after learning she was pregnant, David called Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, home from the battlefield in hopes that time with his wife would offer an explanation for her pregnancy. But Uriah, being loyal to his comrades on the battlefield, told David that he refused to eat, drink and be with his wife during a military campaign. When Uriah returned to battle, David had Uriah put on the frontline, resulting in his death.

David took Bathsheba as his wife and moved on. But the Lord was displeased and sent Nathan to confront David (2 Samuel 12). Speaking to David's roots as a shepherd, Nathan told David the story of a poor man who had a single lamb that he took pride in and treated like family. One day a rich man who had a large flock of sheep received a visitor. Rather than offering one of his own sheep, the rich man took the poor man's prized sheep to feed his guest.

David was immediately outraged by Nathan's story. He declared that the rich man should die and pay four times over for the lamb he stole. A realization set in as Nathan responded to David's anger saying, "You are the man." Seeing the parallels of his recent sin, **David repented saying, "I have sinned against the Lord."**

It took a man like Nathan for David to realize he had done wrong. But Nathan did not stop there; he spoke truth into David's moment of conviction, reminding him that while there would be judgment, the Lord had done away with his sin. What a beautiful picture of Gospel-centered friendship built on conviction of sin and an understanding of the Lord's great mercy. Shortly after his meeting with Nathan, David wrote Psalm 51, a beautiful psalm of repentance and praise to God.

Who is the Nathan in your own life? Who is willing to call you out when you sin and do not see your own need for repentance? Thank that person today and pray that your children also develop meaningful relationships that encourage Christ-like behavior. **Pray for godly relationships and for friends that are not too insecure or nervous to say when something is wrong.** Pray for "Nathans" to be placed in their school, job, future college and beyond.

May our children be marked with a boldness that seeks justice for the moral standard that God has given us. We pray our children join with David when he writes in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

### PRAY FOR PARENTS OF ADULT CHILDREN

*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. - Colossians 1:9-12*

When children leave the nest, parents can unexpectedly experience fear and anxiety. Even years after children have left home, parents can find themselves worrying about their adult children. That fear, anxiety and worry can be rooted in a lack of faith. Romans 10:17 says that "...faith comes from hearing the message, and the message that is heard is what Christ spoke."

God can calm our fear when we spend time in the Word and pray passages of Scripture for our children. When it's time for adult children to leave the home, our weapon of choice must be prayer. In the absence of your daily physical presence with your adult children, inevitably resulting in reduced ability to counsel and guide them, fully commit yourself to support them through the power of prayer (Ephesians 6:18). When we choose to pray in this way, we can know without a doubt that our prayers align with the will of God for them.

Here are passages that you can begin praying regularly for your adult children:

#### **Ephesians 1:17-19**

Pray that God would grant your children the Spirit of wisdom and revelation of Him, that the eyes of their hearts would be opened so that they will know and cherish the hope to which He has called them; the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints; and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in their lives, in accordance with the working of His mighty strength.

#### **Proverbs 4:23**

Pray that your children would guard their hearts diligently as everything we do and say flows out of our hearts. Pray that your children would be compelled to live out Philippians 4:8 where it says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Whether your child is single, in a relationship or married, pursuing purity is a lifelong journey.

#### **Colossians 1:9-12**

In Colossians, Paul prays specifically that those in the church at Colossae would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Why does he pray this? So that they will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in their knowledge of Him. Pray as Paul did that your children would be strengthened with all power, endurance and patience with joy.

#### **Hebrews 10:23-24**

We all want our children to be leaders that champion God's truth in a way that points others to put their faith in Jesus Christ. Pray that your children's words and example encourages others to love and good deeds. May they encourage other believers as we await His return.

### PRAY FOR WOMEN AND MEN EXPERIENCING AN UNEXPECTED PREGNANCY

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. - Psalm 139:1-6*

Alone in her room one night, Emilie sat in shock staring at a dozen positive pregnancy tests. Her entire future was about to change. Emilie, still not wanting to believe the overwhelming evidence that she was actually pregnant, decided to visit a Pregnancy Resource Center in her area for one more test. **She went alone, scared and uncertain of her next steps.**

Hundreds of questions circled through her head as she waited to hear the results: What if I really am pregnant? How will I tell my mom? What will all my friends think? What will the kids at school say? The client advocate shared the news of her positive result with compassion and empathy. Even with all the love and support that was given to her, she left the center unsure of what decision she was going to make regarding the life of her unborn baby.

