

PBC20070512Sat

The Power of a Praying Mother

2 Timothy 1:3-7

May 12, 2007- Saturday 6:00 PM - Dr. David H. McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message, The Power of a Praying Mother]

[applause] Certainly as you pause to reflect on the influence of a mother who prays, you recognize the importance of taking time on... on the calendar and on the weekend to ah... pause and to say thanks to all of our moms. And we do want to say to everyone of our mothers and our grandmothers who are here ah... this evening God bless you. Thank God for you and thank you for your prayers. I think many of us would just echo that and ah... want to give thanks to God for so many of you who have influenced the lives of your families and are continuing to influence the generations that are yet to come.

And certainly our mothers are ah... the greatest influencers in the world. So much of what we do and what we think comes from that which is early instilled in us by our moms. Our reactions, our attitudes, ah... so many of our values and concerns all are the result of the influence of a mother in my life and in your life. I bet if you stop for just a moment... well, I guess I shouldn't bet... but you know what I mean. I would suppose that if you paused for just a moment to think, to listen, you can hear your mother's voice speaking to you. You can remember things that she said to you joyfully, and you can remember things that spoke to you sharply, and you can recall her voice and her influence.

Several people paused to reflect on some things that they had learned from their mothers and I loved this little list that I read just a few days ago. Let me share it with you. Some things my mother taught me:

- One, my mother taught me to appreciate a job well done... to appreciate a job well done. She said, "If you're going to kill each other do it outside. I just finished the cleaning." [laughter]
- Somebody else said my mother taught me prayer. "You'd better pray that will come out of the carpet." [ha] [laughter]
- My mother taught me logic. "Because I said so; that's why."
- My mother taught me foresight. "Make sure you wear clean underwear in case you're in an accident." [laughter]
- My mother taught me irony. "Keep crying and I'll give you something to cry about." [laughter]
- (I love this one) My mother taught me osmosis. "Shut your mouth and eat your supper!" [laughter]
- My mother taught me anticipation. "Just wait till we get home!" [laughter]

- My mother taught me about genetics. "You're just like your father."
[laughter]
- And then my mother taught me about justice. "One day you're going to have kids and I hope they turn out just like you." [pastor laughs]
[laughter]

Well, we certainly learn a lot of things from our moms, don't we? But, of course, for all the things that we learn and all the things that we remember, nothing is greater and nothing is more important than the things that they teach us that help us to live a good and a godly life. It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "No man is poor who has had a godly mother."

And if you've been blessed here this evening with the influence of a godly mother, whether she's still here or has stepped into heaven, one of the greatest blessings of your life is the influence of a godly mother.

And you know the Bible has a lot to say about mothers, and about what our role and attitude is to be in dealing with our mothers. In fact, if I could just summarize what the Bible teaches on this subject, the Bible basically teaches us three things. The Bible teaches us that biblically mothers are to be honored by their children; they're to be treasured by their husbands; and they are to be praised by others. And if you were to do a survey of all that the Bible teaches, it could be compressed down to these 3 basic concepts. And so the whole idea of Mother's Day and a Mother's Day celebration is really a thoroughly biblical concept.

And certainly of all the things that we honor and all of the things that we consider about mothers, what we've just heard sung in testimony is that which is of the utmost importance; that a mother can not only teach and train and lead and influence her children and her family and therefore, the world, she also is to be honored and is to be applauded for her efforts and her endeavors in prayer... in prayer. And if you're a mom there is nothing that is greater and more important that you can do than to pray for your children.

Now we've been involved in a series of studies that we're calling THE REAL SECRET, because there's such attention and attraction to a very popular book called The Secret. And it simply says the secret is to make yourself the center of the universe and you're like one big magnet that can bring everything to you. But the Bible teaches us that the secret... the real secret to life is learning our dependence upon God, and looking to Him and letting Him meet every need and make every provision in life.

