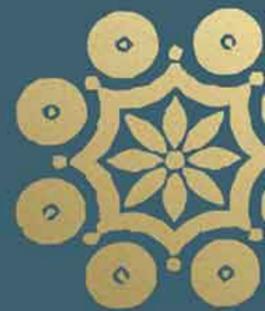
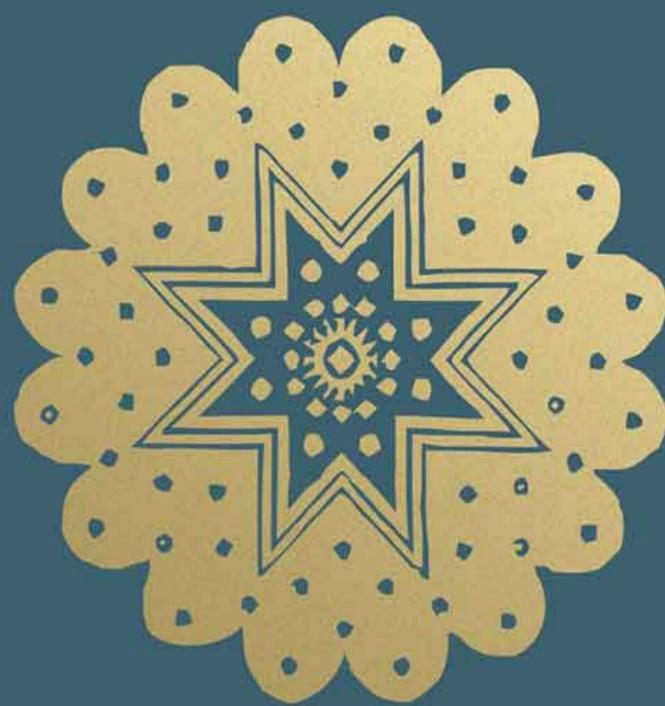


Prayers  
of a Parent  
*for Young Adults*



Kathleen Nielson

## Praise for This Book

As our children grow, so do many of our concerns. Kathleen Nielson's beautifully written book *Prayers of a Parent for Young Adults* is a wonderful guide to help parents pray for a variety of needs. Although young adults may leave our homes, they never leave our hearts. These daily prayers will bless them wherever they may go.

—**Melissa Kruger**, Director of Women's Initiatives, The Gospel Coalition

God invites us to come into his presence in the name of our elder Brother, Jesus, and make our requests known. Much parenting happens on our knees. But what do we say? How do we pray? In *Prayers of a Parent for Young Adults*, Kathleen Nielson provides prayers using Scripture and her own experience. Take this book and learn how to pray by "listening" to Kathleen as she has prayed for her children.

—**Juan R. Sanchez**, Senior Pastor, High Pointe Baptist Church, Austin; Author, *The Leadership Formula: Develop the Next Generation of Leaders in the Church*

## 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 Young Adults*

# 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 Young Adults*

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!



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# Introduction

How being a parent makes one pray—without ceasing! The prayers of this volume reach out to the Lord for our young adult children: from late teens into early adulthood. In these years, children leap into independence, pursue life callings, and often leave home. Prayer has been crucial from the beginning, but as these young adults begin to find their own pathways, we parents even more deeply understand the importance and the comfort of praying for our children. 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



*Our soul waits for the LORD;  
he is our help and our shield.  
For our heart is glad in him,  
because we trust in his holy name.  
Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,  
even as we hope in you. (Ps. 33:20–22)*

How beautifully the psalmist teaches us to wait on the Lord and hope in the Lord—and how crucial are these lessons in relation to parenting!

We begin this volume with a psalm that turns us toward true hope. These young adult years are the ones in which we might hope to see the fruit of our labors in our children. But it is good for us to step back and remember where our hope ultimately lies: in the unfailing faithfulness and steadfast love of our sovereign God who sent his only Son to save us. We can trust in his holy name, all the days of our lives and of our children's lives.

# Of Thanks and Trust

O Lord my God, in you I rest my soul,  
for only you are my help and shield;  
my heart is glad in you.  
As I fill up the years with prayers  
for my dear child,  
I trust you,  
all because of who you are,  
O Lord my God,  
the God of steadfast love  
who gave your only Son for our salvation.

