

# 31 DAYS OF PRAYER

for your children



# Intro

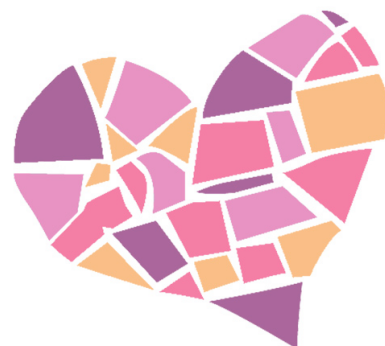
Prayer is a powerful part of a Christian parent's toolbox. Scripture promises us that if we seek the Lord we will find Him. This little prayer book is just one way to be intentional in our prayers for our kids. When we pray God's promises (His Word) over our children, we can expect for Him to show up. It might not be in the way that we planned, expected or hoped for, but He will be present with us and our kids.

Family Matters is very grateful to all of our guest authors who have generously contributed to this prayer book. For more information about Family Matters and its resources for families visit [www.familymatters.net](http://www.familymatters.net)



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# Love.

"Above all,  
love each  
other deeply,  
because love  
covers over a  
multitude of sins."

- 1 Peter 4:8 ESV

day  
one



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"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." - 1 Peter 4:8 {ESV}

You'd be hard pressed to find a parent who doesn't emphatically state that they love their children. Parents have, at times, an irrational love of their children. We know this is true, because when our kid throws a temper tantrum and launches their bowl of Cheerios across the room at us, we are angry with them, but we still deeply love them.

While all parents love their kids, we need to express our love in ways that help our kids to feel secure, free and accepted. The Lord gives us a perfect example of how this looks because His love for us is unconditional and unmerited. That type of gracious love truly does cover a multitude of the mistakes that we will inevitably make as parents. Today, thank your Heavenly Father of His gracious love for you, and ask Him to help you love your children, spouse and those around you with that same type of unconditional love.

Devotional by: Karis Murray

Love

# Accepted.

~day two~

"But God shows  
His love for us in  
that while we  
were still sinners,  
Christ died for us."

- Romans 5:8 ESV



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# day 2

"But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8 {ESV}

One of the non-negotiable needs of every child's heart is the need for a secure love – the need to know they're accepted no matter what. This is a job custom-made for parents who love their children more than they love themselves. To assure them of our full-out secure love, we need to accept them when they're cute or cranky, winsome or whiny, stellar or stubborn.

Accepting this child as God's wonderful gift to us is different than accepting and condoning their bad behavior. But if they know we'll love them no matter what, they will receive the discipline and consequences of their unacceptable behavior as another assurance of our secure love. Give thanks for God's mercy in your own life that leads the way in extending that same acceptance to our child no matter what kind of a day they're having.

Devotional by: Darcy Kimmel

Accepted



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# Belonging.

"What then shall we say  
to these things?  
If God is for us,  
who can be against us?  
He who did not spare  
his own Son but gave  
him up for us all,  
how will he not also  
with him graciously  
give us all things?"

- Romans 8: 31-32 ESV

Day 3.



"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

- Romans 8: 31-32 {ESV}

Belonging is a big deal. No matter how much we try to deny it, we want to belong to something, someone, some place. We need to instill in our children, however, an understanding of where they belong and to whom they belong. You see, as hard as it is, we do not want our children to mistake this place for home. Because God has paid a very high price to have us as His own. We belong to Him. And that is where we find our security and our identity.

It's okay to not belong here. It's okay to look around this broken world and feel like we just don't fit in here. We were never meant to fit in or belong in a fallen, sin-scarred world. We were created for more. We were created for Him. Our prayer for our children is that they would indeed belong, but not here. We want them to be okay walking this sod and being a little out of place knowing that, one day, they will be right where they are meant to be.

Devotional by: Stacy Edwards

*Belonging*



# Affection.

~day four~

"And he took a child and put  
him in the midst of them,  
and taking him in his arms,  
he said to them,  
"Whoever receives one such  
child in my name receives me,  
and whoever receives me,  
receives not me  
but him who sent me."

- Mark 9:36-37 ESV



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## ~ day four ~

"And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." - Mark 9:36-37 {ESV}

There are some beautiful pictures in the Bible. Profound moments etched in my mind when Jesus spoke love tangibly. Although He could have simply stated His wisdom and love, He often chose to reveal it through His actions. Jesus not only touched to heal, He touched out of pure and simple love as well.

Mark 9:36-37 shares the sweetest scene of Jesus tenderly taking a child onto His lap as He addresses the disciples' argument about who was the greatest. Their disagreement might have caused another to be angry or frustrated, but instead Jesus lovingly draws a child into their midst to remind them of His desire for us to approach Him as children and to serve even the least. Jesus affectionately deals with the disciples and the child.

