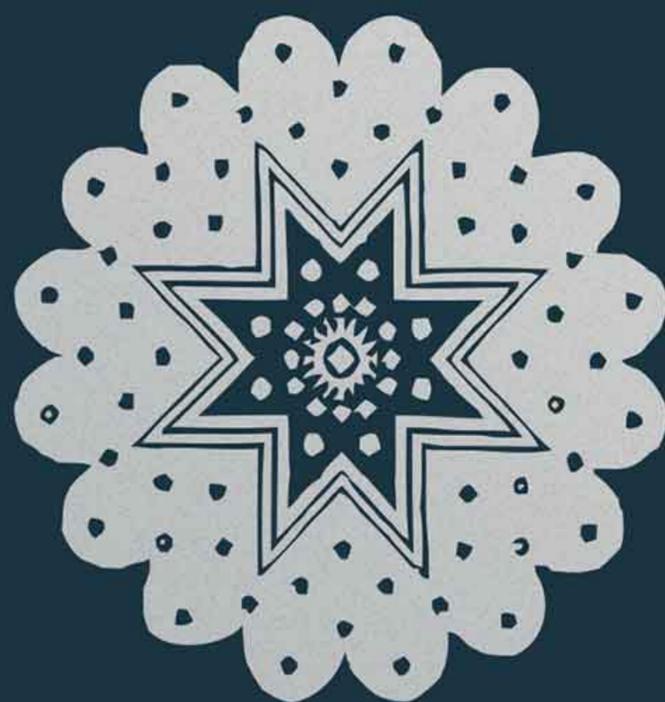


Prayers  
of a Parent  
*for Adult Children*



Kathleen Nielson

## Praise for This Book

Kathleen Nielson has written a book that will improve your prayer life for your children. As you read *Prayers of a Parent for Adult Children*, you can feel the love, compassion, concern, and wisdom of a mother who has thoughtfully prayed for her own children and those of others for years. It is a beautiful expression of how to guide others to Christ while expressing the love Christ has for his own. This book will help parents grow closer to Christ as they pray for their offspring.

—**Miguel Núñez and Catherine Scheraldi-Núñez**, Senior Pastor and Director of Women’s Ministries, International Baptist Church, Santo Domingo

## Praise for the Prayers of a Parent Series

We love how these beautiful, biblical prayers help us to “pray most earnestly” (1 Thess. 3:10), to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), and to pray specifically for our own children. Furthermore, pastors should encourage every member to pray for the children of the church and assist them in doing so. This book would be a huge help to that end, for often people are willing to pray but “do not know what to pray for” (Rom. 8:26). For those in congregations that take vows to assist parents in the Christian nurture of their children, we can’t imagine a better or more important way of fulfilling their vows than praying for those children from their youth onward.

—**Anne and Ligon Duncan**, Wife, Mother, Christian Educator; Chancellor and CEO, Reformed Theological Seminary

I know of no greater gift that a parent can give to their child than the gift of prayer centered on the gospel. That’s why I’m so excited about this project from Kathleen Nielson. Filled with faith, hope, and love, each prayer is accompanied by relevant

Scripture and a focused exhortation to help any parent put into words what they long for in their hearts. Having prayed for and with our two daughters for the last two decades, my wife and I look forward to using it!

—**Julius J. Kim**, President, The Gospel Coalition

Kathleen Nielson has coupled scriptural truth with beautifully crafted poetic prayers that bring hope. As a mom, I am encouraged to consider afresh the many ways I must pray for my children. Kathleen helps me with the joyful task by lifting my eyes upward, creating a Word-focused mission of intercession. As a parent (whether natural or spiritual), you too will be challenged in the prayers you pray—prayers that are bound to change not only your children’s hearts but yours as well.

—**Blair Linne**, Author; Speaker; Spoken Word Artist

Kathleen Nielson understands the longings of our hearts for the spiritual flourishing of our children. She gives these longings beautiful and Bible-shaped expression. A treasure for every Christian parent!

—**Dane C. Ortlund**, Author, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*

There is no greater joy for Christian parents than to hear that their children are walking in the truth. But how do we pray toward that end, day in and day out, through every stage of their lives? I can think of no better guide than this series by Kathleen Nielson—a diligent student of God’s Word, a wonderful writer, and a praying mother (and now grandmother). Because these prayers are so Scripture saturated, you can have confidence that you are praying in accord with the will of our good and sovereign God. Take up and read, and pray, and by God’s grace you could change your world.

—**Justin Taylor**, Managing Editor, *ESV Study Bible*

Since as parents we have no ability whatsoever to change the hearts of our children, prayer for them is not a spiritual luxury; it is essential. It is an amazing grace to us that God welcomes, hears, and answers our prayers. I know of no other guide to parental prayer like Nielson's tender, insightful, gospel-rich, and loving little book. Read it and you will find yourself praying for new things for your children in new ways than you have before, and as you do, you will grow in affection for your Father and in how you approach him in prayer.