I'm praying always that your steadfast love  
would be upon my child,  
both now and evermore.  
I tell you, Lord, in faith,  
my trust and hope lie not  
in how, according to your providence,  
you send the answer to my prayers;  
I hope in you.

O Lord my God,  
I thank you that you hear my prayers.  
I thank you that you've granted me the blessing large  
of showing off your steadfast love  
before my child,  
imperfectly, but by your grace.  
May I be an ever-faithful witness,  
even as I pray,  
and as I wait and hope in you.

*May our sons in their youth  
be like plants full grown,  
our daughters like corner pillars  
cut for the structure of a palace. (Ps. 144:12)*

We sometimes say we would like to keep them young and close, but we know we're aiming for much more than that. We're aiming to see them grow into women and men of mature faith, ready to go out and serve the God who made them.

We're aiming, as Psalm 144 pictures it, for sons who are like full-grown plants, sturdy and fruitful, and for daughters who are like the pillars of a palace, strong and noble. We're aiming for children full of spiritual life and strength, who will play their parts well in showing and sharing that life and strength, all through the power of Jesus Christ our risen Savior and Lord.

May we pray for the maturity of our children with the kind of faith-filled vision that Scripture encourages in us.

*For her maturity I pray: see Ephesians 4:11–16.*

# For Strong Faith

For her maturity I pray, O Lord—  
that she would grow not just in body strong  
but even more in soul. Please never cease to grow in her  
a soul of faith that presses on in knowing you  
and building up your church  
and aiming for the day she'll see your face.

No longer a child tossed about  
by every new idea, every wind of doctrine,  
may she live as one who's planted firm  
among your people, Lord,  
all united by your breathed-out Word  
and growing up in every way together  
into Christ our head.

With strength of soul give her humility,  
daily acknowledgement of sins and failings  
which, I pray, will take her only, always, to the cross  
where Christ our Savior died for us;  
may she not forget that cross,  
and not forget the empty tomb  
that shows Christ risen, conquering death,  
the living Lord of our salvation.

Father, be her guide as she walks onward, strong  
because she's looking to her risen Savior,  
strengthened by your Spirit,  
aiming for the day she sees you face to face.

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)*

Reading this, you may be a believing parent who grieves over your grown child's unbelief and who yearns for God to invade that child's heart. Nothing makes us yearn more.

And nothing makes us turn more fervently to the truths on which we stake our lives: God's sovereignty, God's love shown in his Son, God's power to accomplish all his perfect will.

God sent his Son, who is the light of the world. Let us pray that God will shine that light into this child's heart.

*"Let there be light": see Genesis 1:3. You sent your light: see John 1:4–5.*

# For an Unbelieving Child

Break your light upon my child's heart,  
O Lord who only said, "Let there be light,"  
and there was light.

You sent your light into this world,  
a light that shines in darkness  
and is not ever overcome.

O shine the light of Jesus in his heart,  
merciful Father, by your Spirit,  
that my child may believe.

Thank you, sovereign God,  
that you hold my beloved child in your hand.  
You always have, and all my efforts—  
sometimes feeble or foolish, sometimes wise—  
you know, you use, according to your plan.  
I know that you are sovereign  
and that you are good,  
and so I still my yearning soul before your throne.

In you is life, fully revealed and given in your Son  
who died for sinners who deserve that death,  
who rose that sinners who believe might live.  
Enlarge my heart, I pray,  
to yearn for many sinners to believe and live.

But now I stop to pray again,  
and I will pray again, O Lord of life:  
please shine the light of Jesus in his heart,  
that my child may believe.

*For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.  
(Prov. 2:6)*

They will probably be reading a lot in these years. Hopefully these young adults will make their way through many whole books along with all the shorter snippets and articles and blogs. And hopefully one book, the Bible, will be opened and read again and again.

We all know the temptation to let other words crowd out God's Word. In our interconnected world, we (younger and older alike) often begin the morning and mark the segments of our day by checking on words—whether messages from friends and family or perhaps items of interesting news. More words are always waiting.

In the midst of all the other words, it is the Bible that will give us wisdom, direct from God's mouth. These are the words of life. May our children know this, and may they discipline themselves (and delight themselves) in reading and studying the Scriptures regularly and deeply.