

FBC POWELL, 5-28-17 PM NOTES
"How to Pray for Your Family"
Various Scriptures

Romans 15:30 "Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me".

"I discovered that prayer is the secret weapon of the kingdom of God. It is like a missile that can be fired toward any spot on earth, travel undetected at the speed of thought, and hit its target every time... Satan has no defense against this weapon; he has no anti-prayer missile."
- Ron Dunn

I. Pray for Your Family in the Spirit

Ephesians 6:18 "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints."

Jude 1:20 "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit."

A. The Holy Spirit Reveals Our Need to Pray

Zechariah 12:10 "...the Spirit of grace and of supplication"

B. The Holy Spirit Introduces Us into the Presence of the Father

Ephesians 2:18 "for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father."

C. The Holy Spirit Intercedes for Us When We Do Not Know What to Pray

Romans 8:26 "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

"As Paul says explicitly, the groans are not even audible and are inexpressible in **words**. Yet those groans carry profound content, namely divine appeals for the spiritual welfare of each believer. In a way infinitely beyond our understanding, these **groanings** represent what might be called intertrinitarian communication, divine articulations by the Holy Spirit to the Father."
- John MacArthur

1 Corinthians 2:11 "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

II. Pray for Your Family in Jesus' Name

John 14:13-14 "Whatever you ask **in My name**, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything **in My name**, I will do it."

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father **in My name** He may give to you."

John 16:23-26 “In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything **in My name**, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing **in My name**; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. In that day you will ask **in My name**, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf”.

John 17:6a “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me...”

John 3:18b “...in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

“To pray in the Name of Christ is to pray as one who is at one with Christ, whose mind is the mind of Christ, whose desires are the desires of Christ, and whose purpose is one with that of Christ... Prayers offered in the Name of Christ are scrutinized and sanctified by His nature, His purpose, and His will. Prayer is endorsed by the Name, when it is in harmony with the character, mind, desire, and purpose of the Name.”
– Samuel Chadwick

A. Praying in Jesus’ Name Is to Ask for That Which Glorifies the Father

John 14:13 (NIV) “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.”

“That the Father may be glorified in the Son’: It is to this end that Jesus on His throne in glory will do all we ask in his Name. Every answer to prayer that he gives will have this as its object: when there is no prospect of this object being obtained, He will not answer. It follows as a matter of course that that this must be with us, as with Jesus, the essential element in our petitions: the glory of the Father must be the aim and end, the very soul and life of our prayer”.
– Andrew Murray

B. Praying in the Jesus’ Name Means to Pray for What He Desires

C. Praying in Jesus’ Name Means to Pray Based on His Merit or Deservedness

Ephesians 1:3b “...every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...”

III. Pray for Your Family in Faith

“One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, show him His handwriting; God is tender of His word.”
– Thomas Manton

Psalms 119:36-37 (NKJV) “Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way.”

First Baptist Church Powell 5/28/17
How to Pray for Your Family
Non-Series Sermon

Various Scriptures

This message includes three powerful principles about all prayer, but we will be making special application to prayers concerning the family. Let me share some not so well known truths about powerful prayer. Real prayer, effective prayer, is not for wimps! Romans 15:30: “Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” The Greek word, translated “strive together with,” is a word with a prefix that means “together with” and then the Greek word, *agonizomai*. Our word “agonize” comes from that word. Powerful prayer often involves agonizing. Let me share one of the most basic of all truths about prayer – a truth that most people have never really comprehended. Prayer is work. Sometimes it is agonizing work. That’s why spiritually lazy people don’t pray much. Not many people see prayer, and especially prayer for their family, as work that is sometimes agonizing.

