

"Mining the riches of Scripture, Stanley guides us to intercede for our moms' and dads' greatest needs and to consider our own duty to love and honor them. As you seek to glorify God as the son or daughter he's called you to be, this book will be an excellent resource."

Megan Hill, Editor, *The Gospel Coalition*

"While I'm quick to pray for my husband, children, and church, I often forget to pray for the hearts and lives of my own parents. I'm so grateful for Chelsea's wisdom and helpful prompts! I look forward to using this resource in my own life."

Emily Jensen, Co-author, *Risen Motherhood*

"Chelsea Stanley equips us with biblical truth and encouragement to pray for every kind of parent in every kind of situation. This book is immensely practical and has spurred me to pray faithfully and specifically for my own parents."

Glenna Marshall, Author, *Everyday Faithfulness*

"I grew up knowing that my parents prayed for me every day, but it took me a long time to realize I could (and should) pray for them too. This book is a wonderful guide to help me see how to do that in a way that is rooted in Scripture and honoring to them."

Barnabas Piper, Author, *Hoping for Happiness*

"This book deals in things that are particularly close to God's heart—his word, earnest prayer, and caring for our parents. The practice Stanley invites us into is full of promise in all seasons, both for the ones prayed for and the one praying."

Mike Bullmore, Senior Pastor,
Crossway Community Church

"This book has blessed me so much, and has reminded me that ultimately, if I want to bless and honor my loved ones, I've got to start with prayer."

Isabel Tom, Author, *The Value of Wrinkles*

"Scripture saturated, accessible, soul-stirring, and convicting. I recommend this practical aid to young and old as a thoughtful encouragement in a duty we too easily neglect: praying for our parents. Spending time praying for your parents through this study will warm your affections, encourage repentance, and help you to implore God to do what only he can."

Greg Morse, Staff Writer, desiringGod.org

"Chelsea Stanley has blessed the church by giving us this wise and biblically sound advice on how to pray for our parents. Her model of basing our prayers directly on Scripture is both wise and instructive. Get this book and use it as a tool to bless your parents and strengthen your own prayer life."

John Dunlop M.D., Geriatrician, Author,
Finishing Well to the Glory of God

"Chelsea Stanley gives us a necessary reminder—our parents are in need of prayer. Here's an insightful Scriptural guide to help us do just that!"

Barbara and Stacy Reaach
(mother and daughter-in-law), Authors

"Surely one of the most important things we can do for our parents is pray for them? And yet so often we run out of steam or we're not sure how. This book will energise you and inspire you to keep going."

Matt Beeby, Rector, Saint James Gerrards Cross



FOR YOUR
PARENTS

CHELSEA STANLEY

5 things to pray for your parents

Prayers that change things for an older generation

© Chelsea Stanley, 2021

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FOREWORD

BY TIM CHALLIES

A few years ago, I wrote a series of blogs called “The Commandment We Forgot.” The commandment in question was one pertaining to the whole life of every human being. It was a commandment with application to the home, church, and workplace; a commandment that provides a stable foundation to all of society. Yet it was, and is, a commandment that is sorely neglected today. It is the fifth of God’s ten great commandments to humanity: “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you” (Deuteronomy 5 v 16).

Did you notice that God attaches blessings to this commandment? Writing centuries later, the apostle Paul calls it “the first commandment with a promise” (Ephesians 6 v 2). The blessings take shape in two forms: a long life and a good life. These promises were not guarantees. Rather, they point to the truth that those who honor their parents generally experience a better life than those who do not. Why? Because

those who honor their parents are doing things God's way, living in the way God created humans to live.

But what is honor? Biblically, the word honor refers to weight or significance. To honor our parents we are to attach great worth to them and great value to our relationship with them. It is to respect and revere them, to speak well of them, and to treat them with kindness, gentleness, dignity, and esteem. We are to ensure they are cared for and even to make provision for them when necessary. All of that and much more is bound up in this little word. Such honor can be expressed in a number of ways: forgiving our parents, esteeming them publicly and privately, seeking their wisdom, supporting them, and providing for them.

And here, in this little guide, Chelsea Stanley points us to another important way in which we can fulfill God's command to honor our parents: by praying for them.

To honor our parents is no easy call. We're bound to encounter difficult seasons and hard decisions. We need the Spirit's help. That's why this book is doubly useful as we seek to obey the commandment we forgot. First, as we lift our parents before the throne of grace and pray God's blessings upon them, we honor them before the Lord in that very moment. And second, as we pray for our own heart, and for our relationship with our parents, we will be empowered to love and serve them better in word and deed. And on both accounts, we can enjoy God's assurance that obeying his command to honor our parents will lead to great blessing.

