

PRAYERS FOR YOUR UNSAVED LOVED ONES:

A COMPLETE SCRIPTURE GUIDE



LEADING
The WAY
with Dr. Michael Youssef



INTRODUCTION

IF GOD IS SOVEREIGN, WHY PRAY?

For centuries, Christians have debated the tension between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility as it relates to prayer and other aspects of the Christian life. The simple answer is this: God is in control of all things *and* we are called to pray. As we pray for our loved ones who don't yet know Christ, we rest in the fact that only He can save—while also knowing that our participation in the unseen spiritual battle makes a difference (see John 6:44; James

5:16). We find peace knowing that He is sovereign over all things—while also accepting His invitation to partner with Him in His work of redemption (see Psalm 115:3; Matthew 9:37-38). And in moments when we don't know what to pray, God Himself "intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26, NASB). What a gracious God we serve, who bears with us as we fight the spiritual battle on behalf of our families.

PRAYING GOD'S WORD

As we pray for our loved ones, Scripture is the perfect place to start. From Genesis to Revelation, we see countless examples of God's people praying His own words back to Him. Is it because the words of Scripture are "magic words"—an incantation to be prayed in the right way to achieve the right result? Certainly

not, and neither should we treat it that way. Rather, praying through Scripture reminds us of God's promises. It centers us on Truth. It forces us to recall His faithfulness. It keeps our eyes fixed and focused on Christ. And it aligns us with His heart. As we pray for the lost people in our lives, we need all of these things.

PRAYING SCRIPTURE OVER YOUR FAMILY

No matter how impossible your family situation may seem, it's amazing what God can do when we invite Him into our family time, ask Him to give us opportunities to share the Gospel, and pray for Him to soften the hearts of our family members.

There are countless verses in the Bible through which you can pray for your family members by name. Here are a few to help guide you in your prayers:

1. Father God, I know that "**no one can come to [Jesus] unless the Father . . . draws them**" (John 6:44). I ask that You draw _____ to Your Son, that he/she may know You personally and spend eternity with You.
2. Lord God, I ask that You move upon _____'s heart to accept the Truth of Christ. "**Give them a heart to know [You], that [You are] the Lord, [so that] they will be [Your] people, and [You] will be their God,**" and may they "return to [You] with all their heart" (Jeremiah 24:7).
3. Overwhelm _____ with the reality of Your love for him/her, that he/she may "**grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge**" (Ephesians 3:18-19).
4. Lord, use me to "**open _____'s eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in [You]**" (Acts 26:18).
5. Holy Spirit, show me specifically how to minister to each member of my family—whether I should "**be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire; [or] show mercy, mixed with fear**" (Jude 1:23). Reveal opportunities to share about You, and give me the strength to obey when You open the door.
6. Father God, Your Word says that "**godly sorrow brings repentance which leads to salvation and leaves no regret**" (2 Corinthians 7:10). Only You can open our eyes to the reality that all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory. Come upon _____ with a sense of godly sorrow for his/her sin, that he/she may repent, surrender to You, and be saved.

AS YOU PRAY . . .

1. DON'T FIGHT THE BATTLE ALONE.

As you commit to fighting the battle in prayer for your family, **consider inviting your spouse or another Christian friend or family member to join you in prayer.** There is great power when two or more gather in Christ's name and pray for His will to be done (see Matthew 18:20).

2. REST IN THE FACT THAT ONLY GOD CAN CHANGE HEARTS.

Only God can raise a spiritually dead soul to life—and He "wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). This takes tremendous pressure off our prayers. God is not a reluctant God, but a God who is mighty to save and eager to redeem. As you pray, trust Him to do what only He can do.

3. ASK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE THE GOSPEL.

Prayer isn't just sharing our wish list with God; it is reporting for duty. As you pray, allow God to ready your heart to do His will. Pray very specifically for opportunities to witness to unsaved family and friends and for boldness to seize those opportunities when they arise.

4. DON'T GIVE UP.

You may see the fruit of your prayers immediately, or you may never see the full impact of your intercession. Either way, don't give up praying. Remember, we are engaged in an unseen spiritual battle (see Ephesians 6:12-20)—and one of our greatest weapons is prayer. Though the battle may last a lifetime, God is in the business of doing the impossible, and He can change even the hardest of hearts.



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