After a great deal of thought and prayer, Emilie chose life for her baby and within weeks she began attending the *Life Skills Class* offered by the pregnancy resource center. After Emilie gave birth to her precious little girl, she was able to finish high school surrounded by a support system of family and friends.

Abortion is the greatest threat to the American family, as life begins at conception and abortion ends that life. According to Guttmacher Institute, **women under the age of 19 make up 12% of abortion patients each year, and about one in four women will have an abortion by age 45.\***

Emilie was blessed to have the support of family and friends and the opportunity to contact her local Pregnancy Resource Center for help. However, not every woman experiences the same level of love and support.

Pray that strength and courage will abound in the hearts of women who experience unexpected pregnancy. Pray for God's peace and presence. **May an appreciation for the life He created be instilled in the hearts of expectant mothers and fathers.**

Pray for the women who experience coercion to have an abortion from a significant other, parent or friend. May they know God's love and mercy. May God grant the restoration of relationships and the reunification of families.

**Pray for wisdom for those working in Pregnancy Resource Centers who are frontline responders in defending life.** May they be filled with compassion and wisdom as they meet women like Emilie in times of uncertainty. May women who are considering their pregnancy options feel empowered to choose life for their unborn children and may the Gospel of Jesus be made known that they might know repentance, mercy and peace.



### PRAY FOR OUR NATION'S LEADERS

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. – 1 Timothy 2:1-4*

#### **Pray that city, state and national leaders would be filled with wisdom, courage and peace.**

- May our government officials be granted the courage and stamina needed to steward the power of the office they represent for good. Pray that our government leaders will represent their constituents well, courageously upholding biblical values and policies.

#### **Pray for policies and legislation that protect and defend children.**

- Reach out to legislators in support or opposition of laws that impact the safety of children, education and parental rights. Pray for conviction to rule in the hearts of those acting in a manner that is contrary to God's Word and ask God to grant boldness to believers in positions of power. Pray for godliness to be the central point for policy, and for followers of Christ to recognize that their ambassadorship and submission is to represent Christ's kingdom above all things.

#### **Pray for government leaders and their families.**

- Oftentimes, a commitment to serve constituents means sacrificing large amounts of time with family. For leaders who are splitting time between home and their state capital or Washington, D.C., relational stress and public press can take a toll. Pray that government officials and their families would seek Christ's strength to sustain them each day.

#### **Pray for relationships that leaders have with others.**

- A leader's success is largely dependent on relationships they build with others. Pray that God would guide conversations and open doors to create new, unforeseen connections. Pray that our nation's leaders would feel the urgency of the Gospel message and be bold in sharing a reason for their hope.

According to the Pew Research Center, **almost 90% of the United States Congress claims to pursue Christianity.** Whether they practice their faith or not, the knowledge that individuals around the country are praying for them likely serves as a great encouragement. Consider writing or emailing your city, state or national representatives today. Share that you are praying for their staff and family. If you feel led, write a prayer of encouragement.

## PRAY FOR CHILDREN WITHOUT A STRONG PARENTAL FIGURE, IN FOSTER CARE OR LIVING IN AN ABUSIVE HOME

*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. – James 1:27*

As the church, we are called to learn to do good, seek justice, help the oppressed, defend the orphan and plead for the widow (Isaiah 1:17). For Christians living in America, adoption and foster care create a significant avenue for discipleship. Ultimately, the relationships formed offer an opportunity for children to see the Gospel lived out in the homes of believers. **Faith, forgiveness and love are modeled as each family member functions in relation to the other in the midst of the day-to-day activities.** In the mundane of everyday living, a child can tangibly see Christ's love demonstrated.

Children must be led into adulthood. **In order to pursue Biblical virtues and behavior, children must see these characteristics put into practice.** A child who is adopted or placed in the foster care system at 5 years old will someday be a 19-year-old. Children who have experienced significant trauma will need the support and encouragement of a family throughout life. The need for children to have role models and positive relationships is great.

Do you know someone who has made the commitment to protect or care for children in need? Encourage them today. Express your gratitude for their willingness to love sacrificially and follow the Lord's example as He has adopted us as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5). **For Christians, the process of earthly adoption is grounded in the reality of our heavenly adoption.** Ask how you can pray for them and the children they are bringing up to love the Lord.

