

## Finishing Well

### *A conversation about living for Jesus on the back nine of life*

#### **Conversation Four: Kids & Grandkids (by blood & “adopted”)**

– What role are we to play in your (adopted) kids’ and grandkids’ lives?

"Our lives need to be attractive to our children in the ways that matter most. These ways do not involve our possessions or our professions as much as they do our allegiances. If we have ultimate allegiance to Christ, we will be far from perfect, but we will have integrity before him. The goal of the Christian parent is not to so "protect" a child that they don't know any other way of life. Nor is it to intimidate the child to follow Christ. The goal is that our children should say 'I really want to follow in those footsteps.'"

– Dick Keyes, *True Heroism* (p. 225)



Consider: are parents to be Sculptors or Gardeners for their children?

The gardener is the right model. The sculptor starts with a shapeless piece and with skill and creativity shapes a form. The success or failure of the final product has to do only with the skill and patience of the sculptor. By contrast, the gardener starts with seed that has a life of its own. The gardener must prepare the soil, provide nutrients, water and sunlight. A fruitful harvest will be in part due to the gardener's efforts, but also due to the original seed and many aspects outside the gardener's control. The gardener is an observer to something that God is doing in a way that the sculptor is not. Children are not the products of their parent's proficiency, but are first of all images of God, entrusted into the parent's care.

– Dick Keyes, *True Heroism* (p. 246)

#### **A few questions to start the conversation**

- What is an important lesson you have learned about parenting adult children?
- Are you claiming any promises from Scripture for your kids and grandkids?
- Do you think that God loves your kids and grandkids more than you do?

#### **1. Some Key Scriptures – possible promises from God for our children:**

**1 Samuel 1:27-28** – [Hannah said to Eli,] I prayed for this child [Samuel], and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.

**1 Chronicles 4:10 (NIV)** – Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.

**Psalms 25:11-12** – For the sake of your name, O LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great. Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.

**Psalms 68:19-20** – Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. *Selah* Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.

**Psalms 71:18 (NIV)** – Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.

**Psalms 78:2-7** – I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old—<sup>3</sup> what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. <sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for

Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, <sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. <sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

**Psalm 90:16** – May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children.

**Psalm 102:28** – The children of your servants will live in your presence; their descendants will be established before you." [prayer of an afflicted man]

**Psalm 103:17-18** – But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children-- with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.

**Psalm 112:1-2** – Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.

**Psalm 115:14** – May the LORD make you increase, both you and your children.

**Psalm 127:3-5 (NIV)** – Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. <sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. <sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.

**Psalm 144:12** – Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.

**Psalm 145:4-7** – One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. <sup>5</sup> They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. <sup>6</sup> They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. <sup>7</sup> They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

**Proverbs 14:26** – He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.

**Proverbs 22:6** – Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

**Proverbs 23:15-16** – My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; <sup>16</sup> my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** – He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

**Isaiah 29:23-24** – When they see among them their children, the work of my hands, they will keep my name holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. <sup>24</sup> Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding; those who complain will accept instruction.

**Isaiah 44:3-5** – For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. <sup>4</sup> They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. <sup>5</sup> One will say, 'I belong to the LORD'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,' and will take the name Israel.

**Isaiah 49:25** – But this is what the Lord says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.

**Isaiah 54:13** – All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace.

**Isaiah 59:21** – "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord. "My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever," says the Lord.

**Isaiah 65:1-2** – I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'<sup>2</sup> All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations

**Isaiah 65:23** – They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them.

**Jeremiah 24:6-7** – My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them.<sup>7</sup> I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

**Luke 1:13** – But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.

**Luke 15:17-18** – When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

**Acts 2:16-18** – No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:<sup>17</sup> "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

**Acts 2:38-39** – Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

**1 Corinthians 7:14** – For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

**Philippians 1:6** – being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

## **2. Parenting Adult Children**

From Karen O'Conner, *Parenting Adult Children*, in the Focus on the Family Blog:

**Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)** – Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;<sup>6</sup> in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

One Sunday I broke down in tears at a prayer meeting at church and asked what I could do to restore my adult son to me. He had made some chilling decisions and I was powerless to change him. A dear, older woman hurried across the room, sat down beside me and slipped her arm around my shoulder. 'Your parenting in the flesh is over,' she said softly. 'It's time to parent him in the Spirit. Pray for your son and trust God to do what you cannot do—and He will,' she added confidently.