He loves us all – big and small! When we recognize God's great love for us, we are better equipped to show affection to our children. When we rest in that love, we can offer affection – deserved or not.

Lord, please use us to love our children – display Your love and affection through not only our words, but our actions. And Father, thank you that you love us as passionately and purposefully as you love our children.

Devotional by: Sue Birdseye

Affection



# Purpose.

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~day five~

"He has told you,  
O man, what is good;  
and what does the Lord  
require of you  
but to do justice,  
and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with  
your God? "

- Micah 6:8 ESV



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## ~ day five ~

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"  
- Micah 6:8 {ESV}

To know one's purpose is to have a life direction – a target at which to aim. Having purpose is different than knowing what we want "to do" someday. It's more about knowing "how to do" life. God's word makes it clear that we must walk humbly with Him, but how does that look in real life? It is doing life in an unpretentious way, or as Webster would say, "to destroy the power or prestige of"...which sounds a whole lot like doing life God's way not my way. Being humble is being unassuming. When we walk closely with God we can allow Him to direct and guide us without us assuming we'll take over when we think He's not doing it right. We can trust Him.

Let's pray that we, as parents and care-takers to our loved ones, will be the example our children need to see, and the ones they want to emulate because we've listened carefully to our Creator to fulfill the purpose He had for us.

Devotional by: Cindi Ferrini

Purpose

# Affirm.

"I praise you,  
for I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your  
works; my soul knows  
it very well."

- Psalm 139:14 ESV

6



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# day 6

"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."  
- Psalm 139:14 {ESV}

Affirm: To validate, to assert as valid or confirmed, or  
to express dedication to.

This earthly world does a good job of robbing us  
of the affirmation our hearts instinctively crave. The  
affirmation God has created each of us uniquely and  
wonderfully. The truth and affirmation that we need to  
hide in our hearts (and share liberally with our children)  
is that God loves us for who we are and for who he has  
created us to be. Although the world does a good job  
of distracting us and trying to convince us otherwise,  
we must be vigilant to remember God's affirmation of  
us and we must affirm and dedicate our hearts to Him.

Sweet Heavenly Father, you knit each of us together.  
You knit each of our children together. Your amazing  
love of each one of us is beyond my understanding  
but I am so thankful. And I am thankful too for the  
opportunity you have given me in parenting my  
child. Please, I pray, help us to share this truth with  
our children. The truth that each one is a unique and  
special creation designed especially by You. Help  
each of us to affirm that truth to their hearts today.

Devotional by: Katie Howard Clemens

Affirm

# Humility.

"Blessed are the  
meek, for they shall  
inherit the earth."

- Matthew 5:5 ESV



Day 7.

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## ~ day seven ~

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."  
- Matthew 5:5 {ESV}

"Ok, sweet girl, we are going for a ride," I said to my 7 year old niece..

"I'm ready, Aunt Laura," she replied with a big smile while sliding her Mickey Mouse sunglasses onto the top of her head.

I gasped.

"She just slid her sunglasses upon her head exactly like I've done a hundred times. Melissa is imitating—me."

That was a wakeup call, a little thump of humility from the Holy Spirit. This precious one was watching my every move. Her tiny, impressionable mind was taking notes on the way I dressed, how I treated the waitress, the way I spoke to my husband, and so much more.

Terrified by the enormity of it, I prayed for wisdom. God revealed that children grasp more of what is "caught" than "taught." It stirred me then—and now— to live a life that clings to Christ.

Today, ask God to help you see your family through a child's eyes. What things are causing them to grow or stumble?

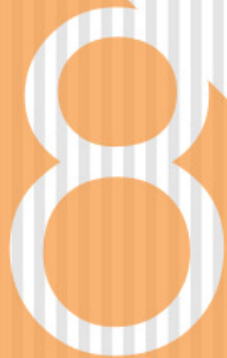
Devotional by: Laura Petherbridge

Humility

# Admonish.

"It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

-Hebrews 12:7,9-11 ESV



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"...we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."  
- Hebrews 12:7 9, 11 {ESV}

Another one of the non-negotiable needs of a child's heart is the need to know that they are significant – that they matter in life and that they make a difference. A parent assures them of that significance when they take the time and make the effort to admonish them. Our mid-course correction says to our child, "I love you enough to make sure you grow up to be a good person. That's one of the ways you'll make a difference in this world."

The word admonish literally means to warn, urge or caution. What a great reminder that all of our correction must be done with the best interest of that child's future in mind. When we graciously admonish our children so that their lives will be significant, we are loving them with grace! Lord, help me to keep you in mind as I guide my child to live a life that matters to you and others.

Devotional by: Darcy Kimmel

Admonish



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# Hope.

~day nine~

“Jesus said to them, “I  
am the bread of life;  
whoever comes to me  
shall not hunger, and  
whoever believes in me  
shall never thirst.”