Pray for adults caring for children in foster care who have experienced trauma at a young age. It takes courage and sacrificial love to care for and invest in young hearts. Ask God to grant peace and protection to children who have been abused and are without the support of a trusted adult. Pray for hearts to be opened to the hope of the Gospel. May they come to know the Lord as a good and perfect Father.

Pray for the children in foster care whose families are reconciling generational hurt and for children undergoing difficult reunification processes. May God grant wisdom in the courts and to those in the legal system defending children from harm.

Pray for the men and women who open their home to children in foster care. Pray that the emotional toll would be a catalyst to cling to Christ as their only source for peace and joy. **Thank God for the sacrificial love He has so graciously given.**

In John 14:18, Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you." We are the orphans rescued by God through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Ask the Lord how you should act as a "doer of the word" (James 1:26-27) and be compassionate towards children without hope. In light of what Christ has done, how can you advocate for children in our nation?

# PRAY FOR THE SALVATION OF PRECIOUS SOULS AND BOLDNESS TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. - Romans 12:2*

Despite the footprints of Christianity in America, its mark on Millennials and Generation Z is not as visible as it was in previous generations. Many young people see the church as an irrelevant relic of the past.

**Over 80% of Christians, both young and old, are considered biblically illiterate.\*** That means a mere 2 out of every 10 Christians know how to live, articulate and defend the Christian faith. Dr. Woodrow Kroll commented, "When we speak of creeping Bible illiteracy in America, we are not talking about the inability to read but the choice not to read... This failure to read the Bible consistently, or to hear its truth consistently, is the major factor in Bible illiteracy in America. It is an epidemic."

There is very little that is more compelling and persuasive to a child than a parent living out his or her faith. It is human nature to learn by example. What example are you setting? Does your family regularly see you point to Christ's death and resurrection as your source of hope? Do you ask for forgiveness from your family members when you sin against them, knowing that modeling repentance is one of the greatest things you can do as a parent?

We are not just in a culture war for the faith of children in our nation; we are fighting a spiritual battle. **We are called to make disciples among all people and all ages.** The greatest prayer that we can ever pray over young people in our nation is that they are compelled by the Holy Spirit to trust and follow Christ as their supreme satisfaction and joy. Ask God to open the eyes of unbelievers that they may turn from darkness to light and open their ears so that they hear the truth of the Gospel.

**Pray for students who have recently come to know Christ; that they might be discipled by other believers.** Pray for their growth and spiritual maturity. May believers speak truth in love so that they will, in all things, grow in godliness (Ephesians 4:13-15). Pray that their identity would be grounded in who they are in Christ and that they would know and understand that they are fearfully and wonderfully made by their Creator.

**Finally, pray that your own faith would be deepened.** Equip yourself by reading Scripture and ask God to prepare you to be the parent your child needs you to be. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of areas in your life that need to be realigned with what Scripture teaches. As you steward the child or children God has placed in your care, pray that God would grant you wisdom and courage to lead precious souls into spiritual maturity.

## YOU HAVE THE POWER TO INSPIRE VIRTUE



When you support Abstinence Clearinghouse, you join a team committed to providing relevant, age-appropriate resources to cultivate virtue and purity. Abstinence Clearinghouse reaches thousands of people each year who are hungry for truth. Your gift:

- Equips parents to be the first, and most trusted, source for conversations surrounding sexual integrity and relationships.
- Helps young men and women pursue virtue through the Truth Series, including *The Truth About: Abstinence, STDs, Second Chances, Pornography, Living Together Before Marriage* and the *Sexual Exposure Chart*.
- Offers the necessary tools and resources to help inspire new beginnings and come alongside people actively choosing sexual integrity and purity for the first time.
- Connects parents, educators and pregnancy centers with the most up-to-date information related to abstinence.
- Reaches youth in a sexualized culture through parent-teen events like the *Knight to Remember, Purity Ball* and *God, Mom & Me Tea*.

Join in the battle to defend children against progressive ideologies attempting to demoralize young hearts and minds. Your partnership provides age-appropriate resources, reaches youth through parent-teen events and advocates on behalf of young people across our nation.

Your gift of \$500, \$250, \$100 or any amount impacts the next generation by empowering parents to promote virtue and purity in the lives of their children. You can give a gift online at [abstinence.net](http://abstinence.net) or by mail to Abstinence Clearinghouse, 3405 S. Kiwanis Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57105.

Raising the Bar,  
Leslee Unruh