And so we've been studying together the prayer... the Lord's prayer that is found in the book of Matthew, chapter 6. I want to invite you to look there with me because we're going to look at yet another of the key elements here in this prayer. Matthew chapter 6 and we begin our reading in verse 9:

9) *Jesus said, "Pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10) "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

11) *"Give us this day our daily bread. 12) And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors'".*

And then the verse that I want you to look at tonight. Verse 13... here it is:

13) *"'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil... lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'"*

Jesus taught that one of the secrets to effective prayer was to pray a prayer of protection. And I would venture to say tonight that of the many prayers that mothers pray, that probably the most oft mentioned and the most oft lifted prayer from a mother's heart is a prayer of protection for her children.

How many of you have ever prayed a prayer of protection for someone? How many of you have ever prayed a prayer like that? Okay, that's almost all of us. How many of you have ever asked someone to pray for protection in your life? Okay, that's good and that's biblical.

The Bible teaches us that we need protection because we live in a dangerous world and we live in an evil world. Our world is not simply filled with people who are sick; the Bible says our world is filled with people who are sinful and that the impact of sin and of the presence of Satan working and moving in this world is that evil has been unleashed on planet earth and one of the great challenges... one of the great battles that we must engage spiritually is a battle to prevail against the powers of darkness, and we do that through the ministry of prayer.

Prayer is vital. Prayer is essential for every family. And of all the things that we can do, praying for our children... praying in our families... growing in grace and knowledge of the word of God and standing as a shield in faith against the fiery darts of the... of the evil one is an important part of our life, of our influence and of our ministry. And not only do we need to do it... mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, grandparents, extended family members... but there are people in every one of our lives who are in our sphere of influence who need our prayer and need to know that we are praying for them.

If you were to keep your hand there in the book of Matthew, and turn back a few more pages over to the book of 2 Timothy, there you would find the Apostle Paul expressing his heart, his desire, his prayer for a young man who he referred to as his son in the ministry.

Timothy, the one whose name is entitled in the book, is actually not a biological child of Paul the Apostle but he was, as though it were, close enough to him to be like family. And as Paul was speaking about Timothy, he reflected on not only his own desire for Timothy but he reflected on the lingering and the abiding influence of some very godly women in Timothy's life. Second Timothy chapter 1 beginning in verse 3... I want you to read it with me. He says:

3) *I thank God, whom I serve as I did my ancestors with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers* (Listen to this...) night and day.

That's how we pray for our children, isn't it? We pray for them night and day. And that's what Paul said, "I pray for you, Timothy, night and day." And then he says in verse 4:

4) *As I remember your tears I long to see you that I may be filled with joy.* 5) *And I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and now in your mother Eunice, and now I am sure dwells in you as well.* 6) *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.* 7) *For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and of love and of self control.*

God has given us a spirit not of fear, but of power [tap] and love [tap] and self-control [tap]. But as Paul was underscoring and highlighting what was going on in Timothy's life and challenging him, he looked back to the fact that what had really been significant in Timothy's life is the influence of a grandmother and of a mother who lived out their faith day in and day out.

I believe, ladies, that you can have an incredible impact in the life of your family and your children if you will learn the influence of Lois and of Eunice in the lives [life] of young Timothy. I believe, men, that we like Paul can see and understand that there is a role of prayer, support and encouragement, of recognition and honor that is to be given in our homes, in our families, and to others, as we seek to extend the influence of our life spiritually, especially in the lives of a new generation, and in particular in our children.

And I believe that tonight there are some very simple concepts that we can focus on that are important for us as adults and are important for our children. In many ways I'm going to look at tonight a principle and each principle has a finger pointing upward, saying to us... to you, to me... maybe I should say pointing outward to us as adults, this is something that we need to do and here's why. And then it will point to our children and say this is why they need for us to do it as well. And so I want to identify these principles because they are principles that are so very vital and essential for our walk with Christ.

Now before I begin to give you these principles to night, let me remind you that God has given instruction as to how families are to deal with their children. What the role and the responsibilities of moms and dads are in the home and in the family. And the Bible says very specifically in the book of Proverbs, chapter 22 and verse 6 that this is God's plan and this is God's job description for us. We are to train up our children:

6) *train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it... Train up a child in the way in that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Now certainly some people have taken that and attempted to make that a promise... a promise meaning that if you will do what your children need you to do, they'll never stray. But I believe that it is not so much a promise as it is a precept and a principle. That's it's saying this is what you need to do, this is how you need to deal with them. And that as you do, you will shape them and mold them and develop them according to the plan that God has for their lives; because every child is different, every child is unique and specific and every child needs intentional and specific training according to the gifts, the abilities, the demeanor, the personality that God has given to that child; and our job is to train them up according to their bents the way they should go and to be able to direct them to the Lord.