Today, prayer has a bad reputation with many people. Prayer, in the mind of many is just a small step above doing nothing. Let me illustrate how we often think of prayer. We did not get a TV until I was in the 6th grade. My favorite TV show as a boy was “The Lone Ranger.” Whatever I was doing stopped when it was time for the Lone Ranger. The sounds of the theme song, *The William Tell Overture*, made my heart speed up every time I heard it. Here is a typical scene in the old Lone Ranger shows. Some bad guys have shot up the town and the Lone Ranger, and his faithful companion Tonto, were headed after them. They are in front of a little Spanish mission and the priest is out front. He has a weird haircut and a long brown robe and he is skinny (probably from fasting). With a pious voice he asks if he can ride with them. The Lone Ranger astride his beautiful white horse, Silver, who is chomping at the bit with nostrils flared, says, “You are a brave man Father, but it could be dangerous. You had best stay here where it’s safe.” The Priest answers, “But I want to help.” The Lone Ranger in His deep, but pure, voice says, “Padre, you can pray.” Then that beautiful white horse rears up on its hind legs and the Lone Ranger utters those famous words, “Heigh Ho Silver – Away!”

The Lone Ranger and his faithful companion Tonto ride off toward the bad guys and the danger that awaits them. The camera doesn’t even bother following the priest as he goes back into the church to pray. Let’s face it; people say nice things about prayer but in most minds it’s a pitiful substitute for real action. Prayer is all too often seen as something that people engage in who don’t have the strength to take action. When it comes to the family, we want to do something, not just pray.

Which seminar would draw the biggest crowd: “How to Pray for Your Family,” or “Twenty Things You Can *Do* to Transform Your Family”? I guarantee you that the overwhelming majority would go to the “do” seminar. The reason we see prayer in such a bad light is that it caters to our pride to fix a situation by something that we “do.” True prayer involves humbling ourselves and admitting that we are helpless and totally dependent on God. That’s not real popular! If we could see through God’s eyes, we would see that prayer *is* where the action is. It is in prayer that the real work is done.

One man said, “I discovered that prayer is the secret weapon of the kingdom of God. It is like a missile that can be fired toward any spot on earth, travel undetected at the speed of thought, and

hit its target every time... Satan has no defense against this weapon; he has no anti-prayer missile.” [Ron Dunn, *Don't Just Stand There, Pray Something*, pages 19-20]

How do you deal with a spouse who no longer wants to be married? How do you change the heart of a sixteen-year-old that has seeds of rebellion that are beginning to sprout and grow? How do you change the bitterness you see in your spouse's heart that he/she doesn't admit is there? How do you change a child in their twenties who says they no longer believe in God? You can go to all the seminars you want to, you can go to counselors, or read a book, but a sovereign God is the only one who can change a person's heart and take away the bitterness and replace the unbelief with assurance of His reality. This sovereign God who determines the ends has chosen the means of prayer to put in motion His acts to accomplish His ends. Prayer **is** where the action is; prayer **is** the work that results in God changing your family.

Today I want to share three principles relating to powerful prayer in general, but we will be making special application to the family.

I. Pray for Your Family in the Spirit

The Bible says in Ephesians 6:18: “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.” Jude 1:20: “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” What does it mean to *pray in the Spirit*? Prayer is a joint venture with the Christian and the indwelling Holy Spirit. We are incapable of praying without the enabling and guidance of the Holy Spirit. In order to pray in the Spirit and in order to allow the Holy Spirit to help our weakness we must be filled with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled, empowered, and permeated by the Spirit – it is to walk yielded to him, and dependent on Him. When you understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian, you begin to see that we are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to pray in a way that is acceptable to God. Without the enabling of the Holy Spirit, our prayers are stiff, lifeless, powerless, dull, and a waste of time. What exactly does the Holy Spirit do in this joint venture we share with Him called *prayer*?

A. The Holy Spirit Reveals Our Need to Pray

The Holy Spirit (God the Spirit) is called in Zechariah 12:10: “the Spirit of grace and of supplication.” The word translated “supplication” means earnest prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to us the need for God's enabling, empowering grace to pray earnestly, because we constantly face battles where we are weak and helpless. The family problems we face are beyond the capacity of human beings to fix. The Holy Spirit reveals that we need the supernatural power of God to address our impossible problems. In that knowledge, He draws us to prayer.

