

## For the Love of God

The Gospel for Generations Past and Future

Dr. David Platt

May 25, 2014



## THE GOSPEL FOR GENERATIONS PAST AND FUTURE Psalm 78

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, I invite you to open with me Psalm 78. An incredible psalm that we've actually touched on at different points in the past. But when it came to the psalms we were reading this week and praying through which ones to study, I knew this was one of the ones we needed to study. Mainly because I've been looking for an opportunity, pastorally, to specifically encourage us when it comes to family worship.

I want to say very clearly that I am thankful—so, so, so thankful—for our student and children's ministry leaders and the work they do in preschool, and children's and student ministry, and the teams that they're a part of, and many of you serving alongside of them, the work that many of you do when it comes to pouring the gospel into children and teenagers all across our faith family. As we make disciples of all nations, we want to be intentional about making disciples in succeeding generations.

But, what we don't want to do in the process of serving children in the church is to abdicate our responsibility to teach and train children, to make disciples of our own children in our homes. We've got to be careful here. We want what we do as a faith family to fuel what we're doing in physical families—the church coming alongside the family, exactly what we just saw illustrated in Eli's baptism. This is his dad baptizing him with the church surrounding them. We want to make disciples in the church in a way that fuels disciple-making in our homes. You ask any parent of a graduating senior this week, and they will tell you how time has flown. And as families, we want to maximize every moment we have in our homes with each other for the glory of our God.

And that is what Psalm 78 is all about. So, we're going to read it together. It's a long one. I'll go ahead and warn you in advance—it's long. But hang with it. Just see. What I want you to see is how this psalmist, named Asaph, set the stage by talking about the generation of God's people to come, and then begins to recount God's work among generations of God's people in the past. So, Psalm 78, verse one:

*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth!  
I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings from of old,  
things that we have heard and known,  
that our fathers have told us.  
We will not hide them from their children,  
but tell to the coming generation  
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,  
and the wonders that he has done.  
He established a testimony in Jacob  
and appointed a law in Israel,  
which he commanded our fathers  
to teach to their children,*

*that the next generation might know them,  
the children yet unborn,  
and arise and tell them to their children,  
so that they should set their hope in God  
and not forget the works of God,  
but keep his commandments;  
and that they should not be like their fathers,  
a stubborn and rebellious generation,  
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,  
whose spirit was not faithful to God.  
The Ephraimites, armed with the bow,  
turned back on the day of battle.  
They did not keep God's covenant,  
but refused to walk according to his law.  
They forgot his works  
and the wonders that he had shown them.  
In the sight of their fathers he performed wonders  
in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan.  
He divided the sea and let them pass through it,  
and made the waters stand like a heap.  
In the daytime he led them with a cloud,  
and all the night with a fiery light.  
He split rocks in the wilderness  
and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep.  
He made streams come out of the rock  
and caused waters to flow down like rivers.  
Yet they sinned still more against him,  
rebellious against the Most High in the desert.  
They tested God in their heart  
by demanding the food they craved.  
They spoke against God, saying,  
"Can God spread a table in the wilderness?  
He struck the rock so that water gushed out  
and streams overflowed.  
Can he also give bread  
or provide meat for his people?"  
Therefore, when the Lord heard, he was full of wrath;  
a fire was kindled against Jacob;  
his anger rose against Israel,  
because they did not believe in God  
and did not trust his saving power.  
Yet he commanded the skies above  
and opened the doors of heaven,  
and he rained down on them manna to eat  
and gave them the grain of heaven.  
Man ate of the bread of the angels;  
he sent them food in abundance.  
He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens,  
and by his power he led out the south wind;  
he rained meat on them like dust,  
winged birds like the sand of the seas;  
he let them fall in the midst of their camp,  
all around their dwellings.*