- John 6:35 ESV





"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." - John 6:35 {ESV}

Our children do not have the luxury of being unaware of evil in the world. They see it all around them and they need to have hope for something more. It won't take long for this world to beat up on them and try to break them. We need to make sure they know that there is a hope and a future for them. They do not need to live lives of quiet desperation. They have a Father who loves them. They have a Christ, a Messiah, a Savior who came for them and died for them – all so they could have a hope.

Jesus wants them to come to Him when they hunger for something more. When they thirst for peace in their lives, they can come to Him and He promises comfort and strength. He promises Himself. They do not have to worry or be in despair. They can live with an everlasting, abiding hope that Christ will come again and make all things new.

Devotional by: Stacy Edwards

Hope

# Preparation.

"Train up a child in the  
way he should go;  
even when he is old  
he will not depart  
from it."

-Proverbs 22:6 <sup>ESV</sup>

~day ten~

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# DAY TEN

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."  
- Proverbs 22:6 {ESV}

This verse is often used as a "promise" or guarantee verse among well-intentioned people. Many parents over the years have dealt with the guilt of a wayward child because they believed they did not train up the child in the right way. The Proverbs though, are wisdom sayings, not guarantees. A popular example from our day might be, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." No one really believes if you eat an apple every day you'll never go to the doctor – but it's still a wise saying worthy of application.

While we have responsibility for training our children, let's not forget that in life there are no guarantees. We can only fully trust in God, and in His providence and passion for His children. Today, pray that God empower you to train well, and that He also release you to fully trust Him when it comes to your children's lives.

Devotional by: Steve Rose

Preparation

# Adventure.

"And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

-Hebrews 11:32-40 ESV

DAY 11

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## ~ day eleven ~

"And what more shall I say?  
For time would fail me to tell  
of Gideon, Barak, Samson,  
Jephthah, of David and Samuel  
and the prophets – who through  
faith conquered kingdoms,  
enforced justice, obtained  
promises, stopped the mouths  
of lions, quenched the power of  
fire, escaped the edge of the  
sword, were made strong out  
of weakness, became mighty  
in war, put foreign armies to  
flight. Women received back  
their dead by resurrection.  
Some were tortured, refusing  
to accept release, so that they  
might rise again to a better  
life. Others suffered mocking  
and flogging, and even chains  
and imprisonment. They were  
stoned, they were sawn in two,  
they were killed with the sword.  
They went about in skins of  
sheep and goats, destitute,  
afflicted, mistreated – of whom  
the world was not worthy –  
wandering about in deserts  
and mountains, and in dens  
and caves of the earth. And  
all these, though commended  
through their faith, did not  
receive what was promised,  
since God had provided  
something better for us, that  
apart from us they should not be  
made perfect."

- Hebrews 11:32-40 {ESV}

Last night my son and I started reading *The Hobbit*, the main character, Bilbo Baggins, has a reputation for being unadventurous. My son, on the other hand, definitely longs for adventure. I can tell by his choice of books, games, and his hopeful career as a Navy seal. My son wants to be a warrior – he wants to rescue and save people.

These verses remind me that our greatest adventure is living a life of faith! Faith that emboldens us to stand for truth, to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness" and "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:11-12). I want my children to be passionate for the Lord. I pray they will be excited about the great adventure God gives us when we live for Him.

Father, please give my children an anticipation of the great adventure that a life of faith provides and an excitement about their life with You – both here and in heaven. I pray that they will willingly and bravely don Your armor (Ephesians 6:10-20) and seek to serve and love You well in whatever adventures You have planned for them!

Devotional by: Sue Birdseye

*Adventure*

# Deeds.

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

- Luke 1:49, 50 ESV



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day 12



"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:7-9 {ESV}

An apple seed will only grow up to be an apple tree that bears apples. You can't expect to find oranges growing on that tree. Similarly, when we sow good deeds in life, we can be assured, that good deeds will continue to grow. We can't stop doing/sowing good deeds when the storms of life knock us down – we have to get up and continue doing what we know is right...not just what is easy, fun and comfortable! Even the pruning of a tree brings forth more and better fruit...but not THIS season...the next. So when you do something kind and good, and it's not accepted or welcomed in the way you'd hoped it would be, don't become disappointed. Watch for how it will blossom if we continue caring for others.

Let's pray that we not tire out or become weary in doing good to and for others. The only One who needs to see it for it to be worthwhile is God. Our job is to persevere. If He is pleased, we have sown well and He will bless it.