Now I believe that when the Bible says in Proverbs 22 and verse 6 we're to "*train up a child in the way they should go*", it's talking about 2 things. One, it's talking about guidance, and every child needs guidance. Children need rules, boundaries, relationships and opportunities. They need all of these things. But as much as they need opportunity to express themselves, they need some boundaries and they need some limits to know where that expression needs to stop. And so there's a balance in life of giving guidance to children that helps them to follow the right path of life, that doesn't just let them run off like rebels, but on the other hand, that allows them to find and discover freedom and growth in their life. So we want to guide our children. And when the Bible says "*train up a child in the way they should go*" it's speaking about guidance.

But it's also speaking about something else: it's speaking about conscience. That we need to imprint the conscience of our children to help them to know what is right and what is wrong. To help them to know how to respond when they do what is right and when they do what is wrong. And therefore, when the Bible tells us that we are to "*train up our children*" what the Bible is saying to us, is that we are to focus in on the specific and the important task of pointing our children to Christ... to the Lord. We are to point them to the Lord. We're to teach them to fear the Lord. We're to encourage them to be shaped and developed according to the plan, the purpose and the pattern that God has for them.

And therefore, what I'm saying to you tonight is... is really a very important truth and it is this: that the home needs to be [tap] the seedbed [tap] for evangelism [tap]! If there's any place that children need to hear faith and learn faith and grow in faith it needs to be in the home. And many times when it comes to the matter of missions and evangelism we talk about going out into the world and reaching the world and changing the world! But may I say to you that the place that the mission field needs to start is at your doorstep, in your home with your children! Because our children are going to go places that we will never go and they're going to

do things that we will never do! And it is essential that every one of us focuses on the opportunity that we have to win our children to Christ.

You know when it comes to missions there's an old axiom that says this: The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home. In other words, that light that shines out and reaches people around the world is first and foremost a light that is real and vibrant in our lives here today. But may I say this, the light that will shine the farthest is the light that shines the brightest in the home and we need to start in the home, focusing our prayers and our attention on protection. And the greatest protection that you can seek for your children is for them to know Jesus Christ and to follow Him all the days of their life. That's what we want for our children. We want them to know and to follow Jesus Christ.

And therefore intentionally and aggressively and specifically we need to focus on winning a new generation of children to Jesus Christ. Do you not know that that's what happening in the world around us? Do you not know that other religions are massive propagating themselves by instilling guidance and conscience in their children, but not according to the Scripture? Do you not know that that is an issue for us in this world in this nation today? That we must change the world? But we can't do it unless we change our children, and they truly, personally know Jesus Christ.

Now some people say, "Okay, you talk about trying to influence children, but don't you think that you can be a bit overly aggressive? Don't you think that you can call for a premature decision in the life of a child?" Well, certainly you can do that! Certainly you can do something to try to force your children ah... to adopt and to adapt faith at an early age in a way that is not becoming of their heart and of their life.

But let me just simply say that many in our world today have simply said, "Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to show my kid the alternatives and I'm going to let them make a choice. I'm going to give them an exposure to the Christian faith and I'm going to let them see what else is there and I'm going to let them make a choice."

Well, let me tell you the problem with that. If you let them just make a choice based on exposure in life, they're going to be overexposed to the things of the world and underexposed to the things of God. And the only way that they're ever going to really be changed [tap] is that they've got to be exposed consistently and faithfully to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! And that's what every church on every street corner in every place needs to do. It needs to seek to win children to Christ.