I was set free that day. Gradually I began to see that God, who reconciled His relationship to His children through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, would surely give me and all mothers and fathers who ask for it the grace to reconcile our changing relationship with our adult children. I have found that such grace has helped me and others to incorporate three helpful steps into our parenting process. And they work! Today, 20 years after that life-changing day, my son is a fine, responsible adult, who has become one of my dearest friends.

## **Recognize and Respect Your Differences**

“During a discussion about parenting, Chet shared his experience: ‘Finally, I’m beginning to see my children in a new way,’ he said. ‘Both are married and have kids of their own. I’m amazed at what good, capable people they are. I realize in talking with others that I have not been as encouraging as I could be. I wonder if that’s why my daughter sees distant. I feel anxious around her, like neither of us is telling the truth. I want to change that. I need to apologize and tell her how truly proud of her I am. I’ve been measuring her by my standard instead of seeing her for the beautiful person God created.’

## **Share Your wisdom and Insight (without being critical)**

“Regardless of the past, I believe our children, whatever their age, want to know who we really are. I had occasion to discover this for myself about 15 years ago when my youngest daughter was still in high school. At the time, she was living with her father following our divorce. Unexpectedly, she accepted my invitation to live with me during her two years of junior college. During that time, our relationship took an important turn. We were once again together under the same roof. I had experienced a lot of emotional and spiritual healing by then, so I knew that, finally, I had something to give her—my true self.

“There were sweet and loving times, and times of tears and long talks as we walked along the ocean hand-in-hand, cooked and baked together—and shopped! It was also a time of deep inner healing for both of us as we drew closer to the Lord and prayed with each other. By the time she left for her last two years of college in Northern California, I felt our relationship had been restored, and that regardless of what surfaced in the future, we’d be able to face it and deal with it. That has proven true.

“Good parents aren’t perfect. And that’s okay. There’s no formula to follow, but there are ways you can grow every day. Focus on the Family’s 7 Traits of Effective Parenting Assessment gives parents an honest look at their unique strengths, plus some areas that could use a little help. In order to be a great parent, it is important to first know and evaluate how you are doing.

“We want you to be equipped as a parent to develop the skills needed to raise the next generation of healthy, mature, and responsible children. Take this free assessment to become a better parent!

## **Relinquish Your Adult Children to the Lord**

“If we do the vital inner work necessary to spiritual and emotional parenting, then relinquishing our children will be easier than we might expect. We will no longer feel compelled to use them as a means of working through the unfinished business of our past or as the focus of our future desires.

“Ecclesiastes reminds us that there is a time for every purpose under heaven. Consider your own situation. Is the Lord telling you that now is the time for you to take steps to restore your relationship with your children? If so, incline your ears to the words of His mouth (Ps 78:1). Admit your imperfections and commit them to a perfect God—who will guide, guard and govern you sons and daughters in ways you could never carry out on your own. Then put into action the truths the Lord reveals.

“Only with God is it possible to find hope for restoration. It is never too late... even now that they’re grown. Jesus promised in Mk 10:27, ‘With God all things are possible.’ We can count on it.”

