

Classic Christian Writings:

In Jeremiah 29:11, God makes a tremendous statement: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." What a powerful legacy for any child--or for any Christian! Almighty God has told us that He has wonderful plans for us. When I read this passage, I am encouraged immeasurably by the Lord's love for me. Does your child feel encouraged and uplifted daily by the Lord's love for him or her? You can allow God to make a profound impact on the lives of your children simply by making His Word known to them, and giving them opportunities to experience the power of the Word of God each day. There is no circumstance, no difficulty, or lifestyle which cannot be transformed, changed or overcome by the Word of God as the Holy Spirit convicts, strengthens or encourages His people. Once children realize who they are in Christ, they will have every tool they could possibly require to live a joyful, Christ-centered life.

Here are some practical steps toward bringing your children to fullness in Christ, through employing the powerful Word of God:

1. Pray Scriptural prayers for your children.

If you are not daily lifting up your children in prayer...who is? Stormie Omartian, noted author, has stated that "Prayer is seeking the presence of God and releasing the power of God into your children's lives." I know of no better way to do just this than to pray His Word into their lives and situations. For example: Pray Romans 12:9-12 by focusing the words of the scripture upon your child: Lord, may the love my child shows for others be sincere. Help him to hate what is evil and cling to what is good. May he be devoted to others in brotherly love. Help him to honor others above him. Father, I ask that my child would never be lacking in zeal, always keeping his spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. May he be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Help him desire to share with God's people who are in need, and may he always practice hospitality.

Of course, there are many passages of scripture which lend themselves to powerful prayer; however, you can now see the tremendous impact such praying will have upon the life of any child. Unleashing the very Word of God into their daily lives will allow you -- and them -- to see the power of God at work within them.

2. What Would Jesus Do?

Recently, a wonderful question has been circulating all over the world: What Would Jesus Do? It is a simple reminder that whatever we are about to do and say should be measured against the standard of Christ. When a child can simply stop and think how Jesus would handle a certain situation he or she is facing, it is a lot easier to make a wise decision. This will only happen if children are taught that Jesus is the standard upon which we are all measured as we walk with the Lord. It is the Word of God that reveals this behavior in powerful ways to our hearts and spirits. When children are truly walking in the Light of Christ, they will desire to seek after the answer to "What would Jesus do in my situation?" or "What would Jesus say if He were faced with this decision?" God's Word has revealed the character of Christ so fully that it is impossible not to have a good direction in which to head when these questions are asked. For example, when someone is unkind to your child, and he is angry or wishes to take revenge...ask your child, "What would Jesus do?" Take him to the passage in Matthew 5:43-45 that says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." Offer to pray with him about the "offender" until he is readily able to do it himself. By taking your child to the Scriptures, you will give him a lifetime strategy for making decisions, and for choosing right behavior, based on what God desires instead of what culture or human nature dictates.

3. Share daily truths from God's Word with your children.

When children learn that the Bible is indeed a living, active, relevant book for their lives today, they will be more inclined to make it the final Word on any decision, question or conflict in their lives. It will be the foundation upon which everything else is built. Knowing that God's Word is true is a great reassurance to children as they face temptations and trials in their lives. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

4. Encourage and help children to memorize God's Word, effectively hiding it in their hearts.

If children have the Word of God hidden in their hearts, it will be the first thing to surface in times of need, trouble or uncertainty. When they learn to depend upon God first – before depending upon their own resources, or the solutions of others, they will live “...peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:2). Deuteronomy 30:14 says, “No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.” Until the Word is learned, it cannot be obeyed. Similarly, children learn what is and is not acceptable in the home as they carelessly do the wrong things until they learn what the right behavior is. God's Word is the path to right living. Here also are several Scriptures for children to memorize to remind them of the importance of the Word in their daily walk with God: “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). “Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures” (Psalm 119:89-90). “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105).

5. Teach your children promises God has made in His Word, and how they can claim His promises through faith. His promises are true and right and trustworthy. As children learn that God means what He says, and that His Word can be trusted, their faith will be strengthened. For example, in Deuteronomy 31:8 we read: “The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” When a child is facing uncertainty, discouragement or fear, show him this powerful promise. Help him to memorize it and to claim it whenever he is in difficult circumstances: “Lord, You have said that you will go before me and be with me. You will never leave or forsake me. Because you promise this, I will not be afraid or discouraged.”

6. Pray for the past, present and future of your child's life:

A. Past--in some families, the past can play a detrimental role in the life of children. Often, this past has nothing to do with the behavior of the child, but on the behavior of ungodly generations before him. It is important not to accept or perpetuate a past that is unacceptable to God. Never dismiss or accept certain patterns such as alcoholism or divorce that keep showing up by saying, “Well, these things just seem to happen in our family” or, “It just runs in our family.” Jesus gives us victory over such bondages. Things that tend to “run” in certain families do not have to continue, just as having “red hair” is not an acceptable explanation for a child's anger or stubbornness. The power of the Word of God can break such bondages. “You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:5-6).

The sins that happened in previous generations can be removed by a generation that loves, honors and obeys God. Fight back with the Word of God: Isaiah 61:1 says, “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.” In 2 Corinthians 5:17, we read, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Galatians 5:1--“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Titus 3:3-7 --“At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” 1 Peter 1:3-5--“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

B. Present--children have very real concerns and needs each day. Ask your child daily how you can pray for him or her. Everything is very serious to them – relationships, tests, sporting events, decisions, right vs. wrong. No matter what age, our children struggle with these issues and others on some level regularly. Reminding them of God's tender care and guidance can reassure even the most anxious child. “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

C. Future – even if your children are very young, it is appropriate to pray for their futures. Your prayers today should focus on your child's tomorrows just as powerfully as his present. Most likely, your child's future spouse has already been born. You want to pray that he or she is being raised by godly parents, and will grow up delighting in the Lord, and being prepared to be just the right life's partner for your child. It is

important to pray for your child's schooling, work, friends, and ministry – in whatever area it might be. If your child is older and already married, or working, etc. you can adjust your prayers to reflect their futures as well. Continue to remind them, help them to memorize, and always pray for them Jeremiah 29:11--“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

These are just a few of the many ways in which the transforming power of the Word of God can impact your child's life. No matter how busy our lives get, they should never be so busy that we cannot share the delight of the Word of the Lord with our children. May the Lord bless and keep you as you raise up this new generation for the glory of God – to be used by Him to do more than we could ever think or imagine!