—**Paul David Tripp**, Author, *New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional* and *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family*

Parenting is important and hard. How do you pray through this complexity? What do you pray when you aren't sure what to say or how to say it? Kathleen Nielson knows the parental spiritual roller-coaster. She's lived it. And prayed through it. This book will give you words to pray and encouragement to ponder as you navigate the issues and challenges of real-world parenting. It helped me. I think it will help you as well.

—**Mark Vroegop**, Lead Pastor, College Park Church, Indianapolis; Author, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*



Prayers of a Parent  
*for Adult Children*

# Prayers of a Parent Series

KATHLEEN NIELSON

*Prayers of a Parent for Young Children*

*Prayers of a Parent for Teens*

*Prayers of a Parent for Young Adults*

*Prayers of a Parent for Adult Children*

Prayers of a Parent  
*for Adult Children*

Kathleen Nielson

  
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For our three sons,  
and their three beautiful wives, now like daughters,  
and our grandchildren, eight so far—  
what amazing gifts from God.  
I love praying for you!



# Contents

- Introduction 9
  
- 1. Of Worship and Trust 13
- 2. For Faith 15
- 3. For a Wanderer 17
- 4. For Word Habits 19
- 5. For Identity in You 21
- 6. For Love of the Church 23
- 7. For Habits of Holiness 25
- 8. For Service and Ministry 27
- 9. For Friendships 29
- 10. For a Heart to Pray 31
- 11. For Money Matters 33
- 12. For Ongoing Work 35
- 13. For a Mind Alive 37
- 14. For a Teaching Heart 39

## CONTENTS

15. For Humility 41
  16. For Faith in Suffering 43
  17. For a Heart of Mercy 45
  18. For Practicing Justice 47
  19. For Facing Fears 49
  20. For Wisdom in Cyberspace 51
  21. For a Joyful Heart 53
  22. For Thankfulness in Singleness 55
  23. For Blessing in Marriage 57
  24. For Faithful Longing for a Child 59
  25. For Grace in Parenting 61
  26. For Family Gatherings 63
  27. For Clear-Sighted Aging 65
  28. For Help in Trouble 67
  29. For Word-Shaped Thoughts 69
  30. For My Child to Think on Jesus 71
  31. For My Parent Heart 73
- Conclusion 75
- Prayers of a Parent 77

# Introduction

How being a parent makes one pray—through the years! Our adult children need our prayers. As we parents long to encourage and help them, prayer is no last resort. Our prayers are perhaps the most important way to help our children as they move on in life. Our prayers focus our own hearts before God, and they lift up our children to the heavenly Father who hears us, and who answers according to his perfect will. How amazing to think that Christian parents can keep reaching out in prayer to God our Father, who has shown his love to us in his own Son—and who gives us his Holy Spirit to help us pray, according to his Word.

These prayers have grown from my heart through years of praying for three sons—and now for their growing families. I know that you parents (and grandparents, and aunts and uncles, and spiritual mothers and fathers!) will surely pray for your children in your own words and with your own specific praises and petitions. My hope is that these prayers might mingle profitably with yours, as we all lift up the next generations to the Lord who knows and loves them perfectly.

These prayers grow out of the Scriptures; each is printed

with a brief related Bible passage and reflects that passage in its content. What confidence, that when we don't know how to pray for our children, the Spirit and the Word guide and help us. Just as the Scriptures show us Jesus Christ at the very center, so these prayers aim to focus on Jesus—his love, his work of salvation on our behalf, his glory, his blessed rule in every area of our lives, his coming again.

The prayers apply to sons and daughters both; they alternate, but any of them can easily be changed by switching the pronouns appropriately. Please note: the prayers are written in one parent's voice, although they can certainly be prayed by parents together. Parents, please know that these prayers, as they focus on our children, inevitably focus often on us parents too. Prayer stretches our hearts in all kinds of ways.

Let us pray!

Kathleen Nielson



*As for man, his days are like grass;  
he flourishes like a flower of the field;  
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.  
But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to  
everlasting  
on those who fear him,  
and his righteousness to children's children,  
to those who keep his covenant  
and remember to do his commandments.  
The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,  
and his kingdom rules over all. (Ps. 103:15–19)*

There's nothing like having adult children to help make clear just how quickly life moves on, generation after generation. It is humbling and good to watch the next generation take their places. It makes us pray indeed.