*And they ate and were well filled,  
for he gave them what they craved.  
But before they had satisfied their craving,  
while the food was still in their mouths,  
the anger of God rose against them,  
and he killed the strongest of them  
and laid low the young men of Israel.  
In spite of all this, they still sinned;  
despite his wonders, they did not believe.  
So he made their days vanish like a breath,  
and their years in terror.  
When he killed them, they sought him;  
they repented and sought God earnestly.  
They remembered that God was their rock,  
the Most High God their redeemer.  
But they flattered him with their mouths;  
they lied to him with their tongues.  
Their heart was not steadfast toward him;  
they were not faithful to his covenant.  
Yet he, being compassionate,  
atoned for their iniquity  
and did not destroy them;  
he restrained his anger often  
and did not stir up all his wrath.  
He remembered that they were but flesh,  
a wind that passes and comes not again.  
How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness  
and grieved him in the desert!  
They tested God again and again  
and provoked the Holy One of Israel.  
They did not remember his power  
or the day when he redeemed them from the foe,  
when he performed his signs in Egypt  
and his marvels in the fields of Zoan.  
He turned their rivers to blood,  
so that they could not drink of their streams.  
He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them,  
and frogs, which destroyed them.  
He gave their crops to the destroying locust  
and the fruit of their labor to the locust.  
He destroyed their vines with hail  
and their sycamores with frost.  
He gave over their cattle to the hail  
and their flocks to thunderbolts.  
He let loose on them his burning anger,  
wrath, indignation, and distress,  
a company of destroying angels.  
He made a path for his anger;  
he did not spare them from death,  
but gave their lives over to the plague.  
He struck down every firstborn in Egypt,  
the firstfruits of their strength in the tents of Ham.  
Then he led out his people like sheep*

*and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.  
He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid,  
but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.  
And he brought them to his holy land,  
to the mountain which his right hand had won.  
He drove out nations before them;  
he apportioned them for a possession  
and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.  
Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God  
and did not keep his testimonies,  
but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers;  
they twisted like a deceitful bow.  
For they provoked him to anger with their high places;  
they moved him to jealousy with their idols.  
When God heard, he was full of wrath,  
and he utterly rejected Israel.  
He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh,  
the tent where he dwelt among mankind,  
and delivered his power to captivity,  
his glory to the hand of the foe.  
He gave his people over to the sword  
and vented his wrath on his heritage.  
Fire devoured their young men,  
and their young women had no marriage song.  
Their priests fell by the sword,  
and their widows made no lamentation.  
Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,  
like a strong man shouting because of wine.  
And he put his adversaries to rout;  
he put them to everlasting shame.  
He rejected the tent of Joseph;  
he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,  
but he chose the tribe of Judah,  
Mount Zion, which he loves.  
He built his sanctuary like the high heavens,  
like the earth, which he has founded forever.  
He chose David his servant  
and took him from the sheepfolds;  
from following the nursing ewes he brought him  
to shepherd Jacob his people,  
Israel his inheritance.  
With upright heart he shepherded them  
and guided them with his skillful hand.*

Let's pray.

O God, we've just heard the history of how You worked among Your people in the Old Testament, and the wonders You performed, and the mercy and the judgment You showed. God, help us we pray. God, help us not just to hear this Word and then close our Bibles or just kind of move on. Help us to hear this Word to us today as Your people. Help us to learn from it, specifically so that the coming generations might know who You are and how You work. We want to be faithful to pass on the stories of what You have done to those who come behind us. So teach us we pray. Help us, we pray, to preach the gospel to generations

to come in the future based on the story of Your grace to generations in the past. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Okay, so if you're taking notes, I would title this message "The Gospel for Generations Past and Future." Just look at verses two and three, which is where we're going to spend most of our time. In the beginning of this Psalm, the psalmist says, Asaph says, *"I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us."* So that's generations past, what God has done among His people in the past.

But then, verse four, *"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."* So there's generations future, the coming generation. Then you look at verse five, generations past: God *"established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel."* So he's looking to the past, what God *"commanded our fathers to teach their children."* But then notice the transition to the future, *"that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God."*

I love that verse. There's at least four generations here. So you've got fathers, and you've got their children; you've got the children yet unborn and you've got their children. So I'm praying on Friday—every Friday I pray specifically for our boys to be the men whom God has created them to be, and our little girl to become the woman who God has created her to be. I'm praying every Friday that if the Lord sees fit, God would give my boys wives that love and honor Him and my little girl a husband who loves and honors Him. So I'm praying for their future spouses.

And then I'm praying for their children. We were actually talking about this last night during our family worship time, how I pray for their children to come to know the gospel. And one of my boys said, "Well, what if I forget to tell my children?" At first I didn't know what to say. I said, "Don't forget!" Like that was helpful. Then he said, "Well, what if I forget?" I thought about that some more, and I said, "It is your mommy and daddy's responsibility to make sure we do everything we can to make sure you don't forget to tell your children about our God. We're praying and working so that you don't forget. And not just your children."

