31 Ways To Pray For Your Teen

By Bob Hostetler

He had been raised in a Christian home and had come to faith in Jesus Christ at an early age. He was baptized at a church camp, and had even survived being a preacher's kid. But early in his high school years, my wife and I could sense him slipping away – from us and from God.

We did our best, of course, to steer him away from dangerous friendships. We watched him struggle with depression. We tried to love and encourage him as much as we could. But every effort failed – and sometimes seemed to make matters worse.

So after a couple years of proving our inadequacy as parents, we stopped trying. Instead, we focused our best efforts on praying. I scheduled a weekend prayer retreat at a retreat center about an hour from home. I took with me only my Bible and one other resource: a 31-day prayer calendar I had devised years ago and had used since my children were small.

For three days I focused my prayers on my son. I prayed as I knelt in the spartan room provided for me. I prayed as I lay prostrate in the prayer chapel on the retreat center grounds. I prayed as I walked wooded paths, ate simple vegetarian meals, and rocked in a chair on the porch. By the end of the weekend, I had prayed my way through many Bible verses and had compiled a brand-new list, tailored to the needs of my teenage son.

I have since realized that many parents of teenagers – even those not in the desperate straits I felt myself in – might profit from a 31-day prayer plan for their teenagers. I hope the following 31 ways to pray will help you in that holy task:

1. Salvation. First and foremost, Lord, let my children know and experience that salvation that comes by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8).

2. Self-control. God, help my children to "think clearly and exercise self-control" in all they do (1 Pet. 1:13).

3. Protection from peer pressure. Lord, strengthen my children against peer pressure, that they may always stand strong against enticements to do wrong (Prov. 1:10).

4. Constructive friendships. Father, lead my children into constructive friendships; lead them away from "bad company" (1 Cor. 15:33).

5. Honesty and integrity. God, help my children walk blamelessly, do what is right, and speak truth in their hearts (Psa. 15:2-5).

6. Protection from irreversible mistakes. Lord, I know my children will make mistakes, but

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please save them from decisions that cannot be reversed and mistakes that cannot be corrected. Let them be among the righteous who may fall seven times but always rise again (Prov. 24:16).

7. Ability to study hard and learn well. God, teach my children to study hard and learn well in both their schoolwork and their study of Your Word (2 Tim. 2:15).

8. Healthy independence. As my children become more independent, in preparation for adulthood, let it always be a healthy independence, and never rebellion (Prov. 17:11).

9. Protection from unbiblical standards. Father, protect my children from unbiblical standards of beauty, conduct, and speech (2 Tim. 2:22).

10. Strong sense of identity. Help my children develop a strong sense of identity that is rooted in the knowledge of who they are in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10).

11. Strong sense of belonging. God, give my children a strong sense of belonging to their family, church, and to the kingdom of God (1 Pet. 2:9).

12. Strong sense of ability. Lord, please instill in my children a strong sense of their own gifts, talents, and abilities, based on the strength You give them in Christ (Phil. 4:13).

13. Strong sense of responsibility. Father, make my children wise and responsible servants, who fulfill their promises and take care of their responsibilities (Luke 12:42).

14. Protection from sexual temptation. Lord, may my children "flee youthful lusts" and remain sexually pure in thought, word, and deed (2 Tim. 2:22).

15. Godly influences. Let men and women of godly character cross paths with my children and become their trusted counselors and mentors (Prov. 1:20-33).

16. Protection from loneliness. God, protect my children from the pain of loneliness, and teach them to find comfort in Your companionship (Psa. 23:4).

17. Protection from popularity. Lord, please protect my children from the pursuit of popularity and from the dangers of "too many friends." Let them stay close, instead, to the Friend who sticks closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24).

18. Single Master. Let my children make Jesus Christ their Lord and Master early in life and serve only Him, all their days (Luke 16:13).

19. Godly mate. Father, lead my children to the mate of Your choosing (Gen. 2:24).

20. Life mission. Lord, instill in my children a strong and clear purpose to fulfill Your plan for their lives (Deut. 13:4).

21. Protection from depression. Deliver my children from discouragement and depression

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during their turbulent teenage years (Psa. 25:16-17).

22. Commitment to the church. God, give my children a strong and lasting commitment to the body of the Christ, the church (Psa. 122:1).

23. Compassion for the less fortunate. Please give my children soft hearts and compassionate spirits for those who are in need (Matt. 25:31-46; Jas. 1:27).

24. Protection from others. Please protect my children from bullies, daredevils, false friends, and even from the mistakes of foolish friends (Psa. 59:1-2).

25. Godly work ethic. Lord, please nurture in my children a strong, godly work ethic that will serve them well as they enter the workforce (1 Thes. 4:11).

26. Belt of truth. Arm my children, Lord, with the belt of truth; teach them to know truth from error in all they do (Eph. 6:14).

27. Breastplate of righteousness. Lord God, arm my children with the breastplate of righteousness; grant that they may make the right decisions, wherever they go (Eph. 6:14).

28. Readiness to share the gospel of peace. Father, let my children's feet be fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace; teach them to share the good news with those around them (Eph. 6:15).

29. Shield of faith. Arm my children, Lord, with the shield of faith, with which they can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one (Eph. 6:16).

30. Helmet of salvation. Fit my children, Lord, with the helmet of salvation; let the assurance of their salvation accompany them in all they do (Eph. 6:14).

31. Sword of the Spirit. Lord, arm my children with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Let them love Your Word and hide it deep in their hearts (Eph. 6:16; Psa. 119:11).

Neither of my children are teens anymore. Both are committed followers of Jesus. And my son is now the worship leader in the church that my wife and I helped start when he was still in high school. God has abundantly answered my prayers for him.

I pray that He will do the same for you, as you commit to doing the one thing I believe I did right as a parent of my teenage children: *pray*.

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