

*The Power of a*  
**PRAYING**<sup>®</sup>  
*Parent*

**STORMIE  
OMARTIAN**



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## **THE POWER OF A PRAYING® PARENT**

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# Introduction

When I first wrote *The Power of a Praying Parent*, I never dreamed it would touch millions of lives. All I thought about was how the Lord had taught me a way to pray for my children that was powerful and effective—and that I wanted to share this with other parents. What had begun as a group of families who got together regularly in our home to pray for our collective children became a way of life for all of us. We felt the power of our prayers and saw their wonderful effects and amazing results. The answers to the prayers we prayed over the years fueled our faith and inspired us to be persistent and diligent to *continue* to pray even as, one by one, our children grew up and left home to build their own lives.

In the last edition of this book, I included an additional chapter called “Praying for Your Adult Children.” It consists of simple prayers to help

you pray specifically for them. That's because as a parent you will never stop praying for your children, no matter what age they are or where they live. That chapter turned into a book called *The Power of Praying for Your Adult Children*. Even if your children are already grown and you have not prayed for them before, you can still use this book to pray for them today. Then add the book specifically for adult children when you are ready for something more in-depth. My children are in their thirties now, and I continue to use that book and this one as a guide for prayer.

In this latest edition of *The Power of a Praying Parent*, I have included a new chapter called "Getting Through the Teenage Years Successfully." In these serious times, it is clear that we cannot afford to wait until our children are teens to cover that crucial section of their lives in prayer. I hope this chapter will remind you of things you might not remember to pray about until they become urgent issues.

As you embark on this adventure of praying for your children, you will find it to be an unending

habit of your heart. Being able to positively affect your children in prayer will keep you in close contact with them and actively involved in their lives, even after they leave home. And it will continually contribute to your joy as a parent.

*Stormie Omartian*

For a special message from Stormie, please visit  
<http://bit.ly/PrayingParentIntro>

## CHAPTER ONE

# *Becoming a Praying Parent*

It's the best of jobs. It's the most difficult of jobs. It can bring you the greatest joy. It can cause the greatest pain. There is nothing as fulfilling and exhilarating. There's nothing so depleting and exhausting. No area of your life can make you feel more like a success when everything is going well. No area of your life can make you feel more like a failure when things go wrong.

**PARENTING!**

The word itself can bring contradictory emotions to the surface. We try to do the best we can raising our children. Then, just when we think



we've got the parenting terrain all figured out, we suddenly find ourselves in new territory again as each new age and stage presents another set of challenges. Sometimes we sail through smoothly. Sometimes we encounter tempests and tidal waves. Sometimes we get so tired that we just want to give up—let the storm take us where it will.

But I have good news. We don't have to be tossed and turned by these winds of change. *Our children's lives don't ever have to be left to chance.*

We don't have to pace the floor anxiously, biting our nails, gnawing our knuckles, dreading the terrible twos or torturous teens. We don't have to live in fear of what each new phase of development may bring, what dangers might be lurking behind every corner. Nor do we have to be perfect parents. We can start right now—this very minute, in fact—making a positive difference in our child's future. It's never too early and never too late. It doesn't matter if the child is three days old and perfect, or thirty years old and going through a third divorce because of an alcohol problem. At every stage of their lives our children need and

will greatly benefit from our prayers. The key is not trying to do it all by ourselves all at once, but rather turning to the expert parent of all time—our Father God—for help. Then, taking one step at a time, we must cover every detail of our child's life in prayer. There is great *power* in doing that, far beyond what most people imagine. In fact, don't ever underestimate the power of a praying parent.

I didn't have the best role model for parenting because I was raised by a mother who was mentally ill and very abusive. I wrote about that abuse and my miraculous recovery from its effects in my book *Out of Darkness* (Harvest House Publishers). I also related how having my first child, our son Christopher, caused me to realize that I had the potential in me to be an abusive parent. I discovered that if we are parenting without God, we are destined to repeat the mistakes of our past and to mimic what we've observed. A scene from childhood can flash across the screen of your mind and play itself out on the stage of your life in a moment of weakness—before you even realize what has happened. It may occur so quickly that you feel

powerless to control it, and it can make you do and say destructive things to your children. This becomes compounded by the guilt that inevitably takes root and grows to often paralyzing proportions. Thankfully I had good counseling and support and was able to overcome this problem before any damage happened to my child, but many people have not been so fortunate.

Because I was painfully aware that I didn't have a positive parenting experience to imitate, I was nervous and anxious when my first child was born. I feared I would do to him what had been done to me. I read every book available on the subject of parenting and attended each Christian child-rearing seminar I could find. I tried to do my best with all this good and helpful information, but it was never enough. I had countless agonizing concerns for my son's social, spiritual, emotional, and mental growth, but most compelling of all, I feared that something bad might happen to him. Kidnapping, drowning, disfiguring accidents, irreparable injuries, diseases, sexual molestation, abuse, rape, or death all played across

my mind as possibilities for his future. As much as I tried not to be an overreacting parent, every newspaper, magazine article, or TV newscast on crime made me more concerned for his welfare. Plus we lived in Los Angeles, a city where crime was rampant. It was more than I could handle.