You know Jesus said [tap] that this was biblical. Did you know that? Jesus said this is what we should do. Don't you remember in Mark chapter 10 that there came a day in the life and the ministry of Jesus when a group of children stormed there to His side and... and... and the disciples were saying, "Let's get these kids back! All these kids here! They're... they're just

creating havoc!" And Jesus said, "Wait, let the children come to Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

You see, Jesus said you have to become like a child if you want to go to heaven. The way to be a... to go to heaven is not to act like an adult; it's to be childlike in your heart, childlike in your faith. And therefore the greatest thing that we can do is to share Jesus with our children so that at the earliest age... at the earliest stage they can know Him and love Him and follow Him.

Now you say tonight in your mind, "When is it right to share Christ with a child? And when should a child come to Christ?" Well I would simply say that depends... it depends on several things. One, it depends on your child's temperament. You do know that every child has a different temperament, right? If you have more than one child in your home you know that those 2 children may have the same name but that may be the only thing that they have in common. And they spend the rest of their days and their nights fighting over the things they don't have in common, right? Because they have different temperaments. Some of our children are very high-strung, some of our children are very low-key. And depending on the temperament of the child, some children are more responsive at an earlier age because they are more sensitive than other children.

In the book of Genesis chapter 25 and verse 27 the Bible describes the difference between 2 brothers... one named Esau and the other one named Jacob. The Bible says that Esau... that he was a skillful hunter and a lover of the field. And it says of Jacob that he was a quiet man who dwelt in tents. And so here these men were... they were brothers and yet one was a outdoorsy, rugged type... sort of an edgy guy, and the other one was a much meeker, more mild-mannered person. You see, even in these lives we see the difference. But you know that... you see that. And it has to do with temperament.

And then development... children develop differently. Some walk a little sooner than others; some talk a little sooner than others; some think a little bit more in depth than others do at an earlier age. And so children can be different in temperament, different in a development.

And then they're different in their interest and in their involvement. Some children at a very early age begin to just want to know more about the Bible and the things of God. And when they do, you need to nurture that and you need to encourage that. And you need to do everything that you can to do what Paul said here to Timothy... to fan the flame and let the sparks begin to fly. Let the heat begin to build up. Let them begin to grow that they may know Christ in their lives.

Well I said to you that I had some principles. Let me just share these simple 4 principles with you tonight, and then we'll be free. First and foremost, if we want to fulfill the plan that God has for us in prayer and the mission that God has for us in seeing our children come to Christ, then

we need to understand the principle of priority. That the matter of praying for our children to come to Christ and the matter of influencing them to come to Christ is a priority because it is a very serious thing.

Studies have shown time and time again that 85 percent of all the people who come to Christ do so before the age of 23. 85 percent of people who profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior do it before the age of 23! That's why Solomon said in Ecclesiastes chapter 12 and verse 1:

1) Remember your Creator in the days of your youth before the evil days come and the years draw near when you say 'I have no pleasure in them.'

That is, come to the Lord at an early time. Don't wait until your life has been ravaged and been seared by sin. Now, will God save adults? Yes, and He does! And thank God, time and time again when we gather we see adults who come to Christ and follow Christ! But how important it is... how vital it is... what a priority it is that children would come to Christ. And therefore the focus of our prayer and of our praying needs to be that our children would know Jesus Christ and would trust Jesus Christ! That they would come to Him, that they would know the Gospel and that they would receive Him.

What is the Gospel? It is the message of the death, of the burial, and of the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Who Jesus is, what Jesus came to do... Die on the cross for our sins and to offer us the free gift of eternal life. And therefore when we pray... therefore when we pray the prayer "deliver us from evil" we need to also pray the prayer... pray that our children will trust the Savior and come to Jesus Christ. Believe on His name, confess Him, and therefore in our lives the priority of prayer is praying for the salvation of our children. And the priority of our prayer is that our children will be saved!

Then there's the principle of simplicity. Not only the principle of priority, but it is important for us to pray that children would be saved and that we can pray that prayer. But the principle of simplicity... Did you know that it is a very simple thing to lead a child to Christ? Because children are so open. Children are so eager. Children are willing and ready to believe. Now they need to understand what to believe and they need to see the importance of believing the truth of the Gospel.

