Praying for Your Children
Part 2
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Christian parents who do not regularly and fervently pray for the salvation and sanctification of their children are guilty of neglect in the highest order. It is considered neglect if parents do not adequately care for the temporal physical needs of their children. So why wouldn’t Christian parents recognize it as neglect when they don’t adequately care for their child’s eternal soul?

A clever enemy uses misdirection in order to gain an advantage for his attacks. This is precisely what Satan does. He convinces us to focus our attention on the here and now, blinding us to our children’s real needs. The tyranny of the urgent demands our focus and more often than not, we become “Parental Tylenol” (we alleviate the discomfort of bad behavior through the correction of symptoms). This approach is of the flesh, and so time consuming that our strength is sapped. No thought or energy remains to seek a cure for what truly ails our children.

Ephesians 6:12 informs the believer, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Our real struggles are not flesh and blood struggles; they are spiritual struggles. Spiritual struggles must be fought spiritually. John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim’s Progress, said, “You can do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.”

Specific Reasons Christian Parents Should Diligently Pray for Their Children

1. Children are no more capable of pleasing God on their own than we are.
   Although we employ human means to aid in child-rearing, real, lasting change is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. If your child does not come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, he or she will have no power to overcome sin (Romans 3:10-12; 8:7).

2. The salvation of children should be intensely sought so they may avoid the bad habits and struggles that plague many adults.
   A life transformed by Jesus Christ helps protect against a life full of regrets. Good habits are best formed when young. Prayer, Bible study, the daily fight against sin, and other Christian virtues developed in youth are a powerful defense against the strategies of Satan.

3. Diligent prayer helps us focus on what is truly important in the lives of our children.
   Living in a sin-stained world often directs our thinking toward earthly goals for our children. Regular, fervent prayer focuses our thoughts on what is truly important. As we focus on the Lord, our goals for our children are more in line with God’s goals for our children. Remember--they belong to God. With that in mind, it becomes clear that we should seek His will through prayer on all matters pertaining to our children’s lives.
4. We will be less likely to exasperate our children.  
   The tendency is to be easy on ourselves and hard on others, especially our children. However, when we pray as David did, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24), we will come to better recognize our own shortcomings. We will also appreciate more fully how incredibly patient God has been with each of us. Continual thanks for God’s love toward us should motivate us to treat our children as God treats His.

5. Our children are under constant attack from the world, the flesh, and the devil.  
   Knowing that our children are under constant attack should generate resolute prayer. Wartime brings a focus that peacetime neglects. Spiritually speaking, we are at war every single day. Letting down our guard or thinking we are safe from assault only makes our defeat more certain.

6. No one can pray for them as you can.  
   No one cares for your children more than you do (save for God). You have an intimate knowledge of your children that others lack. Your regular interaction with them gives you insight concerning their strengths, weaknesses, joys, struggles, and future goals. Although you implore others to pray on behalf of your children, few will actually pray, and none will pray with your intensity. After all, God entrusted their care to you.

If you haven’t been praying for your children as you ought, you have been duped by the most talented liar the world has ever known. Satan led you by the hand into apathy (one of his favorite tools), and you went willingly. The road to hell may be paved with good intentions, but its streetlamps are lit by indifference. If this describes you, God is calling you back to passionate advocacy on behalf of your children and others. Paul exhorts believers in Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, 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.”

If only for a moment we could glimpse through the corridors of time and see the results of obedient, fervent prayer through God’s eyes, we most assuredly would fall face down and pray. Knowing our God is sovereign over all things, there is no need to see the future. Demonstrate your trust in Him by earnestly involving yourself in His ordained method for bringing about change in us and in our children – PRAYER!