B. The Holy Spirit Introduces Us into the Presence of the Father

Ephesians 2:18: “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.” That word “access” refers to a court official who introduces people who desire an audience with the King. The Holy Spirit gives us access to the throne of grace where we find mercy and grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

C. The Holy Spirit Intercedes for Us When We Do Not Know What to Pray

Romans 8:26: “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” Even when we do not know the specific will of God in a given situation, “the Spirit Himself intercedes for us” bringing our needs to the Father when we are not even sure of what to ask.

The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf in a way that is truly beyond human comprehension – “with groanings too deep for words.” This is not, as some have wrongly interpreted it, praying in “tongues” (ecstatic “language” that is not really language at all). John MacArthur helps us understand what Paul is saying here. “

As Paul says explicitly, the groans are not even audible and are inexpressible in words. Yet those groans carry profound content, namely divine appeals for the spiritual welfare of each believer. In a way infinitely beyond our understanding, these groanings represent what might be called intertrinitarian communication, divine articulations by the Holy Spirit to the Father.

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Romans 1-8*, page 467]

This ties in to 1 Corinthians 2:11: “For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.”

I don’t want prayer to sound mechanical because it is a relationship and not rituals. It involves sometimes pouring out your heart in a flood of emotion. It involves a lifestyle of praise and thanksgiving and deepening of the relationship. When we come down to making specific requests, we do that correctly only when we are praying in the Spirit and experiencing Him showing us our need to pray, bringing us into God’s presence, and guiding us in what to pray that is in the will of God. If you would pray powerfully for your spouse, children, grandchildren, and extended family, you must pray in the Spirit.

II. Pray for Your Family in Jesus’ Name

On the night before Jesus was crucified, in just a few short verses He spoke six times of praying in His name.

John 14:13-14: “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

John 15:16: “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”

John 16:23-26:

In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf.

You cannot escape the importance of praying in Jesus’ name. The name stands for the person. When a name is called, we envision the person bearing that name. Jesus said to His Father in John 17:6a: “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me...” He meant that He had shown them God’s attributes – who the Father really is.

When the Bible speaks of believing in John 3:18b: "...in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The name of the only begotten Son of God means the person of Christ – who He is and what He has done. Let's put all that together. To pray in Jesus name is to pray consistent with who He is and what he has done. It means that we pray what He desires and what will glorify the Father. The godly professor Samuel Chadwick said:

To pray in the name of Christ is to pray as one who is at one with Christ, whose mind is the mind of Christ, whose desires are the desires of Christ, and whose purpose is one with that of Christ... Prayers offered in the name of Christ are scrutinized and sanctified by His nature, His purpose, and His will. Prayer is endorsed by the name, when it is in harmony with the character, mind, desire, and purpose of the name.

[Quoted in Oswald Sanders, *Prayer Power Unlimited*, page 58]

Do you see how much more praying in Jesus' name is than tacking that little phrase on to the end of a prayer? In fact, you can pray in Jesus name without saying that at the end of your prayer, and you can say the phrase and really not be praying in His name. Let me give you some specifics of what it means to pray in Jesus' name and how it applies to praying for your family.

A. Praying in Jesus' Name Is to Ask for That Which Glorifies the Father

John 14:13 (NIV): "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father." This must be the ultimate motive of everything we ask in Jesus' name. This requires some real examination of our motives. Are you praying for your child's salvation so that he or she will go to heaven and not hell, or are you praying for his or her salvation so that their life will bring glory to God? Are you praying for the healing of a family member so they won't suffer any longer or so that God can be glorified? Are you praying for your child to make a high grade on their college entrance exam so that they can get into the best school in order that they can have a prestigious job making lots of money or so that they can glorify God? Are you praying for your spouse to walk yielded to the Lord so that he or she will treat you better and be a better father or mother or are you praying for them to be transformed and walk in obedience to God that he might be glorified? If you truly pray in Jesus' name, you must have Jesus' motive – the glory of the Father. Andrew Murray said:

"That the Father may be glorified in the Son": It is to this end that Jesus on His throne in glory will do all we ask in his name. Every answer to prayer that he gives will have this as its object: when there is no prospect of this object being obtained, He will not answer. It follows as a matter of course that that this must be with us, as with Jesus, the essential element in our petitions: the glory of the Father must be the aim and end, the very soul and life of our prayer.

[Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, page 110]

B. Praying in Jesus' Name Means to Pray for What He Desires

With His name comes His authority and power. No one gives the use of his name to another who does not share His desires, interests and goals. Unless you are surrendered to the Lordship of Christ you cannot pray in His name. To pray in His name is to use His power and authority to ask for what He desires. To pray in the name of Jesus is practically synonymous with praying in the will of God.

C. Praying in Jesus' Name Means to Pray Based on His Merit or Deservedness

I am praying in His name when I come humbly before the Father admitting that I have no merit or right to even be heard by Him based on my own merits. I come boldly, however, because I come based on Jesus' merit and worth and life. Let me illustrate that by marriage. In our culture when a woman marries a man she legally bears the name of her husband. She legally has the use of his name. Let's suppose that a bride is extremely poor and she marries an extremely wealthy man. He owns the town bank and thousands of acres of real estate. He has a good name in the town as an honest man and a man of his word. From the moment she marries him, she is identified with his wealth and his good name. She no longer acts under her old name, but under her husband's name. When she has a need to draw money from the bank, she does it in her husband's name. She lives in light of his name. Believers are betrothed to Jesus. The church is called "the bride of Christ" in the Scriptures. Jesus has given us the use of His name. Our account in heaven is empty; we have no merit of our own. His account contains, as we read in Ephesians 1:3b: "...every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places..." His account never is depleted or even diminished. It is constantly full. To go before the Father in Jesus' name means that we go based on his account – His merit and His worthiness. Dr. R. A. Torrey tells about speaking in a conference on prayer and after the conference a man came to talk to him. He lamented that he had been praying about a matter for a long period of time and the Lord had not answered. Dr. Torrey asked him a simple question. He said, "Why should the Lord answer your prayer?" The man said something like this: "He should answer because I have been a faithful elder in my church; I have taught a Bible class for years; I tithe, and I witness for Christ." Dr. Torrey said, "Sir your problem is that you are coming before the Lord in your own name and not in Jesus' name!"

Are you praying for your family in Jesus' name?

III. Pray for Your Family in Faith

Prayer that is faithless is fruitless. Let's not make praying in faith something that is always mystical. It doesn't usually involve hearing an audible voice; it does not usually involve a vision or dream. Faith involves finding God's will in the situation for which we are burdened, praying God's will back to Him, and then living in expectancy that God is telling the truth and will keep His word in his timing. The Puritan Thomas Manton said, "One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, show Him His handwriting; God is tender of His word." [*Puritan Quotes*, page 216].

A consistent life of answered prayer is impossible apart from an ever growing knowledge of and meditation upon God's word.

There is certainly a persevering and pleading aspect to prayer. It's not that we simply read a promise, say, "Father I claim this for my rebel child" and then never bring it up again. We continually bring Scripture after Scripture before the Lord, personalizing for our family member and continue to expect God to act. Yet in all our pleading we live with the expectancy that God is tender to His Word. In my prayer journal, beside my family is Scripture after Scripture that I pray for them. In my Bibles that I use for my quiet time, in the margin there will be numerous notations with a date that says, "Prayed for Kathy" or "prayed for one of my children or sons-in-law or daughters-in-law." I pray for all my children and their spouses, Psalm 119:36-37 (NKJV): "Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way."

As you read the word, and meditate on it, apply promises and biblical truths to your family and their needs. The word comes alive as we begin to see it as the content of our prayers. Then all we are doing is living in expectancy that God keeps His Word.

Conclusion

The most productive thing you can do for your family is to pray for them. When you pray, make sure that you are praying in the Spirit, praying in Jesus' name, and praying in faith.