Devotional by: Cindi Ferrini

*Deeds*



*Diversity.*

"There  
is neither  
Jew nor Greek,  
there is neither slave nor  
free, there is no male  
and female, for you are  
all one in Christ Jesus."  
Galatians 3:28 <sup>ESV</sup>

day  
11

31 DAYS OF PRAYER  
for your children



# DAY 13

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." - Galatians 3:28 {ESV}

Do you remember your Sunday School teacher sharing God's Word on the flannel board? Do you remember getting a star by your name if you brought your Bible and friend to church? Do you remember singing this song when you were a kiddo...

"Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white. All are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

I think it's time for parents to pull out the old Sunday School song and teach your kiddos this rich, profound, supernatural and life changing truth. The truth that God is super creative. The truth that God has a wild imagination. The truth that God made people red, yellow, black and white. The truth that God calls us to live a life that appreciates and values the diversity that God has created. Today, pray that God would give your kids a supernatural, accepting, encouraging spirit to those that are different from them.

Devotional by: Chris Spradlin

*Diversity*

# Vulnerability.

~Day 14~

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

-Corinthians 12:9,10 ESV

# day 14

"But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 {ESV}

My parents divorced when I was eight. It was scary. It produced a control freak. That's why I battle with giving everything over to God—including my family. Laying loved ones at the foot of the cross requires vulnerability, a dictator's greatest fear.

Trust doesn't come easily when your soul has been wounded. God understands. He gently woos us into his embrace and reveals His tender, passionate heart. This transforms anxiety into trust. He never fails. He never abandons.

Those childhood scars now serve a higher calling, and my weakness is made strong in Christ.

Are you afraid of being vulnerable? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal hidden areas where fear may be preventing you from letting go. When weakness becomes a friend, rather than a foe, the abundant life promised by Christ isn't far behind.

Devotional by: Laura Petherbridge

Vulnerability

# Honesty.

"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

- Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV

day 15.



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"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." - Hebrews 4:14-16 {ESV}

No parent has to sit their child down on the couch and say, "OK, honey, today I'm going to teach you how to lie". No, they are good at it right out of the blocks. The nuanced skill of a two year old to lay one on you is, quite frankly, admirable. Our job is to make them bad liars. To catch them every time and hold them accountable. In order to build the character trait of honesty into their hearts, we need to make telling the truth, even with the negative consequences, more attractive than telling a lie.

Teaching our children to be honest is the compassionate response of a loving parent because we know it will save them from the high cost of making bad choices in their relationships, their jobs and their walk with the Lord. Heavenly Father, please fill me with your grace toward my child to encourage them to come boldly for forgiveness when they mess up.

Devotional by: Darcy Kimmel

Honesty

# Forgiveness

~day sixteen~

"Be kind to one  
another,  
tenderhearted,  
forgiving one  
another, as God in  
Christ forgave you."

-Ephesians 4:32 ESV

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## ~ day sixteen ~

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

- Ephesians 4:32 {ESV}

Forgiveness. The very concept of forgiveness is the core of the faith. God forgave us through Christ, not by our merit or works, but by His love. When it comes to family and children, sometimes forgiveness seems elusive because we can quickly become bound up in measuring effort versus forgiveness. As a pastor, one of the biggest areas I have seen this dwell in is in parents forgiving themselves, or each other.

No one expects you to be a perfect parent, not even God Himself. However God does expect us to forgive our spouse, our kids, and even ourselves when we mess up. Forgiveness is the safety net below the high wire of the family. We can either cling to the high wire and not move, or we can walk step by step, knowing when we fall we are safe. Today, pray that God expand your net of forgiveness in your family, starting with yourself.

Devotional by: Steve Rose

Forgiveness



# Faith.

“for at one time you  
were darkness, but now  
you are light in the Lord.  
Walk as children of light  
(for the fruit of light is  
found in all that is good  
and right and true),”

- Ephesians 5:8-9 ESV

day  
17



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# day 17

“for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true)”  
- Ephesians 5:8-9 {ESV}

“This little light of mine. I’m gonna let it shine...”

Do you remember singing that as a child? I confess I sang that song yesterday and I actually sing it quite often. The very simple words of that song serve as a reminder to my heart that I want to be a light in the dark world in which we live. It’s a reminder too that my children need me to be a light for them to ensure they can see the path God has placed them on in this life until their own flames shine a little larger.

The world and culture in which we live today can be a dark place. But we have God’s word to guide us and other believers to encourage us as we seek to reflect God’s light to the world.

Pray today that the Lord would strengthen your faith and grow your child’s faith from a tiny candle flame to one so large it could fill a lighthouse.

Devotional by: Katie Howard Clemens

Faith

# Integrity

~day eighteen~

"Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,  
but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out."

- Proverbs 10:9 ESV



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# day 18

"Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out."

- Proverbs 10:9 {ESV}

Integrity – a word we pray is a character quality of our children and ourselves. Most of us would describe integrity as living honestly and morally. Dictionary.com also defines it as "the state of being whole, entire, or undiminished." I believe both those definitions are described in Proverbs 10:9 which states that if we live a life of integrity we will live securely with no need to hide or fear.

