

Your Children and the Power of Prayer

As this school year draws to a close, I know there are numerous kinds of emotions that flood your mind. I suspect that the greatest number of those emotions come from thoughts such as, "How did this year go by so quickly—I had hoped that we would be able to ..." Some of you are looking at a few short months until your students will be leaving home to attend college or university or to start some other phase of life that will forever change certain aspects of your relationship with them.

Others of you will experience varying degrees of change as your students move to different levels—elementary to middle school or junior high—or that move to high school. Each of these changes or even the consideration of such changes may bring on waves of nostalgia—if only they wouldn't grow up so fast, or can't we slow things down just a little?

How do you as a parent gradually and appropriately lift the hand of control and still retain the right relationship with your children as they enter and move through these various stages of life? How do you counsel and nurture them toward right relationships and right choices? How does that strategy change appropriately as your children mature and develop greater independence?

First, allow me to commend you for your choice of Christian schooling as a support in your children's intellectual development and spiritual formation. I know that you recognize that these are not matters you simply hand off to the school and that this amazing role of parenting becomes no less challenging as each day, month, and year passes. There is no question in my own mind that down through the ages parenting has become increasingly complex. This complexity has been intensified in a secular culture that diminishes the spiritual while

aggressively embellishing the pursuit of independence and doing your own thing.

I am particularly moved by a scriptural account recorded in what many biblical scholars have concluded is the oldest book of the Bible, the book of Job. At the very beginning of the book, the author describes Job, a man we most often equate with patience. I would like to suggest a new consideration—Job was a man with the highest sense of parental responsibility. According to Job 1:4–5, "His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, 'Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' This was Job's regular custom" (NIV).

Here we see reflected the life of a godly parent who continued to lift his children to God faithfully—seeking their purification from any sin they might have committed. Job apparently never wavered from intensely caring about his children and interceding to God for their spiritual needs—even after they were grown and lived in homes of their own. He continued to plead to God on their behalf. I am convinced that this is one of the aspects of Job's character that caused God to say of him, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:8, NIV).

In spite of the tremendous challenges you face in parenting, do you elevate your prayer life on behalf of your children to the same level that Job did? As you enter this summer break, I urge you to pursue God's hand of mercy, grace, and divine intervention in the lives of your children. It is critical to engage in intercessory prayer for them.

And thank you for choosing Christian schooling for your family. Your Christian school is committed to focusing on the development of your children for God's intended purpose and glory through academic and spiritual growth.



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