### **3. Praying for Your Kids and Grandkids (those by blood and those “adopted”)**

From “31 Biblical Virtues to Pray for Your Kids and Grandkids”, by Bob Hostetler, *Revive Our Hearts – Pray!* (Issue 4):

- 1. Salvation**—“Lord, let salvation spring up within my children, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” (Isaiah 45:8; 2 Timothy 2:10)

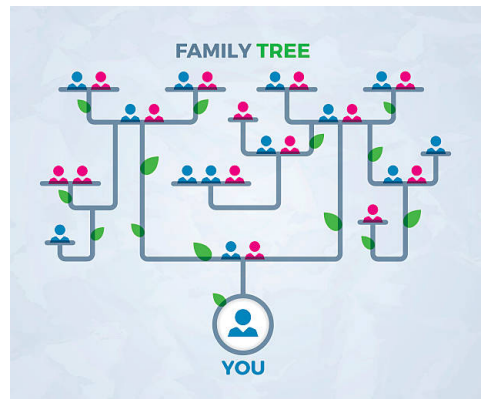
2. **Growth in Grace**—"I pray that my children may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)
3. **Love**—"Grant, Lord, that my children may learn to live a life of love, through the Spirit who dwells in them." (Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:2)
4. **Honesty & Integrity**—"May integrity and honesty be their virtue and their protection." (Psalm 25:21)
5. **Self-Control**—"Father, help my children not to be like many others around them, but let them be alert and self-controlled in all they do." (1 Thessalonians 5:6)
6. **Love for God's Word**—"May my children grow to find Your Word more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb." (Psalm 19:10)
7. **Justice**—"God, help my children to love justice as You do and act justly in all they do." (Ps 11:7; Micah 6:8)
8. **Mercy**—"May my children always be merciful, just as their Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)
9. **Respect** (for self, others, and authority)—"Father, grant that my children may show proper respect to everyone, as Your Word commands." (1 Peter 2:17)
10. **Biblical Self-Esteem**—"Help my children develop a strong self-esteem that is rooted in the realization that they are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:10)
11. **Faithfulness**—"Let love and faithfulness never leave my children, but bind these twin virtues around their necks and write them on the tablet of their hearts." (Proverbs 3:3)
12. **Courage**—"May my children always be strong and courageous in their character." (Deuteronomy 31:6)
13. **Purity**—"Create in them a pure heart, O God, and let that purity of heart be shown in their actions." (Psalm 51:10)
14. **Kindness**—"Lord, may my children always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else." (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
15. **Generosity**—"Grant that my children may be generous and willing to share, and so lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age." (1 Timothy 6:18-19)
16. **Peace-Loving**—"Father, let my children make every effort to do what leads to peace." (Romans 14:19)
17. **Joy**—"May my children be filled with the joy given by the Holy Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 1:6)
18. **Perseverance**—"Lord, teach my children perseverance in all they do, and help them especially to run with perseverance the race marked out for them." (Hebrews 12:1)
19. **Humility**—"God, please cultivate in my children the ability to show true humility toward all." (Titus 3:2)
20. **Compassion**—"Lord, please clothe my children with the virtue of compassion." (Colossians 3:12)
21. **Responsibility**—"Grant that my children may learn responsibility, for each one should carry his own load." (Galatians 6:5)
22. **Contentment**—"Father, teach my children the secret of being content in any and every situation, through Him who gives them strength." (Philippians 4:12-13)
23. **Faith**—"I pray that faith will find root and grow in my children's hearts, that by faith they may gain what has been promised to them." (Luke 17:5-6; Hebrews 11:1-40)

- 24. A Servant's Heart**—"God, please help my children develop servant's hearts, that they may serve wholeheartedly, as if they were serving the Lord, not men." (Ephesians 6:7)
- 25. Hope**—"May the God of hope grant that my children may overflow with hope and hopefulness by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)
- 26. Willing & Able to Work**—"Teach my children, Lord, to value work and to work at it with all their heart, as working for the Lord and not for men." (Colossians 3:23)
- 27. Passion for God**—"Lord, please instill in my children a soul that 'follows hard after You,' one that clings passionately to You." (Psalms 63:8)
- 28. Self-Discipline**—"Father, I pray that my children may acquire a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair." (Proverbs 1:3)
- 29. Prayerfulness**—"Grant, Lord, that my children's lives may be marked by prayerfulness, that they may learn to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- 30. Gratitude**—"Help my children to live lives that are always overflowing with thankfulness and always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:20; Col 2:7)
- 31. Heart for Missions**—"Lord, please help my children to develop a desire to see your glory declared among the nations, your marvelous deeds among all peoples." (Psalms 96:3)

#### 4. Praying for the Family Tree

From "NavTools – One on One", *Nav Magazine*:

It's easy to become discouraged as we attempt to bring those we love into a relationship with Jesus. Most of us come to the point where all we can do is pray. But prayer is tough. Prayer is hard work. It's long-term. Here are some guidelines to encourage you as you pray.