In recent months I've had struggles with a child being dishonest. Lies break my heart. It's been a challenge to impress upon my sweet one how destructive deceitfulness is to everyone. Allowing my child to suffer the consequences has been difficult and absolutely imperative. Living a life of integrity is non-negotiable. I hope for more for my children... honesty, morality and security.

Lord, please give our children a desire to live a life of integrity. We pray that our children will trust that the truth is always best. May we model behavior that encourages our children to walk securely in the truth. Thank you Father, that you deliver, protect and guide us as we take each step with integrity.

Devotional by: Sue Birdseye

Integrity

# Poise.

~day 19~

"Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us."

- Titus 2:6-8 ESV



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for your children



"Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us." - Titus 2:6-8 {ESV}

In my former place of employment, I actually took a class on posture. The instructor believed greatly in walking properly with back straight and shoulders squared. While it may look a little more attractive to walk that way, ultimately, I do not think the Lord cares if our children can walk across the room while balancing books upon their heads. He does, however, care greatly about their spiritual walk.

Our prayer for our children should be that they walk wisely (Ephesians 5:15-16.) We should desire that they walk in love (Ephesians 5:2.) How our children carry themselves matters. Let's pray that they would be men and women of integrity, discipline and self-control. The world is watching and they need to see Jesus.

Devotional by: Stacy Edwards

Poise



# Discipline

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize?

Run in such a way as to get the prize.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

- 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 ESV

Day 20.



31 DAYS OF PRAYER  
for your children

## ~ day twenty ~

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." - 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 {ESV}

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Parenting can be a challenge that at times causes us to want to take a passive stance, because that's easier. However, the answer is not passivity, the answer is good old fashioned buckling down and working at it!

Yes, parenting requires disciplined training – especially since much is at stake. Through prayer and studying God's word we seek a deeper knowledge of Him and His ways which daily enables us to parent with His mindset. God will provide the heart for parenting if we have the discipline to seek Him while training

up our children in the way they should go. Even in the difficult times we need to lean into an issue and work towards God's desire and His best for our children and ourselves.

Father God, thank you for the gift of parenthood, for trusting me with your image bearers. Guide me daily and give me the discipline to study your word, make time for relationship with you, and actively, purposefully teach my children how their lives can be used to glorify you in word and deed. When I am weary give me strength and a disciplined commitment to my children.

Devotional by: Tracey Eyster

*Discipline*

# Endurance.

~Day 21~

"Count it all joy,  
my brothers, when you  
meet trials of various kinds,  
for you know that the testing  
of your faith produces  
steadfastness. And let  
steadfastness have its full  
effect, that you may be  
perfect and complete,  
lacking in nothing."

- James 1:2-4 ESV



# day 21

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." - James 1:2-4 {ESV}

The first year after forming our stepfamily was definitely the hardest. There were many days that I whispered, "This is not what I signed up for, I want out!"

But I made an "I will" commitment before God, and my spouse. That meant in good times and in bad, I will remain faithful.

Determined for our marriage to survive, I tenaciously dug in my heels and asked God to help me fight off the ugly, destructive thoughts and emotions that were choking the life out of our union. God gave me the Mind of Christ which allowed me to see my husband's children through heavenly eyes—not my own. He revealed how to let go of unrealistic expectations. And when I feel lonely, frustrated, angry, and tired of loving stepsons who may never return the feeling, Jesus teaches me how to love as He loves.

Is there someone you are struggling to love? Are you ready to give up? Ask God how to view that problem spouse, child, or family member through his lens, rather than a human perspective. It's transforming.

Devotional by: Laura Petherbridge

Endurance

# Courage

"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV

~Day 22~



## ~ day twenty two ~

"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

- Deut. 31:6 {ESV}

I trust God will keep His promises and be true to His character. I do what is right even when no one is looking. I believe to the core of my heart and soul in God's uncompromising love for me. These 3 proclamations take courage, a steadfast belief grounded in the truth of God's Word brought to life through my relationship with His son Jesus.

Courage is the crux of all the Biblical virtues –

"Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point." – C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters

Teaching my children to live courageously is more than just embracing head knowledge. I must first demonstrate to them on a consistent basis the core assertions with an uncompromising conviction.

- I implement courage to restrain my emotional impulses, "sigh."
- I exercise courage to swallow my pride to act in humility, forgiveness, and honesty, "exhale."
- I draw upon courage to tell the truth, not gossip, say no when others compromise with yes, confront addictions, and stay pure, "whew."
- It takes courage for me to stand firm as a real follower of Jesus and humbly submit my life to God, "yes, Lord."

As parents we must be determined to be of good courage when holding our children accountable to making courageous choices.