So every Friday I'm praying for my children's-children's children—so the generations to come. I want the gospel to be carried on, to be passed on with passion from children to children to children. And then this kind of praying changes parenting, doesn't it? Because then I find myself asking, "Well, how can I love and lead my children—not just for their sake, but for their children's sake, and for the sake of their children's children? What can I do to pass on the gospel of God's grace and God's greatness to them for generations to come?"

## **What We Do**

And that's where this psalm comes in and encourages us. What do we do? And there are four things in this psalm that I want to exhort us to do based on this text. And we're going to go through them pretty quickly, because then I want us to talk practically about how this might look in our homes.

### **We teach the Scriptures.**

So one, what do we do? One, we teach the Scriptures. Verse four, we don't hide from our children, we "tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." This testimony He has established, this law He has appointed, "which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children." God has given us His Word, and we want to pass this Word on to the next generation. We want to do this in our homes, but don't think, "Okay, if I don't have kids-- or if I'm not married or if I don't have kids--this isn't for me." This is what we want to do as the people of God. We're all involved in this part. We're all involved. We want the gospel to be passed on. We want the good news of Who God is and what God has done to be passed on. We want to teach the Scriptures to coming generations.

We want to teach them the Scriptures. Deuteronomy 6:7 says:

*These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*

So hear that. All the time, all the time—when you're sitting in the house, when you're playing out in the yard, when you're riding in the car, when you go to bed, when you wake up.

We teach the next generation who God is. We teach them the glorious deeds of the Lord and His might. Ah, we tell our children that everything begins and ends with God, that He's the supreme creator, and sustainer and ruler of all, and He is ultimate. We don't teach children convenient rules to obey, and religious rituals to follow, and life skills to know. We teach them God. We teach the next generation who God is.

We teach the next generation what God has done, the wonders He has done, which is what the rest of this psalm is recounting, of all that God has done in the history of His people. The psalmist says, "Tell them about the plagues. Tell them about God's provision of manna from heaven, quail falling from the sky. Tell them how God has faithfully and powerfully provided for His people from generation to generation. Teach them who God is. Teach them what God has done."

And we teach the generation what God has said, His law, His commandments. So parents, make this Book the center of instruction in your home. Let this Book trump all other books in your house. If God has spoken, then what else is more important for us to tell our children? How to play baseball? Football, or basketball, or ballet or games? How to do science, or math or geography? Certainly not that any of these things are bad, but no, more than anything else we teach them the Word of God. It's the only thing that will last. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of God shall never pass away. It stands forever. From generation to generation, this Word will never fade. This Word is the rock upon which our children, and their children and their children can stand for eternity. There's nothing like it. So we give it to them. Every chance we get, we give them the Word. We teach the Scriptures.

### **We tell the stories.**

Second: we tell the stories. We tell the stories. That's the beauty of this Psalm. It's the longest historical psalm in the Bible, and when you read through it like we did, you see story after story, account after account, of God's work among God's people. So get the

picture of what we're passing on to the next generation. We're telling our children that we're a part of a story that began a long time ago.

So we're not the first ones on the scene, our children aren't the first ones on the scene. We want our children to know that the world doesn't revolve around us, and the world clearly does not revolve around them. The world revolves around God. History revolves around God. And He is weaving together a grand Story made up of all of our individual stories that we're a part of.

So, I love this. When I gathered with my children last night for a time in the Word and prayer and singing, I know that I am not the first dad to do that. And we're not the first family to do that. I'm looking at my kids last night and one of them is over here picking their toes, and I'm like, "You're not the first kid to pick your toes in family worship." And I'm looking at another child laid on his back with his feet hanging up in the air. He's playing games with his feet, and I'm like, "You're not the first kid to totally not be paying attention to anything of what's going on in family worship."

Because you're doing what families did--have done--for history. Generation after generation. You think back. You sit there in your home gathered around with your family, and you realize, this is what they did centuries ago, when they remembered the Passover, when they remembered that night they put blood over their doorposts of their homes. I'm telling the same stories to my kids that they were telling to their kids then.

