

I'm Jeanette Chase, Director of Family Ministry, here at Crossroads. And I am thrilled to be able to end our prayer series today talking specifically about prayer in our parenting. I truly believe that parenting is the hardest job you will ever have and the most important. The more you care, the harder it is. There are no sick days, no paid holidays, no vacation, no paycheck. Not only is there no paycheck but as a parent, you pay and pay and pay. The estimated cost to raise a child nowadays without the cost of college is \$184,000. But what you receive is so priceless. You have the opportunity to build a foundation, to shape a life that will last forever. What could be more important than that? My husband, Scott, and I have been married twenty-five years. We have two kids. Chelsea's nineteen and a sophomore at the University of Cincinnati and Nick is sixteen, a sophomore at Ontario High School. We are not perfect parents. My kids would want me to say that twice. We are not perfect parents and we don't have perfect kids and that's OK. That's exactly what we're all going to be saying. We're human. We're going to make mistakes. I remember when Chelsea was born...it was a nightmare pregnancy. Nine months...nine months of being sick. Twenty-four hours of intense labor...emergency C-section and then emergency surgery for hemorrhaging. And look how young we look there...isn't that amazing or what? That's what twenty years ago will do to you. But you know, Scott was in the operating room with me and then when Chelsea came out, they had him leave. And he was waiting in the recovery room and the nurse brought Chelsea to him and she went to leave and he's looking at this brand-new baby that he knows nothing about and he gets this panicked feeling as only a brand-new father can and he's telling the nurse, wait a minute, does this come with an instruction manual? And now as parents of teenagers, we're asking the same thing. But the answer for us is absolutely. As believers, God has given us the Bible. It's our job as parents to read it, to study it and to pray over it. Now I know that not all of you here today are parents but you all know children. You might be an aunt or an uncle, a brother, sister, a grandparent, a friend or a neighbor, but you know children that need your prayers. And if you don't, I want to invite you to come join us in the children's ministry because we can introduce you to a lot of kids who could use your prayers.

Growing up as a kid today is nothing like it was when we were kids. What they are exposed to is unbelievable. And I have some statistics that I want to share with you. Did you know? Three children die every day in the United States from child abuse. Every ten seconds, there's a new report of child abuse and they say only one in three is even reported. One in eight children are born to a teenage mother. One in three to unmarried parents. One in five American children live in poverty with 1.5 million homeless. One in eight children never graduate from high school. Forty percent of all children go to bed at night without a father in the home to tuck them in. And last but certainly not least, one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually molested before their eighteenth birthday. That just breaks my heart. These aren't just random statistics that don't mean anything to us. We have children in every single, every single one of these categories here. The very first thing that we need to do as parents or as people who care about kids is to number one: Commit to praying for them. If we don't pray, we're telling God that we don't need his help. And I don't know about you, but I do not want God to think I don't need his help. He knows I need his help; He's just waiting for me to tell him.

Would you send a soldier to war without protection? Without armor? Without a weapon? No, absolutely not. But that is exactly what you're doing to your children if you don't pray for them. Because, folks, it is a battle out there. God has a plan for each and every one of our children and Satan would like nothing more than to interfere with it. Lamentations 2:19 says: Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward him for the life of your young children. The word, Lamentations, is a Greek verb meaning to cry aloud. Here's this great nation that has stopped following God. They're doing whatever pleases them, whatever they want to do. And God punishes them by sending in the Babylonians. Folks, we need to be on our knees crying aloud praying for our children.

And there are three areas that we can pray about. Number one: The past, our past. Because you know as parents, things that we have in our past affect how we parent. What is it that you as a parent need to pray about and let go? And then pray for your children's past. Pray that their mistakes don't stay with them and affect them for life. Romans 12:12 says: Be patient in trouble and keep on praying. You know, that tells us that we should expect trouble. Be patient through the trouble and keep praying to get through it.

Number 2: The present. When you get up in the morning, pray for your kids because you don't know what they're going to experience that day. And I always just pray, God, I don't know what my child is going to go through today. I don't know the frustrations. I don't know the peer pressure. I don't know the decisions that they're going to have to make. But God, I just pray that you would give them wisdom, that you would be there with them that they would turn to you. When Chelsea first left for college that was really hard. And I used to wake up in the middle of the night and I'd have a nightmare with her in it and I would just say, OK God, you are bringing her to mind for a reason and she's nowhere near me and I don't know what she's going through, but I do know about college. And I do know that college is the number one time that kids will leave their faith. What they are exposed to at college should scare us all. So every time I wake up in the middle of night, she's who I pray for. You know, we do have something really cool for our college kids and it's because we want to keep them connected to church. We have a group we call, MOCK, Mothers of College Kids. We send care packages, birthday cards, just notes of encouragement because we want our kids to know that they're being prayed for. And it's such a cool thing when we send out the care packages and we pray over them. We pray for each one of those college kids....praying that God would be with them and that they wouldn't become one of the statistics of walking away from their faith. If you have a college kid, I encourage you to stop by the Family Ministry kiosk and fill out one of these college connect forms. It's too late this year for them to get care packages but at least we can get them on our mailing list. We're going to be offering a wonderful Bible study this summer just for them. So if...if that is something that we could do for your college student, please stop by, pick one of these up. We surveyed over a hundred of our junior and senior high teens. Ninety-five percent of them told us that they want their parents to pray for them. Seventy-five percent said they

do not feel comfortable asking you for prayer. So parents, they want your prayers but they're not going to tell you that.

Number three: Pray for the future. It is never too early and it is never too late to pray for your child. Pray now about who they will grow up to marry because as believers we want them to marry someone who's going to help them in their faith and not pull them away. Pray for their college. Pray for their career.