But when I tell you that leading children to Christ and praying that they will come to Christ is a simple thing, I'm not trivializing the Gospel; I'm just speaking the truth. That in a very simple way we can pray, "Lord, let them come to Jesus" and in a very simple way they can open their hearts and receive Him.

I'll always remember the night that we were sitting at the corner at the Taco Bell on 81A, along the Atlantic coast ah... there on a highway, waiting at a red-light when my daughter Mary Elizabeth, at that time 5 years of age, sitting in the backseat of the car simply said this in conversation. She said, "Dad's a Christian, mommy's a Christian, (her brother) Joseph's a Christian." And then her countenance fell and she said, "I don't know if

I'm a Christian." We were sitting there and I'm looking out the window at the Taco Bell and I'm sitting there at the red-light, thinking, "Okay, I'm in the car." I'm thinking, "This is a moment! I need to talk to her in this moment." And just about the time I'm trying to decide what to say next, she said, "I want to be a Christian." And her brother who was 8 years old, sitting next to her (the 5 year old) said, "Well, Lizzie, here's how you can a Christian." And he starts sharing the Gospel with her! And I'm in the front seat getting ticked off, thinking, "That's my job! I'm her dad!" [laughter] And before I could say anything, J... Joseph said, "Lizzie, you got to know that Jesus is God's Son, the Savior, and that He loves you; that Jesus died on the cross and that you have to be willing to confess your sins and receive Him into your heart." And you know what he said? He said, "Lizzie, would you like to do that right now?" I mean, the light is still red! I'm sitting there, thinking, "Wait a minute!" [laughter] And before anything else could happen, my son, an 8 year old, led my daughter, a 5 year old, in a prayer in the back seat of the car to receive Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. It was an incredible moment! [applause] It was a simple thing! It was a precious thing! And she didn't need her preacher daddy to lead her to Jesus! She just needed a brother who had already had the experience in his life.

Now, I'd been praying for her to be saved, just like I'd prayed for him to be saved, and just as I continue to have people on my prayer list that I want to see saved. But you see, praying for people to be saved is a simple thing, and yet it's a simple thing for children to be saved! And so we need to understand the principle of simplicity.

Now for children to be saved, there are some things they need to understand. One, they have to have a concept of sin. They have to know what sin is. You see, to be saved everyone has to understand sin... that sin is not living up to God's plan and God's standard; that sin is violating and therefore living in a way that God would have us to live. The Bible says [Romans 3:23], "*For all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*" And I've got some news for you; it's not the greatest news but parents, you better believe it! Your children are sinners and they need to know it! Did you know that? They need you to preach to them at home. Not to be condemned, not to demean them. You know what I'm talking about. But they need to understand the truth about sin. And they need to know what sin is.

I told our 11:00 o'clock crowd last Sunday... I was talking to them about sin and in a Sunday school class some teachers were talking about sin and they were talking about sins of commission and sins of omission. And the teacher said, "Now what's a sin of commission?" A little girl lifted up her hand and she said teacher, I know what it is. A sin of commission is when your parents tell you do something and you do something else or you don't do what they told you to do. You disobey." She said, "That's a sin of commission." And the teacher said, "That's exactly right." And then a little boy lifted up his hand and he said, "I know what the sins of omission are!" She said, "You do?" He said, "Yeah, I know what they are." He said, "Those are the sins that you're planning to do but you just

haven't gotten around to them yet." [laughter] No, sins of omissions are not doing what we know we should do. Sins of commission are violating the things that we know that are right and doing what is wrong.

Certainly our children need to have a conscience. Our children need to understand what sin is. But if a child can understand what is right and what is wrong... what sin is, then a child can come to a place in life that they can make a commitment of faith, turning from sin and trusting in Jesus Christ. I've seen that happen time and time again. And that's why we have given so much emphasis and ministry and resource to our children's ministry here and will do that in the north campus, and will do that for generations to come because we want boys [clap] and [clap] girls [clap] to know the simple [clap] truth that Jesus loves them and Jesus died to save them, and that they can be saved. It's a simple thing but it's such a vital thing for them.