One of the most requested songs in our family worship time is "Father Abraham." We're celebrating Abraham, our forefather in the faith, who went before us, who trusted God, who saw God do the impossible. So we want our children to know the stories. We teach the next generation the Scriptures. We tell the next generation the stories.

### **We warn against sinfulness.**

And as we do, so third: we warn against sinfulness. So you step back from this psalm and you realize: it's a warning. The flow of this psalm follows a cycle, showing us what God did among His people, how His people turned from Him, how He brought them back over and over and over again. This is what we see in the stories, in the Scriptures. We see how the people of God didn't trust God and we learn from them.

First Corinthians 10--talking about all that had happened as God brought His people out of Egypt, and they wandered through the wilderness--so exactly what we're reading right now as we go through the book of Numbers. First Corinthians 10:6 says, "*These things took place,*" so what we're reading in Numbers, "*these things took place as examples for us.*" These were examples for us. Then Paul says they "*took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.*" These stories are intended by God to be a warning. Paul says, "*Do not be idolaters as some of them were,*" and then he talks about the way they turned from God and they tested God, and they paid the penalty for their sin--how many of them were destroyed. And then he says, 1 Corinthians 10 days, "*These things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction... Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.*"

In other words, read these stories in the Scriptures and realize: the same thing could happen to you. The same thing could happen in your life. The same thing could happen in my life. This brings Numbers to life, doesn't it? To realize that God has given you the stories that we're reading for your instruction, to guard you, and me and us, our families, this church, against sin? So we might warn one another, that we might warn each other, we might warn our children.

There are dreadful consequences to come when you turn from God. Turning from God leads to destruction and judgment, and His judgment is real. So don't turn from God. Don't test God. Trust God. Trust God. Trust God. Trust God. This is what we pass on to the next generation. Don't turn from Him. Don't test Him. Trust. We teach the Scriptures, we tell the stories to warn against sinfulness.

### **We exalt the Savior.**

And then fourth: we exalt the Savior. We tell the next generation about God's mercy toward His people. We tell the next generation how God's grace triumphs over man's sin. The story of Israel is the story of how God responds to His people's failures with His forgiveness. God's forgiveness--His compassion--is the only reason this story keeps going, right? Israel's story in the Old Testament is the story about God's response to His people's failures with forgiveness.

How God responds to His people's faithlessness with His faithfulness--this is good. And it gets even better when you realize that Psalm 78 is not the end of the story, when you realize that this recounting of God's grace, and mercy, and forgiveness and faithfulness ultimately points not backward but forward to Christ the promised Son of God--God in the flesh--who would come to pay the price for all our failures, who would come to endure the penalty of all our faithlessness.

Oh, non-Christian friends who are here today, we have a story to tell you. Though every one of us has turned aside from God, we've turned aside to other gods; we've turned aside to ourselves. And it looks different in each of our lives. It looks different in world religions all over the earth. But it's all turning from the one true God to worship other things. We've rebelled against this God. We have done exactly what we read about in this Psalm.

But the good news, the rest of the story, is that God has not left us alone in our rebellion. This God has come to us. God in the flesh, Jesus Christ has come to us, and He has lived a life that we could never live, a life of perfect obedience to God, perfect worship of God. And then, though He had no sin to pay any penalty for, He died on a cross to pay the price for sin in our place. He died on a cross as the substitute for you and me. He took--Matt talked about this at 9:00--He took the just payment of God on sin upon Himself so that you and I could be delivered out from it.

You say, "How is that possible?" By turning from our sin, ourselves, and trusting in Jesus and the sacrifice He made on our behalf, you and I can be restored to this God, not just today, but for all of eternity. That is a story worth celebrating. And it's a story we're passing on. We want this story--not to stop with us--we want this story to spread through us. Right? *"Tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done,"* how He has made a way for our salvation.

## **What We Hope**

So then, what with this picture--teaching Scriptures, telling stories, warning against sinfulness, exalting the Savior--as we do these things, what we hope--now, follow this--what we hope... You may have noticed--especially in those verses five, six, seven, eight--all the times that "that" and "so that" are mentioned. Look at verse five. *"He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them."* "So, that (then down in verse seven)... So that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but

*keep his commandments.” Verse eight, “That they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.”*

So, follow this. This is not just teaching, and telling, and warning and exalting simply for information’s sake. This is teaching, and telling, and warning and exalting for transformation’s sake. So what do we hope for? We do these things—we teach, we tell the stories, we warn against sinfulness, we exalt the Savior—what are we hoping for? At least three things in this text.