Number two: Teach your child to pray. Proverbs 22:6 says: Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not turn from it. Now some people read this and they think, this is a promise from God. If I do this alright, my kid's going to be OK. Well, you know what? This is from the book of Proverbs and it's considered a wise saying. It would be very wise for us to do this but it's not a promise. Because we know that our kids can make their own choices. We do the best we can. We set the foundation. Parents have a responsibility to teach their children. Parents, the family ministry is here to provide tools to help you, to instruct you, but it is your responsibility as parents to train your child. Well, you would say, OK, how do I teach my child to pray? It's really easy. First of all, you pray with them. Let them hear you pray. Let them hear you admit your mistakes and you asking for forgiveness. And then you listen while they pray. Whenever my kids were small and we were in the car and if we would see an ambulance or a fire truck or a police car with their lights on, we would turn off the radio and we would pray...for whatever that situation, whatever was going on, and we didn't know. We didn't need to know. But we knew that was a situation for prayer. And it helped the kids learn how to pray for others.

Well, I want to teach you something really simple. It's called the five finger prayer. Everybody has a hand...look at your hand, OK? Your thumb...your thumb is the closest finger to your body. That's a reminder to pray for those closest to you. Your next finger is your pointing finger. And that's a reminder to pray for those who point us in the right direction: Teachers, doctors, pastors. The next finger is the tallest finger and that's a reminder to pray for those who lead us: The President whether you voted for him or not, he's our President, other government leaders, leaders in your church, your school, your community. The next finger is the weakest finger. Ask any piano teacher and they'll tell you that's the weakest finger. That's a reminder to pray for the weak...the weak physically, spiritually, emotionally. And the last finger is your little finger. That's when we pray for ourselves because our prayers should be the littlest for ourselves. And if you can teach that simple little thing to your kids, you are helping them learn how to pray for others.

We have an amazing children's ministry here at Crossroads. We teach them to pray, we take their prayer requests and we pray with them. If you have a young child in this auditorium, they're missing out because this room is not for them. Their classrooms are where they need to be because that is where they are going to learn at their age level with kids just like them. So I want to encourage you that if you have your child in here today with you, that if you would talk with them this week and make the commitment that next

week, you're going to take them to class. If they're scared or you're scared, then I encourage you to stay with them. But I have tell you, I think you're going to like it so much, you're going to want to volunteer. And we're OK with that.

Number three: We need to model. Joshua 24:15 says: Then choose today whom you will serve but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. You need to decide. Who are you serving? What are your priorities? A lot of people would say, yes, we've chosen. We follow the Lord. But if you look at their life, that's not true. Where are your priorities? There's a saying: If the devil can't make you bad, he'll make you busy. What stops you from coming to church? What stops church from being number one? Sports, dance, your social life, you want to sleep in? Remember, you're modeling for your kids. It's not what you say, it's what you do. I first started teaching Sunday School when my son was two years old. Every week that I would prepare their lesson, I would learn something. I had no idea the plans that God had for me when I accepted the calling of teaching two-year olds. Remember how I said that forty percent of kids go to bed at night without a father in the home? Men, you want to make a difference in the life of a child. Serve in the family ministry. We have a lot of amazing men in our ministry. We have a few that volunteer every single week even though our rotation doesn't call for that. Men like Mario, Paul, Mike, Joseph, Carl. And we have one man who serves every week during the 9:30 service in the elementary classroom. His name is Doug Wolf. We had a young child who insisted on having his head shaved because he wanted to be like Doug. Can you imagine a child? You're modeling to that child. That's what you can do when you model.

Milo came up to me last Sunday and he shared a video with me that one of our parents had sent to him, Chris and Penny Davis. And it's a video of their three-year old son, Levi. They were at Metronome. Levi picked up a guitar and he started to play and to sing this song that Milo had written. It was one of the songs that we sang tonight. It is Levi's favorite song. And Milo said, you know, I didn't even realize that I could impact the life of a child through one of my songs. Penny, Levi's Mom, is on the praise team and so she goes around singing this song and I want you guys to see this video. It came from a cell phone so the, you know, it's not the greatest, but I thought it was so cool and I just wanted to share it with you guys.

(Video clip)

Is that awesome or what? Yeh. Well, you know, we don't get a chance very often to acknowledge all the volunteers that work in the family ministry. So I would like to ask if you are a volunteer, anywhere in the family ministry, if you would please stand because we as parents need to say thank you.

(Clapping)

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Prayer, Part 7

Jeanette Chase, Director of Family Ministry

Weekend 03.21/22, 2009

So we need to ask ourselves, what are we modeling for our kids? If you want your child to think of others, then you need to serve. If you want your child to grow spiritually, then you need to model that.

Number four: Celebrate. My...one of my favorite verses in the Bible is III John 1:4, and it says: I have not greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. Isn't that what we want as parents? Yes. Absolutely! Take time to celebrate the good that your kids are doing. You know, they say that ninety-five percent of a child's good behavior goes unnoticed. Why as we as parents do we focus on the negative? Celebrate the good. Tell your kids when they do good. Celebrate.

So remember. Commit to praying for your children. Teach your children to pray. Model for your children. And celebrate. If you want help praying for your child, I have these free bookmarks at the family ministry kiosk. Thirty-one biblical virtues that you can pray for your kids. Do one a day every month.

Let me pray for you. Father, thank you for what we've learned today. Thank you that we can come to you on behalf of our children. We know that each and every one of us has a calling to commit to praying, to teaching our child, to modeling and to celebrate. And Lord, we thank you for that honor and that privilege. Father, thank you for being the perfect parent, for setting the example for us, for being there with us each and every step of the way. Lord, we praise you for that. Help us be the parents and people who love kids that you want us to be. In your most holy and precious name, we pray. Amen.