



31 Biblical Virtues to Pray for Your Children

Praying Beyond Protection and Blessing

by Bob Hostetler

For years, like any responsible Christian parent, I prayed daily for my two children, Aubrey and Aaron. I prayed for God's blessing and protection throughout their days. I prayed for them to be happy. I asked God to help them through difficult times and to help them make wise choices. My prayers were regular, heartfelt, and-for the most part-pedestrian. I wanted so much for my children. But when I knelt in prayer, I invariably found the same tired words rolling from my lips.

Then one day, Nancy, our pastor's wife, shared a testimony during a morning worship service. She talked about her concern that her children develop strong Christian morals and the fruits of the Spirit. This had prompted her to develop a unique prayer list. That day I decided to follow Nancy's example. I've developed a "parent's prayer program" of my own, a simple practice that has revolutionized the way I pray for my children.

Each day of the month, in addition to my prayers for their safety and the concerns of that day, I also pray for a specific character trait, virtue, or fruit of the Spirit to be planted and nurtured in my children-through my efforts and my wife's, through the influence of others, and through Aubrey's and Aaron's own actions and decisions.

At the end of each month, I begin praying through the list again, combining traits when the month is shorter than 31 days.

After several weeks of praying through the list below for my children, I discovered an additional benefit to my prayer program: as I prayed with my children each night, the Lord brought to mind the subject I'd prayed for that morning, and I would repeat my request in Aubrey and Aaron's hearing. Before long, they began to echo my prayers, pouring out their own hearts in prayer for the virtues and qualities I desired to see in them. Thus, my simple prayer program has not only changed how I pray, but also how my children pray-and by God's grace, how we live as well.

Following is prayer list for children, along with suggestions from Scripture. Feel free to duplicate it—or improve upon it—to help you pray specifically and purposefully for your own children.

About the Author **BOB HOSTETLER** is the author of the award-winning *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door* (co-authored with Josh McDowell) and *They Call Me A.W.O.L.*



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1. Salvation—"Lord, let salvation spring up within my children, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (Is. 45:8, 2 Tim. 2:10).
2. Growth in grace—"I pray that my children may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).
3. Love—"Grant, Lord, that my children may learn to live a life of love, through the Spirit who dwells in them" (Eph. 5:2, Gal. 5:25).
4. Honesty and integrity—"May integrity and honesty be their virtue and their protection" (Ps. 25:21).
5. Self-control—"Father, help my children not to be like many others around them, but let them be alert and self-controlled in all they do" (1 Thess. 5:6).
6. Love for God's—Word "May my children grow to find Your Word more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb" (Ps. 19:10).
7. Justice—"God, help my children to love justice as You do and act justly in all they do" (Ps. 11:7, Mic. 6:8).
8. Mercy—"May my children always be merciful, just as their Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).
9. Respect (for self, others, authority—"Father, grant that my children may show proper respect to everyone, as your Word commands" (1 Pet. 2:17).
10. Biblical self-esteem—"Help my children develop a strong self-esteem that is rooted in the realization that they are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:10).
11. Faithfulness—"Let love and faithfulness never leave my children, but bind these twin virtues around their necks and write them on the tablet of their hearts" (Prov. 3:3).
12. Courage—"May my children always be strong and courageous in their character and in their actions" (Duet. 31:6).
13. Purity—"Create in them a pure heart, O God, and let that purity of heart be shown in their actions" (Ps. 51:10).
14. Kindness—"Lord, may my children always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (1 Thess. 5:15).
15. Generosity—"Grant that my children may be generous and willing to share, and so lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age" (1 Tim. 6:18-19).
16. Peace-loving—"Father, let my children make every effort to do what leads to peace" (Rom. 14:19).
17. Joy—"May my children be filled with the joy given by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 1:6).
18. Perseverance—"Lord, teach my children perseverance in all they do, and help them especially to run with perseverance the race marked out for them" (Heb. 12:1).
19. Humility—"God, please cultivate in my children the ability to show true humility toward all" (Titus 3:2).
20. Compassion—"Lord, please clothe my children with the virtue of compassion" (Col. 3:12).
21. Responsibility—"Help my children learn responsibility; each one should carry his own load" (Gal. 6:5).
22. Contentment—"Father, teach my children the secret of being content in any and every situation, through Him who gives them strength" (Phil. 4:12-13).
23. Faith—"I pray that faith will find root and grow in my children's hearts, that by faith they may gain what has been promised to them" (Luke 17:5-6, Heb. 11:1-40).
24. A servant's heart—"God, help my children develop servants' hearts, that they may serve wholeheartedly, as if they were serving the Lord." (Eph. 6:7).
25. Hope—"May the God of hope grant that my children may overflow with hope and hopefulness by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13).
26. Willingness/ability to work—"Teach my children, Lord, to value work and to work at it with all their heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Col. 3:23).
27. Passion for God—"Lord, please instill in my children a soul that 'followeth hard after thee' (Ps. 63:8, KJV), one that clings passionately to you."
28. Self-discipline—"Father, I pray that my children may acquire a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair" (Prov. 1:3).
29. Prayerfulness—"Grant, Lord, that my children's lives may be marked by prayerfulness, that they may learn to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Eph. 6:18).
30. Gratitude—"Lord, help my children to live lives that are always overflowing with thankfulness and always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20, Col. 2:7).
31. A heart for missions—"Help my children to develop a desire to see your glory declared among the nations, your marvelous deeds among all peoples" (Ps. 96:3).