

# Pray Them Home

## Three Prayers for Prodigal Children



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Guest Contributor

I once was that prodigal child — lost, angry, and struggling to find my identity. Hardened on the outside, but deeply hurting within. The pain of my choices was not only destroying me, but creating heartache within our family and severing my relationships with the people who loved me most.

By God’s grace, my parents did not give up on me — despite how tempting it must have been at times. Instead, they entrusted my life to God, prayed for my brokenness, and fought for me in prayers that God eventually answered.

Parents, if you are raising a seemingly hard-hearted, rebellious son or daughter (whether outwardly or inwardly), I challenge you to take up your arms, fight the spiritual battle that rages over them with all of your God-given strength, and refuse to give up on their life.

I encourage you to pray these three prayers over lost children.

## **1. Pray for a heart of brokenness, no matter the earthly cost.**

“My parents loved me enough to pray for my brokenness, a brokenness that would lead to healing.”

It’s incredibly hard to pray for anything but a comfortable, successful, and pain-free life for our children. But as Christian parents, the greatest eternal good that we can pray for them is their salvation over their earthly happiness or comfort. We have to fight for them in this world filled with temporary pleasures, self-gratification, and blurry lines — entrusting their lives to our Lord — even if the path of salvation comes through pain.

I am eternally grateful that my parents loved me enough to pray for my brokenness, a brokenness that would lead to healing.

And my path of brokenness nearly killed me.

After a devastating loss of my identity as an athlete and hidden abuse from peers, my life spiraled out of control. I searched for identity and purpose in anything but Jesus. As self-destructive patterns drove me deeper into despair, I longed for an escape from this world, ultimately landing me in the protection of a hospital.

In that stark white hospital room, the choice before me was clear: be crushed by the weight of my sin or lay the broken pieces of my life at his feet. By his grace, he led me to my knees and has been redeeming those broken pieces ever since.

We will only be bold enough to pray a prayer of brokenness over our children when we ourselves have been broken before God and trust his love for our children and us. It's only when we have completely surrendered our children to him that we can pray, "Father, use what you must to save my child from an eternity apart from you, no matter the cost."

## **2. Pray against the enemy's desire to have them.**

**“We will only be bold enough to pray for our child's brokenness when we ourselves have been broken before God.”**

A battle is being waged over our children's lives. We have to fight for them, especially when blindness keeps them from fighting the battle themselves.

I remember my mom telling me the story of a time when I was standing in the kitchen with her, angry at the world, and taking it out on her. She looked at me

and said boldly, “I am fighting for you, and I won’t let Satan have victory over your life!” After she spoke those words, I fell into a heap on the floor and burst into tears.

Although we don’t have a guarantee of our children’s salvation or the outcome we may desire, we can be confident that God is faithful to his promises and hears our prayers. One of the great weapons God has given parents to fight against the world’s pull and the enemy’s schemes over their children is to pray the way Christ did for Peter: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” ([Luke 22:31-32](#)). Although Peter was a believer and the children we are praying for may not be, we can still pray to God that he would rescue our children from the power of Satan, give them faith in Christ, and use their lives to advance the gospel and strengthen other believers.

### **3. Pray specific Scripture over their life.**

Even if your child wants nothing to do with the truth and hates to hear the word of God, they can do nothing to stop you from praying Scripture for them. This is another mighty weapon God has given to parents.

My parents prayed [Psalm 18:16-19](#) over my life and prayed it often:

He sent from on high, he took me;

he drew me out of many waters.

He rescued me from my strong enemy

and from those who hated me,

for they were too mighty for me.

They confronted me in the day of my calamity,

but the Lord was my support.

He brought me out into a broad place;

he rescued me, because he delighted in me.

It truly amazes me to look back and see how faithful God was to answer this prayer. I was drowning in self-destruction, abuse from others, rebelliousness, and sorrows too deep to understand at the time. God, in his mercy, drew me out of many deep waters, and rescued me from my own flesh and Satan's desire for me.

**“While we must teach and train our children, and put boundaries in place, we have no control over their hearts.”**

As I sat in a hospital room, no longer wanting to live, God rescued me, brought me out into a broad place, and showed me that he delighted in me (despite my unworthiness). He has continued to be faithful to this prayer, upholding me through many deep waters and carrying me through many dark days.

Parents, no matter how far your child seems to be from Jesus or what path they are on, you can fight for their life with the powerful weapon of God's word.

# The Power of a Praying Parent

The truth is, while we must teach and train our children, and put boundaries in place, we have no control over their hearts. Ultimately, God alone can fill their hearts with a love for Christ and open their eyes to see the beauty and glory of who he is.

I am learning this on a new level and from a different perspective as I now face struggles with my own children that often tempt me to despair. But we are not helpless, and we are never hopeless. Whether our children are young or old, have soft hearts or hearts of stone, we have the power of prayer, God's living word, and a sovereign God we can trust.

Our Father in heaven loves to take seemingly hopeless lives, like my own once was, and show himself merciful and mighty. Give your child the gift of prayer, and trust that God will use his or her life for his good purposes — growing and transforming your own life in the process.

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