Devotional by: Edy Sutherland

*Courage*



# humble

"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you"

- John 6:35 ESV

day 23





"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"  
- Micah 6:8 {ESV}

We are a part of God's beautiful creation. But all too often we become so proud and full of our own importance that we forget we are in fact the creation... and not the Creator. Our pride does a disservice to us all for when we are big there is no room for God's glory. When we are small, and humble, we can see our need for complete dependence on God and His glory shines and lights up the world.

Pray that the next time you or your child is tempted toward pride that you would remember Micah 6:8 and that you would remember that a prideful heart is the opposite of what the Lord requires of us all. Pray that God would fill you both with humility as His creation.

Devotional by: Katie Howard Clemens

*Humble*

# Gratitude

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

James 1:17-18

~day twenty-four~



## ~ day twenty two ~

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."

- James 1:17-18 {ESV}

Manners matter. Saying "please and thank you" are important in showing kindness and gratitude.

It seems few people feel the need to write thank you notes any more. I'm not sure why. Let's consider the giving of a gift. The giver must first consider what to give; then search for the gift, purchase or make the gift, wrap it and then present the gift. Just adding up the time it took should encourage the receiver to at least say, "Thanks for the effort!" But in saying or writing a "thank you" for a gift, we are acknowledging the giver's kindness...in thought and in action. What might take the giver hours to complete, will take the recipient but 5 minutes to express a written thank you.

Let's pray that we can transfer this simple lesson on gratitude to the larger realm of what God has done for us. Let's teach our children to recognize and thank God for the many ways He blesses, the way He bestows upon us gifts, the way He provides and protects. And by expressing thanks to others, our children will learn how much more important it is to thank Him, too!

Devotional by: Cindi Ferrini

Gratitude

# Generosity

~day twenty-five~

"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

- Luke 6:28 ESV



31 DAYS OF PRAYER  
for your children



"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." - Luke 6:38 {ESV}

Our children were made in the image of God. As parents, it is our job to instill in them the characteristics of Him as well. In addition to being loving and kind and faithful, we want to raise up children who are full of generosity. It is God's very nature to give generously and we, as His children, should do no less. We should be generous with our time, our energy and our resources. Nothing should be off limits when it comes to serving God.

Our prayer should be that we raise children who know what it means to give. We must teach them how to serve others in a "serve me" world. God does not withhold any good thing from us. His gifts are generous and His love is lavish. May we live lives of generosity in His name.

Devotional by: Stacy Edwards

Generosity



# Service

"Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

-Philippians 6:3-4 ESV

day26

31 DAYS OF PRAYER  
for your children



# DAY 26

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interest of others." - Philippians 2:3-4 {ESV}

When my oldest daughter Katie was 5, I took her with our church group to serve in New Orleans. 2 years after Katrina had hit, areas of the city were still untouched. Many people questioned my thought process, since New Orleans is such a "wicked" city, but I knew the possibility of positive influence on her from that trip would far outweigh the negative. Now 11, Katie has recently returned from another trip with me, to San Pedro Sula Honduras this past December.

Making service a priority in your home starts with 2 things: 1) you must model it, and 2) you must intentionally place your children into situations where they can serve. Don't buy into the lie that they need to be 15, 20, or 25 to do so. Kids naturally love others, and the early years are the most fertile to foster the attitude Philippians 2:3,4 speaks of. Today, pray that God increase your eyes and ears to be made aware of service opportunities. Maybe it begins with the neighbor across the street...maybe it begins with a trip. However it begins, pray that God shows it clearly, and trust Him in the serving.

Devotional by: Steve Rose

*Service*

# Master

"And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

-Joshua 24:15 ESV

## day 27

**31**DAYS OF PRAYER  
for your children





## ~ day twenty seven ~

"And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

- Joshua 24:15 {ESV}

I've always found it easy to read Old Testament passages about idol worship and false gods and think that it's an Old Testament problem. Most of us don't wake up every morning and sacrifice an animal to a hand carved statue in our backyard. But the truth is, idol worship is just as prevalent in 21st century America as it was at the time of Joshua. Instead of sacrificing animals to wooden objects, we sacrifice our families at the altar of wealth, success, and beauty.

Whether we realize it or not, there is a master of our home. There is no escaping the God given drive in all of us to serve something. I think Bob Dylan said it well when he wrote, "You're gonna have to serve somebody, yeah, you're gonna have to serve somebody. It may be the devil or it may be the Lord, but you're gonna have to serve somebody." Today, let God be your master and pray that he would be the master of your home. Pray that your children would serve him and him alone, and that your whole family would turn from the myriad of 21st century idols constantly creeping into our living rooms, distracting us from our true king.

Devotional by: Cody Kimmel

Master

# Mission

~day twenty-eight~

“For we are his  
workmanship, created in  
Christ Jesus for good  
works, which God  
prepared beforehand,  
that we should walk in  
them.”