- 1) **Pray for your relatives, not against them.** When we pray for family members, it's easy to concentrate our prayers on issues related to their behavior. We're bothered by their swearing, their quick temper, or their drinking. We're tempted to pray, 'Lord, please bring them to Yourself and make them stop.' God's first concern is for their salvation—life change precedes behavioral change.
- 2) **Pray for patience; God's timing is seldom ours.** It could take years—even decades—for our loved ones to come to faith in Jesus. We have to be faithful for the long haul.
- 3) **Pray for others to serve as sources of Christian influence.** Sometimes relatives have a difficult time listening to us. They know firsthand our imperfections. We must pray that God will bring other Christians into the lives of our relatives.
- 4) **Pray for opportunities to demonstrate love, not pressure.** Pressing family members for decisions often causes them to grow defensive. When they express spiritual interest or curiosity, trying not to overreact. Too much enthusiasm can cause them to recoil. People will respond to faithful, unconditional love before they'll respond to emotional pressure.

- 5) **Pray—and don't lose heart.** Luke 18:1 says Jesus 'taught them a parable to show that at all time they ought to pray and not to lose heart'. Jesus wants us to persevere, and indeed He rewards such perseverance.

Every person's spiritual pilgrimage is unique. God calls us to stay consistent and involved in people's lives. We pray—allowing God to bring the results in His time.

## 5. Prodigal Children

From *Family Life* (2004):



### Loving the Prodigal Child

A crisis with a child means your family is headed into a period of testing ... and of growth...

The core meaning of the word prodigal is "waste." The famous prodigal son from Jesus' parable in Luke 15:11-32 not only wasted the material possessions of his inheritance and much of his life, but he also did much worse. He wasted, through rebellion and foolishness, his precious relationship with his father.

Let's be candid. All of us Christian parents, no matter what our background, parenting style, or level of spiritual maturity, share a common fear—that a child will become a prodigal. There is no jolt of agony that compares to the child who says with his words and his behavior, "I reject you, your values, your lifestyle, your God."

We desperately desire that this will never happen in our homes. But it can and does. And for those who must come to grips with a prodigal child, it can seem like the world is coming to an end.

What is a prodigal child? First, it's important to realize that many children may exhibit troubling or rebellious behavior, but are not full-blown prodigals. If your child wears a different hairstyle, gets a piercing, is moody or depressed, comes home with Cs on his report card, or becomes angry when told to empty the dishwasher, that doesn't make him a prodigal. I count these as part of the norm for preteens and teenagers.

A true prodigal child will show extreme defiance and rebellion as a pattern over an extended period of time. In fact, the word "defiance" catches it all—a stubborn, rebellious spirit that challenges authority, refuses to acknowledge responsibility for faults, and doesn't embrace the truth. Here are some signs suggesting the presence of a prodigal:

- A prodigal child consistently, flagrantly disobeys rules and crosses boundaries.
- A prodigal child shows ongoing active or passive disrespect for authority.
- A prodigal child is unteachable and refuses to accept responsibility.
- A prodigal child persists in self-destructive behavior (drugs, drinking, sexual activity, stealing, violence).
- A prodigal child lies and continues a pattern of deceit, even after being caught red-handed.
- A prodigal child's life is disintegrating in many areas and is out of control.

Those who work professionally with such teenagers often mention a few root causes.