And you know it takes just as much grace to save a child as it does an adult. It's not that there's more grace for an adult and a little less grace for a child. It just takes grace to be saved. [Ephesians 2:8-9] *"For by grace are you saved, through faith and that not of yourself; it's the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* And we just want to help our children to know the simple truth by calling on the name of Jesus.

So the principle of priority... it's important, it's a serious thing to win our children to Christ; the principle of simplicity. While they don't have to be PhD's And ThD's and know all the books of the Bible, they can know Jesus and they can trust Him. And yet this is the wonder of the Gospel: it's so simple that a child can receive it and yet it is so wonderful that all the theologians throughout all of history have never unraveled the mysteries of God's grace! That's the wonder of God's truth and the Gospel.

But then there's another principle and that's the principle of productivity. Do you know why we pray for our children and why we want to be prayer warriors? For the principle of productivity. That at the earliest age and the earliest stage our children would trust Christ and follow Him so that they would live full and rewarding lives for Jesus Christ. So that they wouldn't waste their lives! So that they wouldn't spend time figuring out what life's not about, so that one day they go "Oh yeah, that's what it's about!"

So many people burn their years, burn their time, burn their life... tasting this, trying that... thinking if, then... if I get this, then this is going to happen! And yet when we teach our children to come to Christ and we pray that they would know Him, then there's the prayer of productivity... that they will live rich and full and meaningful lives all their days for Christ. Not wandering, not... not stum... stumbling around, but walking in the Light and following Jesus Christ.

So there's the principle of priority in our prayer, there's the principle of simplicity in our prayer and in their action, there's the principle of

productivity... living a full life, and then there's the principle of security.

Do you know the most secure thing that you can pray for your children is that they would come to know Jesus Christ? And do you know that the most secure thing that can happen to your child is that your child will come to a time, a place and a moment when they would call upon the name of the Lord that they might be saved. That's what you begin praying for them, and that's what you want to see them pray. "Lord Jesus, here's my life; I give my life to You." And so the greatest security that you can have as a parent is the security of knowing, not just that your children have been to church or not just that your children have heard the Bible, but that you children have trusted Christ and that Christ is living in them!

The Bible says [John 1:12], "*As many as receive Christ to them gives He the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe on His name.*" And when a child believes and receives Jesus Christ, that child becomes a child of God... not just your child, but God's child and they are secure in Him. Jesus says [John 10:28], "*I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand.*" When we pray, "Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", we can pray as well, "Lord, I know that my child is in Your hand, and I am trusting that You will care for them and that You will lead them and that You will guide them." Praying for our children.

The principle of priority, the principle of simplicity, the principle of productivity, the principle of security.

I am the beneficiary of a wonderful praying mother. My mom would rise every morning of her life and pray for me and pray for our family... for her children. I'm holding in my hand tonight one of her daily prayer journals. This journal is one of about 10 or 12 like this that I have from ah... latter years of her life. And every page is just filled with a short sequence of prayers. Not long prayers. Every one has... every one of these pages has 4 different entries of prayer on it. But it's just her heart poured out for her children, praying for me, praying for my wife, praying for my children to be saved when they were little, praying for all kinds of things. And I am so grateful to God for the influence of a mother who prayed. And I hope, moms, that you know tonight that the priority [tap], the simplicity [tap], the productivity [tap], the security [tap] that you can have in praying is vital in your life!

But let me just kinda wrap these final moments tonight by saying when [tap] we [tap] pray [tap], what [tap] should [tap] we [tap] pray[tap]? Beyond praying for salvation, what should we pray and how should we pray for our children? And I came across a... a list... a list that is found ah... in Everything by Prayer by Sandy Day, and it's a list of things that a mother would pray for her children. Frankly, as I've read through my own mother's prayer journals, I've read these very things in her prayer. Let me just close by reading this list to you as to how to pray.