- Ephesians 2:10 ESV



31 DAYSOFPRAAYER  
for your children



"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." - Ephesians 2:10 {ESV}

"What is my mission in life going to be?" This is one of three big questions that every parent has the privilege of helping their child answer. What is your child going to do with the God given gifts and resources God entrusts to them? You might have an inkling of what that mission in life might be even now or perhaps you have no idea what that child is going to grow up to do or be!

That's OK because ultimately, that decision is one made in the heart of your child with the help of God. It's our responsibility though to model to our child a life lived focused upwards toward God and outwards toward others. That way when they take on their mission in life, no matter what it is, they will be doing it for the benefit of others and for the glory of God. Lord, please help me live my daily life in such a way that I point my child toward a life that is lived for you and others.

Devotional by: Darcy Kimmel

Mission





Mate

~day 29~

"Therefore a man  
shall leave his father  
and his mother and  
hold fast to his wife,  
and the two shall  
become one flesh."

-Matthew 19:5 ESV

# day 29

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." - Matthew 19:5 {ESV}

When my cousin was a young'en he knelt down by his bed, bowed his head and prayed this simple, heartfelt, life changing prayer...

"Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake. Please GOD! Save me a piece of that cake."

So many parents teach their kiddos to ask God to give them a good day at school, to help them on a test or to take their headache away. All great prayers. But can you imagine what would happen if we trained our kiddos at a very young age to pray for their future mate? Can you imagine what would happen if we prayed this with our kids but we also enlisted brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and grandparents to pray for your kiddos future mate? Today, pray for your child's future mate. Pray that they would marry a wholly committed follower of Jesus. Pray that your kids' future mate walks in purity and pray that your kids' future mate falls madly in love with Jesus.

Devotional by: Chris Spradlin

# Mate

# Unity

---

"And above all  
these put on love,  
which binds  
everything together  
in perfect  
harmony."

- Col. 3:14 ESV

~day 30~



31 **DAYS OF PRAYER**  
for your children

## ~ day thirty ~

"And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."  
- Col. 3:14 {ESV}

One by one, the musicians in the orchestra seat themselves on stage – each warming up by playing scales, notes and parts of the music they've prepared. None of it sounds very good because everyone is doing their own thing. Soon, the first chair violinist enters and plays one note. EVERYONE in the orchestra tunes to that note and they are all "together" – but it is not until the orchestra conductor lifts his baton and directs everyone in the playing of the music, that it all comes together...in perfect harmony.

When we live our life through the practice of loving others, we are setting up all the players in our life to be bound together in a similar perfect harmony – conducted by the One (God) who orchestrates life.

Let's pray that we can practice loving thoughts that transfer into actions to help our children realize and recognize the importance of loving others well. When they see us get along in our marriage, with our siblings, extended family, and friends, they will have the example they need to make the right kinds of choices to will help them live in harmony with others, too.

Devotional by: Cindi Ferrini

Unity

# Grace

---

~day 31~

"The Word became  
flesh and made his  
dwelling among us.  
We have seen his  
glory, the glory of the  
one and only Son,  
who came from the  
Father, full of grace  
and truth."

- John 1:14 ESV

## ~ day thirty one ~

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." - John 1:14 {ESV}

Charles Wesley, on the one year anniversary of his conversion penned the great hymn "Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing." In one of the final verses, he described grace: "Harlots and publicans and thieves, in holy triumph join! Saved is the sinner that believes, from crimes as great as mine." Charles Wesley understood grace. He understood that when God entered the world in Christ, unmerited favor, unwarranted love, undeserved mercy, and unending grace came with him.

God forgives a debt we cannot repay, he loves us as rebels, he pursues us as we flee, and revives our lifeless hearts. God does not work on a system of merit. God's grace is the truth of God. If this is true, then why do we as parents treat our kids with a system of merit? Why do we make our kids earn our favor through their accomplishments, their talents, and their behavior? As a parent, I understand how easy it is to judge our children according to what they do, but that's not the way God treats his kids. He treats his children with grace, not fairness. Today, thank God for the grace he gave us in Christ and ask him how to show that grace to your family.

Devotional by: Cody Kimmel

Grace

# Next Steps?

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# Printables

[31 Days of Prayer for your Children - Pink Calendar](#)

[31 Days of Prayer for your Children - Blue Calendar](#)



# Resources

[Raising Kids Who Turn Out Right](#)

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## ~ about the authors ~

**Sue Birdseye** is the proud mama of 5 children - college to kindergarten! She is walking the unexpected road of single mom with a lot of love, a touch of humor and a serious lack of sleep. She hopes to encourage other moms by sharing her story and her faith. Sue is a regular contributor to "Mom Life Today", "Fredericksburg Parent" and her own personal website "Up to My Toes". She has also written for "Flourish Magazine" and "Thriving Family Magazine". Her first book, "When Happily Ever After Shatters", will be out in March 2013.