- **Selfishness.** We are all self-centered by nature, but selfishness becomes an art form in the prodigal's life.
- **Desire for control.** This issue is often linked to selfishness. During adolescence, young people naturally seek greater control over their lives. Selfishly, they may ask for much more control than they can handle.
- Another factor behind prodigal behavior can be **a dry relationship between one or both parents and the child.** If for whatever reason the parents are not securely tethered to the child and are not relationally filling the child's emotional tank, the child will seek replenishment from peers, who may be running on empty themselves. The values of these peers may be extremely hostile to what mom and dad believe, and the war for the child's heart is on.

Sometimes, however, there just seems to be no single identifiable cause for a child's rebellion. And whether or not we can point to a particular reason, we can trust the Bible's insight. Solomon commented, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child" (Proverbs 22:15). That means every child has a bent toward foolishness, and in some children the foolishness sprouts and blooms into prodigal behavior.

A crisis with a child, and the pain that goes with it, should sound the alarm that everyone in the family, especially the adults, is heading into a period of testing and growth. Pain is pain, but God uses difficulty to stretch and mold us, and the result is greater maturity.

Here are some priorities you should maintain as a parent:

- **Keep loving.** No matter how broken and alienated your child may be, you always will be dad or mom—the only people in the world with the unique opportunity to love him or her without strings like no other person can. This is a powerful tool, like a huge magnet that can irresistibly draw a wayward child back to your embrace.
- **Pray.** God is fully capable of grabbing your child's attention. The Good Shepherd does not lose sheep. Ask, and keep asking. The apostle James wrote, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16).
- **Connect.** Your child may not even want to speak to you. And you may be weary of trying to reach out and always getting shut down. You have no choice; you must find ways to connect. Even in the face of angry words and cold body language, you can speak kind words and give hugs and tender touches. You can compliment and encourage. You can show interest. You can serve. You can pursue your child in ways that speak her language of love.
- **Establish boundaries.** Although you will keep trying to connect, you and others in your family should not accept abusive, destructive behavior from an in-house prodigal. You have been given authority by God to draw boundaries. What will be the basic requirements for anyone living under your family's roof? These rules must be carefully thought through and clearly communicated to your child. Your child needs to know that if boundaries are crossed, serious consequences will result. For example, one boundary might be "no drugs or alcohol of any kind in the house." If a prodigal child persists in violating this boundary, the consequence might be going into a regular drug-testing program or even leaving the home and living at a substance abuse treatment center. These are very severe measures. That's why you must carefully choose and then maintain the boundaries.
- **Get help.** You must not attempt to deal with a prodigal alone. You need prayer and emotional support. You need spiritual wisdom. You need the prayers and counsel of the leaders (elders or deacons) of your church. You may need professional counselors or other advisors. If your child is dangerously out of control or has run away, you may need to call the police. Don't let shame, pride, fear, or anything else keep you from getting help. "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory" (Proverbs 11:14).

I believe we can wait expectantly for a prodigal child to return, but we also need to accept the reality that this may be a wait of months and even years. Although you pray that resolution and reconciliation will come quickly, prepare for a long haul, especially if your rebelling child is in the early teenage years. A particularly vulnerable area during a family crisis is the husband/wife relationship. A significant part of your retreating and regrouping must involve honest discussion and effort that will solidify, not divide, mom and dad. A prodigal child often seems bent on creating conflict between parents, as well as among other family members. Don't let this happen. This is the time when you must cling to your spouse like glue.

The ultimate hope of any parent should be that God will reach down and profoundly touch His child. All of our efforts to raise our children to follow Him are in His hands. We are but stewards for a brief period of these gifts called children.



**6. Prayers for Prodigals, by B. J. Reinhard (NavPress):**

These Scripture-based prayers are designed to be prayed for any loved one (a son, daughter, grandchild, spouse or parent) who has strayed from God into a destructive lifestyle. For the sake of clarity, the prayers are written with a son in mind. Adapt them to fit your situation.



