

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart March 2023

HOW CAN I PRAY FOR MY CHILDREN?

by BURK PARSONS



Prayer for our children comes naturally when we understand that God has created us as dependent creatures ourselves, made to depend on the Lord. God fashioned our hearts with an insatiable desire to commune with Him. Although prayer doesn't always come easily, those of us whose hearts have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit cannot help but go to our heavenly Father again and again to give thanks to Him, to praise Him, and to ask for His help.

We want our children to know the Lord and the joy of fellowship and communion with the Lord. We want them to be regenerated—to be born again—but we are unable to do that in our own power, for only the Holy Spirit has the sovereign grace and power to save

our children. To that end, we can pray for our children even as they mature in their mother's womb. We can pray first and foremost that God would sovereignly regenerate their hearts unto new life in Jesus Christ. We can pray that our children would trust God, love God, love and obey the Word of God, confess their sins to God, worship God, and commune with God all their days. We can pray that the Lord would grant them humility, wisdom, discernment, honor, integrity, love, and grace in all of life. We can pray that they would trust and follow the Lord all their lives, that they would never know a time that they didn't trust the Lord, and we can pray that they would have exceptionally ordinary testimonies of lives lived trusting and following the Lord.

Beyond praying for our children, perhaps the most fundamental thing we can do is model a praying life before them. We are called to make disciples, and the Great Commission begins at

home. We ourselves need to know more about prayer if we are going to teach our children in a way that equips them to pray genuinely on their own, in our absence. As our children mature, we can continue to explain to them what prayer is and how they can pray. We can pray with them, for them, and around them. We can also pray for their particular life circumstances and the work of God in their lives.

As we continue to depend on God and enjoy communion with Him, we will help to reflect Christ in our own lives, pointing our children not to ourselves but to their heavenly Father—that our God might use us sinful and broken vessels as models of a repentant and faithful prayer life in communion with Him. May our children see us rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks in all circumstances as we long for our Lord's kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (1 Thess. 5:16–18; Matt. 6:10).

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart March 2023

HOW CAN I PRAY FOR MY CHILDREN?

by BURK PARSONS



Prayer for our children comes naturally when we understand that God has created us as dependent creatures ourselves, made to depend on the Lord. God fashioned our hearts with an insatiable desire to commune with Him. Although prayer doesn't always come easily, those of us whose hearts have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit cannot help but go to our heavenly Father again and again to give thanks to Him, to praise Him, and to ask for His help.

We want our children to know the Lord and the joy of fellowship and communion with the Lord. We want them to be regenerated—to be born again—but we are unable to do that in our own power, for only the Holy Spirit has the sovereign grace and power to save

our children. To that end, we can pray for our children even as they mature in their mother's womb. We can pray first and foremost that God would sovereignly regenerate their hearts unto new life in Jesus Christ. We can pray that our children would trust God, love God, love and obey the Word of God, confess their sins to God, worship God, and commune with God all their days. We can pray that the Lord would grant them humility, wisdom, discernment, honor, integrity, love, and grace in all of life. We can pray that they would trust and follow the Lord all their lives, that they would never know a time that they didn't trust the Lord, and we can pray that they would have exceptionally ordinary testimonies of lives lived trusting and following the Lord.

Beyond praying for our children, perhaps the most fundamental thing we can do is model a praying life before them. We are called to make disciples, and the Great Commission begins at

home. We ourselves need to know more about prayer if we are going to teach our children in a way that equips them to pray genuinely on their own, in our absence. As our children mature, we can continue to explain to them what prayer is and how they can pray. We can pray with them, for them, and around them. We can also pray for their particular life circumstances and the work of God in their lives.

As we continue to depend on God and enjoy communion with Him, we will help to reflect Christ in our own lives, pointing our children not to ourselves but to their heavenly Father—that our God might use us sinful and broken vessels as models of a repentant and faithful prayer life in communion with Him. May our children see us rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks in all circumstances as we long for our Lord's kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (1 Thess. 5:16–18; Matt. 6:10).

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP WHEN I PRAY?

by KEN JONES



In Romans 8:26, the Apostle Paul says: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

Before addressing how the Spirit helps us in prayer, let’s establish two foundational truths. First, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:9, the Apostle says: “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him” (see also Eph. 1:13–14).

Second, the instruments used by the indwelling Spirit to help and strengthen believers are God’s appointed means of grace. Statements to this effect are contained in

both Lutheran and Reformed standards.

Luther’s explanation of the third article of the Apostles’ Creed in his Small Catechism is a good example: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord; or come to Him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts.” In short, the indwelling Spirit illumines our minds to comprehend God’s grace in Christ through the ordinary means of the Word and sacraments. And, as passages such as Ephesians 4:15–16 and Hebrews 10:24–25 tell us, the Holy Spirit ministers to us also through vital and vibrant fellowship within the body of Christ.

Returning to the topic of prayer, Paul, beginning in Romans 7:7, unpacks the reality, implications. And struggles of remaining sin, leading him to cry out: “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (7:24). The answer that he gives, of course, is Christ. So throughout Romans 7–8, Paul refer-

ences by way of contrast the weakness of our flesh and the help of the Spirit.

We don’t always feel or act like children of God, but the Spirit bears witness that we are (8:15–17).

The reason Paul doesn’t know how to pray as he ought is that he feels unworthy to petition God because of his remaining sin. But the Spirit helps believing sinners to come boldly to the throne of grace, reminding us through God’s appointed means that through our union with Christ we are indeed the children of God and joint heirs with Christ. Therefore, when we cry out, “Abba, Father,” we are heard by a gracious, loving Father. The Holy Spirit, then, helps us in prayer to recall who we are and to comprehend the grace of the Lord to whom we’re praying.

[Both articles were taken from *Tabletalk*, March 2019]

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP WHEN I PRAY?

by KEN JONES



In Romans 8:26, the Apostle Paul says: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

Before addressing how the Spirit helps us in prayer, let’s establish two foundational truths. First, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:9, the Apostle says: “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him” (see also Eph. 1:13–14).

Second, the instruments used by the indwelling Spirit to help and strengthen believers are God’s appointed means of grace. Statements to this effect are contained in

both Lutheran and Reformed standards.

Luther’s explanation of the third article of the Apostles’ Creed in his Small Catechism is a good example: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord; or come to Him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts.” In short, the indwelling Spirit illumines our minds to comprehend God’s grace in Christ through the ordinary means of the Word and sacraments. And, as passages such as Ephesians 4:15–16 and Hebrews 10:24–25 tell us, the Holy Spirit ministers to us also through vital and vibrant fellowship within the body of Christ.

Returning to the topic of prayer, Paul, beginning in Romans 7:7, unpacks the reality, implications. And struggles of remaining sin, leading him to cry out: “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (7:24). The answer that he gives, of course, is Christ. So throughout Romans 7–8, Paul refer-

ences by way of contrast the weakness of our flesh and the help of the Spirit.

We don’t always feel or act like children of God, but the Spirit bears witness that we are (8:15–17).

The reason Paul doesn’t know how to pray as he ought is that he feels unworthy to petition God because of his remaining sin. But the Spirit helps believing sinners to come boldly to the throne of grace, reminding us through God’s appointed means that through our union with Christ we are indeed the children of God and joint heirs with Christ. Therefore, when we cry out, “Abba, Father,” we are heard by a gracious, loving Father. The Holy Spirit, then, helps us in prayer to recall who we are and to comprehend the grace of the Lord to whom we’re praying.

[Both articles were taken from *Tabletalk*, March 2019]