Tim Challies

Blogger and Author, Challies.com

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will help you to pray in 21 different areas and situations for your mother or father—be they biological or adoptive, working or retired, fit or frail, married or separated, believers or unbelievers. There are five different things to pray for each of the 21 areas, so you can use this book in a variety of ways.

- *You can pray through a set of “five things” each day, over the course of three weeks, and then start again.*
- *You can take one of the prayer themes for the week and pray one point every day from Monday to Friday.*
- *Or you can dip in and out of it, as and when a particular need arises in your family’s life.*
- *There’s also a space on each page for you to write in the names of specific situations or concerns that you intend to remember in prayer.*

While I’ve used “parents” plural throughout this guide, I know that for a variety of reasons—some of them very painful—not everyone will be praying for two parents. I also acknowledge that each reader will come to this book with a unique family dynamic

and history. While we can't capture everyone's particular situations in each prompt, I trust that with a bit of creativity you'll be able to consider your family's needs and adjust your prayers accordingly with the Spirit's help.

Each prayer suggestion is based on a passage of the Bible, so you can be confident as you use this guide that you are praying great prayers—prayers that God wants you to pray because they're based on his word and aligned with his heart.

As Christians, God commands us to be devoted to prayer and to honor our parents (Romans 12 v 12; Ephesians 6 v 2). When we honor our parents by including them in our prayers, we obey both commands which is doubly pleasing to God!

The command to honor our parents comes with a beautiful promise—"that it may go well with you" (Ephesians 6 v 3). I hope that you will reap this blessing as you come before God with prayers that change things for an older generation.



PRAYING THAT GOD WILL...

SAVE MY
PARENTS

JOHN 3 v 16-21

PRAYER POINTS:

Father, you are the God who saves. Please help my parents to...

1 KNOW GOD'S LOVE

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (v 16).

God's love toward our parents is deep, steadfast, and pure. Our own love for them pales in comparison. Pray that your mom and dad would look at Christ's sacrifice and know how much God loves them. Thank him for loving you with this same love too.

2 BELIEVE IN JESUS

"... that whoever believes in him..." (v 16).

Do your parents believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation? If they do, praise God for saving them from their sin. If they don't, pray boldly in the power of the Holy Spirit and the name of Jesus that God would cause their hearts to believe. Ask God to give you opportunities and courage to share your faith with them.

3 NOT PERISH

"... shall not perish..." (v 16).

Whether we're believers or not, we all have to face the fact that our earthly bodies will eventually perish. Pray that your parents would have a growing sense of their own mortality—causing them to soberly contemplate what comes after the grave and swiftly run to Jesus to escape the sting of eternal death.

4 HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

"... but have eternal life" (v 16).

Christ died for our sins so that, if we believe in him, we might live with God and enjoy him forever in heaven. Pray that your parents would take hold of this promise and allow it to impact the way they live out the rest of their days on this earth as well.

5 COME TO THE LIGHT

"But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God" (v 21).

Those who live in the truth of the gospel—the good news that Jesus died for our sins—don't need to fear the light. What things from your parents' past or present might cause them to shrink back into the shadows? Pray that they would confidently come into the light, where sin is exposed, shame flees, and good works shine bright for God's glory.



PRAYING THAT GOD WILL...

GIVE THEM
PURPOSE

PSALM 90 v 12-17

PRAYER POINTS:

Lord, you created my parents to enjoy and glorify you. I ask you to...

1 HUMBLE THEM

"Teach us to number our days" (v 12).

When we "number our days," we realize that our time on earth is limited. This could have a paralyzing effect on some, but pray instead that it would propel your parents to humbly acknowledge our everlasting God and to live out the remainder of their days in his service.

2 HAVE COMPASSION

"Have compassion on your servants" (v 13).

How much we all need God's compassion! We belong to him, but we usurp his purpose for our lives and selfishly labor for our own success and glory instead. Take a moment to confess your own idolatry to the Lord. Then ask him to convict your parents of their sin and to have mercy on you all.

3 SATISFY THEIR SOULS

"Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love" (v 14).

The world offers our parents a smorgasbord of goodies that promise to satisfy them. They're told that *this cruise, this magic pill, this retirement village* will make them happy, but the Bible says that true satisfaction comes from God. Pray that your parents would be satisfied in him and that they would know his unfailing love day by day.

4 SHOW YOUR DEEDS

"May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children" (v 16).

The work of redemption is God's most marvelous deed. If your parents are God's servants, marvel at the saving work Christ accomplished on their behalf. If they are not his servants, pray that he would allow you to behold his splendor as you watch him do a work in their hearts that only he can do.

5 ESTABLISH THEIR WORK

"Establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands" (v 17).

Think about the work your parents do each day. Whether they work with their hands, sit at a desk, or volunteer in retirement, ask God to make their work fruitful—not for their own personal gain or praise, but for the good of their fellow man and the glory of God.