1. Lord, protect my son. Build a hedge around him to guard him physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Block his paths so that he cannot move toward activities and relationships that would harm him. (Job 1:10; Hosea 2:6-7)
2. Deliver him from evil. Rescue him from a destructive lifestyle. Restore him to his senses, and bring him home from the land of the enemy. (Matthew 6:13; Psalm 91:14; Luke 15-17; Jeremiah 31:16-17)
3. Guide my son into truth. Teach him to recognize deceptive ideas and thoughts. Make him alert to the lies of the enemy and teach him how to resist the devil by faith. (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 1 Peter 5:8-9)
4. Give my son the courage to be honest with himself and with You. Spirit of God, convict him of sin and his need for You. Don't allow my son to blame others for troubles in his life. Show him that he alone is responsible for his choices. (John 16:8; Genesis 3:12-13; Ezekiel 18-20)
5. Lord, thank You for drawing my son with love and tenderness to Yourself, even in his desert place. Show him that You are with him. You delight in him. Amid the clamor for his attention and affections, may he hear Your voice calling him and respond to Your deep, deep love. (Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 2:14; Zephaniah 3:17; Ephesians 3:14-21)
6. Cause my son to call out to You in his distress and confusion. Cause him to seek You with abandon. Thank You for promising to answer him (Psalm 91:15; Jeremiah 29:13)
7. Remove my son's heart of stone and replace it with a new, soft heart. Make this heart into a bed of fertile soil so that the seed of truth sown into it will grow deep roots and bring forth a rich crop of life. (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Matthew 13:23; Colossians. 2:6-7)
8. Lord Jesus, reveal to my son that lasting refreshment and satisfaction can only be found in You. In You he will find an abundant life. (John 4:10, 10:10; Psalm 1:3)
9. Lead my son to friends who will graciously point him to You. Cause him to be attracted to those who are attracted to You. Scatter like chaff in the wind any friends who will bring him harm. Give him the courage to please You, not man. (Proverbs 13:20; Galatians 1:10)
10. Produce in my son a humble spirit that is yielded to You. Teach him how to live in You and show him that apart from You he can do nothing. (James 4:10; Romans 6:13, John 15:5)
11. Lord, reveal to my son how valuable and significant his life is. Give him a vision for his purpose in the world, and show him the possibilities for his future. Through You, he can do all things. (Isaiah 43:7; Jeremiah 20:11; Philippians 4:13)
12. Help my son to see that he doesn't need to condemn himself. Show him that he can experience complete forgiveness through the work You've already finished on his behalf. Give him the grace to repent of and let go of the past. (John 19:30; Acts 3:19; Isaiah 43:18-19)
13. Thank You for offering hope and comfort to my son. Thank You for restoring the years the locusts have eaten and bestowing on my son a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of despair. (Isaiah 57:18; Joel 2:25; Isaiah 61:3)
14. Teach my son that following You is not about following rules. Show him that what You long for is a genuine relationship with Him. (Romans 6:14; Jeremiah 9:24; Philippians 3:8,10)

15. Lord, cause my son to grow up in You, maturing into an oak of righteousness for the display of Your splendor. Help him to grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with You and with man. (Ephesians 4:15; Isaiah 61:3; Luke 2:52)
16. Teach my son to live in freedom, animated and motivated by Your Spirit and in step with Him. (Galatians 5:16, 25)
17. Teach my son to walk by faith. Help him to see beyond his circumstances and trust You with every part of his life. (2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1; Proverbs 3:5-6)
18. Impress on my son the need to protect his mind, guarding its purity through the choices he makes about what he looks at, listens to, and thinks about. (Philippians 4:8; 2 Corinthians 10:5)
19. Lord, in this fast-paced world of instant gratification, plant in my son the perseverance he needs to succeed. Cause him to be still and wait patiently before You. Help him to rest in Your power. Establish the work of his hands. (Psalm 37:7; Hebrews 12:1-3; Psalm 90:17)
20. Turn my son's focus away from himself and onto You. May he allow Your power to flow through him to others. Teach him to love others as himself. (Philippians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Matthew 22:39)
21. Cause my son to love You with all his heart, soul and mind. May he live all his days in love with and rejoicing in You. (Matthew 22:37; Psalm 27:4; Philippians 4:4)

*No matter how long you have  
traveled the wrong way....  
you can always  
turn around.*