One day in prayer I cried out to God, saying, “Lord, this is too much for me. I can’t keep a twenty-four-hours-a-day, moment-by-moment watch on my son. How can I ever have peace?”

Over the next few weeks the Lord spoke to my heart about entrusting Christopher to Him. My husband and I had dedicated our son to God in a church service, but God wanted more than that. He wanted us to continue giving Christopher to Him on a daily basis. This didn’t mean that we would now abdicate all responsibility as parents. Rather, we would declare ourselves to be in full partnership with God. *He* would shoulder the heaviness of the burden and provide wisdom, power, protection, and ability far beyond ourselves. We would do *our* job to discipline, teach, nurture, and “train up a child in the way he should go” knowing that

“when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). We were to depend on God to enable us to raise our child properly, and He would see to it that our child’s life was blessed.

An important part of our job was to keep the details of our child’s life covered in prayer. In doing this, I learned to identify every concern, fear, worry, or possible scenario that came into my mind as a prompting by the Holy Spirit to pray for that particular thing. As I covered Christopher in prayer and released him into God’s hands, God released my mind from that particular concern. This doesn’t mean that once I prayed for something I never prayed about it again, but at least for a time I was relieved of the burden. When it surfaced again, I prayed about it again. God didn’t promise that nothing bad would *ever* happen to my child, but praying released the power of God to work in his life, and I could enjoy more peace in the process.

I also learned that I should not try to force my own will on my child in prayer. This only leads to frustration and disappointment for all concerned.

You know the kind of prayer I mean, because we're all prone to it: "God, I pray that my son will grow up and marry my best friend's daughter." (*Her parents would be great in-laws.*) Or, "Lord, let my daughter get accepted at this school." (*Then I can feel better about myself.*) Of course we may never consciously acknowledge the words in parentheses, but they are there in the back of our mind, subtly inspiring us to impose our will in God's ear. I have found it's better to pray more along the lines of "Lord, show me how to pray for this child. Help me to raise him Your way, and may Your will be done in his life."

By the time our daughter, Amanda, was born four and a half years after Christopher, God had taught me what it means to pray in great depth and to really intercede for my child's life. Over the next twelve years God answered my prayers in many wonderful ways, and today I see the results.

My husband and I recognize the hand of God on our children's lives, and they readily acknowledge it as well. For it's the power of God that penetrates a child's life when a parent prays.

## What Is Prayer and How Does it Work?

Prayer is much more than just giving a list of desires to God, as if He were the great Sugar Daddy/Santa Claus in the sky. Prayer is acknowledging and experiencing the presence of God and inviting His presence into our lives and circumstances. It's seeking the *presence* of God and releasing the *power* of God which gives us the means to overcome any problem.

The Bible says, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18). God gives us authority on earth. When we take that authority, God releases power to us from heaven. Because it's *God's* power and not ours, we become the vessel through which His power flows. When we pray, we bring that power to bear upon everything we are praying about, and we allow the power of God to work through our powerlessness. When we pray, we are humbling ourselves before God and saying, "I need Your presence and Your power, Lord. I can't do this without You." When

we don't pray, it's like saying we have no need of anything outside of ourselves.

Praying in the name of Jesus is a major key to God's power. Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you" (John 16:23). Praying in the name of Jesus gives us authority over the enemy and proves we have faith in God to do what His Word promises. God knows our thoughts and our needs, but He responds to our prayers. That's because He always gives us a choice about everything, including whether we will trust Him and obey by praying in Jesus' name.

Praying not only affects *us*, it also reaches out and touches those for whom we pray. When we pray for our children, we are asking God to make His presence a part of their lives and work powerfully in their behalf. That doesn't mean there will always be an *immediate* response. Sometimes it can take days, weeks, months, or even years. But our prayers are never lost or meaningless. If we are praying, something is happening, whether we can see it or not. The Bible says, "The effective,



fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). All that needs to happen in our lives and the lives of our children cannot happen without the presence and power of God. Prayer invites and ignites both.

### Begin with a Personalized List

I actually started praying for each of my children from the time they were conceived because the Bible says, “He has blessed your children within you” (Psalm 147:13). I believed in the power of prayer. What I *didn't* realize at that time was how important each detail of our lives is to Him. It's not enough to pray only for the concerns of the moment; we need to pray for the future, and we need to pray against the effects of past events. When King David was depressed over what had happened in his life and fearful about future consequences (Psalm 143), he didn't just say, “Oh, well, whatever will be will be.” He cried out to God about the past, present, and future of his life. He prayed about *everything*. And that is exactly what we must do as well.