- One, pray for you children, that they will know Christ as a Savior at an early age. That's the thing that I focused on tonight. That's where it all begins... they they would know Him.
- But, number 2, that they would learn to love God's Word.
- Pray that they will have a hatred for sin. Why? Because sin is destructive; sin is deceptive; sin injures.
- Pray (listen to this) that they will be caught when they're guilty. [ha,ha] (Don't you love that?) God just catch 'em, expose 'em! Do whatever you gotta do! But pray that they would be caught because you want them to learn the consequences of hidden sin in their life and deception.
- Pray that they will be protected from the evil one in each area of their live... spiritual, emotional, physical.
- Pray that they will have a responsible attitude in all their interpersonal relationships. (That is, that they would take responsibility for themselves, not just blaming others.)
- Pray that they would respect those in authority over them.
- Pray that they would desire the right kinds of friends and be protected from the wrong kinds of friends in life.
- Pray that they will be kept from the wrong mate and saved for the right one.
- Pray that they will... they as well as those they marry... will be kept pure until marriage.
- Pray that they will learn to totally submit to God and actively resist Satan in all circumstances.
- Pray that they will be single-hearted, willing to be sold out to Jesus Christ!
- And pray that they will be hedged in so that they cannot find their way to wrong people or wrong places. And that wrong people cannot find their way to them.

Praying for our children, prevailing in prayer, giving them the gift... the blessing... the joy of a praying parent. And moms, I know tonight that many of you are praying these prayers. And we join you and we affirm you and we pray for you that God will give you strength and God will give you grace.

Many of you in this room tonight... not just mothers, but many of you in this room are here because of a praying mother, a praying parent in your life. And I thank God for those! But let me say this to you tonight: your parents can pray for you, but there's 1 prayer that they cannot pray for you and that's the prayer that you have to pray... the prayer that says, "Jesus, I'm a sinner and Jesus, I want to be saved."

Now you parents can pray for you to be saved, but there has to come a day, a time, a place, a moment where you recognize your need to be saved and you open your heart and receive Jesus Christ. And before we walk away tonight, having talked about prayer, having talked about salvation,

having talked about this life in Christ, if you've never done it, tonight I want to pray for you and I want to invite you to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Others of you tonight are here and you've been praying for God to lead you in life. You as a mother, you as a father, you as a family have been praying for God's strength and help for your family and you need a church family who can put their arms around you as we sought to do with these parents and babies tonight. And you need someone to support you and encourage you. Could I just say to you tonight, Prestonwood would welcome you. We would extend our hearts, our ministry, our love and our support to you in prayer. And if you need a church home and a church family we would invite you to come and to be here.

Maybe some of you just need to come and recommit yourself as a mom, as a dad, as a parent, to the task that's in front of you. You can use this altar as a place to pray. Whatever God is speaking to your heart tonight, I want to encourage you not just to hear and then walk away, but to hear and to respond.

And so Father, in this moment and in this time we come to You. We thank You that You're a God who hears and answers prayer. And Father, I thank You that I can stand here tonight with the answer to a mother's prayer for a son who would love you and follow You. But Father, I stand here tonight as Your child, and thanking You for the fact that I have the privilege along with many others here to pray for people, [music begins] some men and some women, some boys and some girls... that they would come to know Jesus, would trust Him, would love Him, would follow Him. And Father, I just pray right now that there would just be people all over this building who in their heart would say 'Jesus, I need You. Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner. Jesus, I give my life to You. Take my life. Make me the person You want me to be.' Lord Jesus, hear those prayers even now and give them the grace and the courage to respond. Lord, lead people into this fellowship tonight, and just whatever You would want to do by Your Spirit, would You just take the restraint, the self-consciousness, the obstacle of size... everything away, and let us right now just respond to You. In Jesus' name I pray. AMEN

As you look up I want you to stand up. I want you to stand up because together we're going to sing. We're going to sing a hymn... a chorus of invitation and we're going to invite men and women and boys and girls to come to Jesus tonight. Wherever you are, there in the terrace, here on the lower floor. I'm simply going to ask that you just make your way right here with me. I'm not going to embarrass you. I just want to meet you here, okay? I just want you to come and stand here with me. Not looking at the crowd... just looking at me. But if you want to know Christ, if you want a church home... a church family... if you want to make a commitment in some form tonight, or need someone to pray for you, I'm simply going to ask you to just come and stand right here with me. As we sing, as we pray, as we wait. Come and follow Christ right now.