**Katie Howard Clemens** is a wife, mama, sister, friend, and a grateful grace filled girl. She is also a microwaver, sometimes baker, dust bunny namer, and brain tumor survivor. A former single mama she has two beautiful, smart, funny, little people she is blessed to have call her Mom. She currently serves as the Managing Editor and Community Manager for "Mom Life Today" and blogs very infrequently at [katiefromtexas.com](http://katiefromtexas.com). Find her on Twitter at @KatiefromTX

**Stacy Edwards** is a trucker's daughter and a pastor's wife. She is a freelance writer and a mom to four fabulous little girls. Stacy blogs at "Servant's Life" where she uses her words to point others to the hope and encouragement found in Christ.

**Tracey Eyster** is the happily in love wife of Bill and the fun-filled mom of two teens, she is devoted to her family and is happiest when making memories with them. In 2008 she took her passion for speaking into the lives of moms and created the ministry of "MomLife Today". She is passionate about MomLife and is amazed at God's blessing of allowing her first book "Be The Mom" to come to fruition. She enjoys connecting with moms through her personal blog at [www.bethemom.com](http://www.bethemom.com), and on Facebook or Twitter @MomBlog

**Cindi Ferrini** is on associate staff with Campus Crusade with her husband, Joe. Cindi is a homemaker, speaker, and author (*Balancing the Active Life, Get it Together, 'Tis the Season*). Together, Cindi and Joe, authored "UN-EXPECTED JOURNEY: When Special Needs Change Our Course". The Ferrini's live in Cleveland, Ohio and have 2 children at home and one married.

**Cody Kimmel** writes as "Postmodern Parent" for the Family Matters Blog. He is a husband, father, pastor, songster, writer, and most importantly, believer in the one true Messiah, Jesus Christ. He also writes a blog at Shouts from the Wilderness.

**Darcy Kimmel** has a heart for encouraging and equipping parents and grandparents to maximize their unique callings in life with the Grace Based Parenting model for relationships. Her greatest joy comes from her own family and relationships. Darcy speaks at marriage and parenting events with her husband Tim. As a writer, Darcy is co-author of several books on parenting, grandparenting and family relationships.

**Karls Murray** is a wife, mother, writer, gardener and watcher of NCIS. She is passionate about parenting with Grace, being her husband's best friend and trying to live her life fearlessly. She is the Creative Director at Family Matters where she sits in the back closet (her office) and writes the "Family Matters Minute" and answers multitudes of frantic email questions. She also writes at her personal blog [www.candidmotherhood.com](http://www.candidmotherhood.com) and her desert gardening video diary [www.cultivatingdust.com](http://www.cultivatingdust.com).

**Laura Petherbridge** serves couples and single adults with topics on spiritual growth, marriage and relationships, stepfamilies, co-parenting, and divorce recovery. She is an international speaker and author of "When 'I Do' Becomes 'I Don't' -Practical Steps for Healing During

Separation and Divorce", and "The Smart Stepmom", co-authored with Ron Deal, and endorsed by Gary Chapman (Five Love Languages). Laura is a featured expert on the "DivorceCare" DVD series, and has appeared on "Focus on the Family", "Family Life Today", "Moody Broadcasting", "Christianity Today's Marriage Partnership" and "Crosswalk.com". She and her husband, Steve, reside in Summerfield, FL. [www.LauraPetherbridge.com](http://www.LauraPetherbridge.com)

**Steve Rose** recently authored his first book "Shouting at God", about his father's battle with cancer and their family's struggle with his illness and death. You can find out more about Steve, his book, and read his personal blog at [www.steverose.me](http://www.steverose.me).

**Chris Spradlin** writes at [www.epicparent.tv](http://www.epicparent.tv). "EP" is a blog that offers Jesus focused, honest, authentic, on-the-edge, innovative, entrepreneurial, get-your-hands-dirty parenting advice. Chris was on staff for several years at LifeChurch.tv as a pastor and team teacher and now is a Pastor in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. (someone has to serve in the heart of the Rockies). His wife's name is Jodie and she has made the decision to go back to school and study nursing, so Chris is officially Mr. Mom where he is learning to cook breakfast, get kids ready for school, doc appointments, homework, dishes as well as laundry. He has three kiddos - Cole, Kylie and Tifton - and he passionately believes that if parents would step into their God-given role, the world would be changed! You can connect with Chris and EpicParent on Facebook & Twitter.

**Edy Sutherland** uses outdoor adventure to help others see Biblical principles through another vantage point. She is the author of "The WHEE Factor: The RUSH You Get When You Experience God in Everyday Life". Learn more about her ministry at [www.edysutherland.com](http://www.edysutherland.com)