May we wrap these prayers all around with worship to the Lord who rules history and watches over his people forever. The world changes, and we change, but God's redemptive love in Jesus Christ his Son does not change: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

# Of Worship and Trust

I look up to you, O Lord of all,  
and see your everlasting greatness,  
bow before your heavenly throne.  
As I bow low, I see our fleetingness,  
our human days that sprout like grass, and grow,  
and then are gone.

I thank you that your steadfast love  
will never cease, but is  
from everlasting past to everlasting future  
on the ones who fear you;  
and your righteousness will not run out,  
but extends farther than we can see—  
to children's children.

I humbly pray, O Father God,  
that you would spread your love  
to generations, in and through my child,  
displaying your great gift of righteousness  
in this next human life, and then another,  
all passed on by your redeeming grace,  
received by faith in your redeeming Son,  
as your regenerating Spirit brings new life.

Through generation after generation,  
may praise keep on rising to your throne,  
until the Day when all of us will gather round it,  
shining like the Son,  
and never parting, never ceasing  
praise and worship to you, glorious Lord.

*But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.*

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (Heb. 10:39–11:3)*

The book of Hebrews gives us a picture of God's people through the ages pressing forward in faith, believing God's Word. In Old Testament times, God gave promises of things yet to come, and his faithful people lived in the assurance of things hoped for: they trusted his Word.

The fulfillment of all God's promises bursts into sight with the coming of Jesus, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the grave. We believers continue to live now in faith, looking back to the cross and the empty tomb, looking up to the glorified Christ in heaven, and looking forward to his promised coming again.

Let's pray that our children would be of those who press forward in faith, by God's grace, believing God's Word and assured of the hope of Christ's glorious return.

*Through a doorway: see Revelation 4–5.*

# For Faith

May my child walk on in faith,  
with eyesight ever clearer for the things not seen—  
invisible realities that draw believers forward  
with a hope that only grows with passing years.

Lord Jesus, may he see you  
as just through a doorway—  
Lamb of God who died, now risen, glorious,  
interceding there at God's right hand  
for the ones who are your own by faith,  
the gift of your amazing grace.

May those around him sense not fading dreams  
or shrinking spirit; may he ever more clearly grow  
in strength of soul, whether his body is weak or strong.  
May he exude conviction of those things not seen,  
so others are convicted, too, to look, and see.

When doubts arise, or doubters challenge,  
may he turn always to your powerful Word.  
By your word, Lord God, the universe was made—  
the seen made out of unseen, from the start.  
Please let him trust your Word so mercifully revealed,  
so fully shown to us in Christ your Son, our Savior.  
Please let your Word sustain and grow his faith,  
through every moment on the way to full and perfect sight.

May he walk on through life in faith,  
with eyesight ever clearer for the things he's yet to see.

*These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)*

You may know very personally the pain of watching a child wander, without faith in Christ. We ache for these children.

And we pray. Even as our hearts ache, we pray. For these wanderers we pray—and nothing makes us pray more, often persisting through years of petition, not knowing the answer to our prayers.

As we pray, we come to grasp the comfort and the power of prayer to the Lord who sees into every heart. In these prayers, we learn to rest in what we know—or *whom* we know, the sovereign and loving Lord of all.

*Your breathed-out Word:* see 2 Timothy 3:15–16.

# For a Wanderer

Lord God, I do not know and cannot see her heart,  
but all her steps appear to turn away from you,  
away from light and life found in your Son.

I know, Lord, that you see into the darkest heart;  
your perfect wisdom lays out all our paths.  
Please turn her feet and move her heart  
toward you, toward life in Christ, I pray.

I do not know just how you might ordain  
to call her to yourself to find eternal life  
and life abundant, through believing in your Son.

I know that you have given your breathed-out Word,  
the writings that can make us wise for salvation  
as we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,  
the living Word made flesh to save us.  
Please, by your Spirit and your people,  
speak your Word of life into her heart, I pray.

I do not know the ways in which her story will unfold,  
or how your perfect purposes will guide her path.

I know with thankful heart  
that you have sent your Son to give us life.  
I know you, Lord, and live in you.  
I trust in you, even as I daily ask,  
please lead her to believe in Christ your Son, I pray.

*Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes;  
and I will keep it to the end.  
Give me understanding, that I may keep your law  
and observe it with my whole heart. (Ps. 119:33–34)*

In most cases, words of parents to grown children are far fewer than they were to growing children. We don't speak to and with them quite as much—but we speak to the Lord about them just as much!

And we ask God continually that it would be his voice, his Word, to which our grown children would be listening. The inspired Scriptures are God's own breath to us humans; we need his breathed-out Word to live on by faith. Our children need this Word.

We can't always talk about this with our children, especially adult ones. But we can trust God's Word, pray according to it, and pray that our children would *keep* it, as the psalmist prays, now and to the end.