### **They will know God in their minds.**

One, we’re hoping, we’re praying, we’re working as a church, we’re hoping, we’re praying, we’re working in our homes, so that the next generation—that they will know God in their minds. We hope. We hope. We pray, that they will know God in their minds. We want them to know God. We want our children to know God deeply. We want teenagers to have an intimate knowledge of who God is. Amidst all the awards and scholarships that students might get at the end of a school year, achievements for which we are grateful for God’s grace, the one that matters most is Jeremiah 9:23-24. “*Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord.*” This is what we want more than anything—more than getting this accolade or this achievement—we want them to know God. We teach Scripture, tell stories, warn against sinfulness, exalt the Savior, and hope they’ll know God in their minds.

### **They will trust God in their hearts.**

Second: that they will trust God in their hearts. Verse seven, that the knowledge of God in their heads will lead to hope in God in their hearts. So we’re not just after head knowledge, we’re after heart trust. We don’t just tell stories for the sake of stories. We tell stories so that children will believe—they’ll believe—that God is trustworthy, that they’ll put their trust in Him, that they’ll trust in Him to satisfy them, that they’ll turn away, aside from the pleasures of this world, because they have found greater treasure in our God. We hope that their hearts will belong to God.

### **They will obey God in their lives.**

And third, we hope, we pray, that they will obey God in their lives, that they will “*keep his commandments,*” end of verse seven. “*That they should not be like their fathers*”—stubborn, rebellious, unfaithful, verse eight. We don’t want them to turn away. We want them to keep His commandments faithfully. Isn’t this what we long for? As parents—and not just parents, but every member of this church—don’t we long for children and students, from our homes and from this body, to finish high school in our midst to walk into this world knowing God? Knowing God in a way that some atheistic professor on a college campus can’t just shoot down their faith, because all they know is a few facts about God. No, they know God. Don’t we want them to walk into the world trusting God to lead them, to guide them, to satisfy the deepest desires of their hearts? They don’t need to squander their time running after the things of this world, because they have God.

Don’t we want them to walk with God in obedience to Him? Not just to be able to survive spiritually, but able to thrive spiritually? Not just walking into the world, but running into the world with the gospel, ready to use whatever gifts, experiences, education, resources—anything and everything God entrusted to them, to spend it all for His glory among all peoples.

That's what we want. That's what we long for. That's what we pray for. And this is what we work for together, and it's worth it to work for this. It's worth it to work for this in the church, in this church, on a weekly basis. Thank God for the ways so many of you are working for this among the children in our body.

And I can't help but think that maybe one application of this text for some people is to start working among children in our body. So, if you're not, would you consider it? This is not preschool children, students—nobody asked me to do this, so this is not a campaign. This is just Word application. Who is He calling to make some sacrifices and to schedule on Sunday or Wednesday to work among our children?

## **A Simple Guide for Family Worship**

And it's worth it to work for this in our homes. Right? We don't want to be casual about our children's spiritual lives in our homes. We don't want to be casual about our children's eternal destiny in our homes. So this is why—so practically—this is why we put together a "Simple Guide to Family Worship" that you can download from our website, or go on the Brook Hills app and get it. You go on the website, go right to Bible Reading Plan, and there's a link to it there.

So that we in our homes—so pastorally, this is just where I want to exhort today. So families across our faith family—so this would apply to families with children, this would apply to couples without children, even to singles who live maybe with roommates—this is a good habit to develop. Worship in your home with whoever's in your home. So just as you set aside a time and a place to be alone with God, to set aside a time and a place to gather in your home. Maybe it's in the morning, maybe it's in the evening, maybe it's every day, maybe it's once a week. Just some regular time where you do these things.

### **Read the Word together.**

So, one: **you read the Word together.** You say, "What do we do? What do we do? How do we do this at home?" So just practically, this very simple, pastoral, practical application. So we read the Word together. Just read it. Include your children in reading it with you.

### **Study the Word together.**

Let that lead you secondly to study the Word together. So examine the Word, just like you do in your personal time with the Lord. That "Simple Guide to Personal Worship" that is also on the same place you can download the "Simple Guide to Family Worship." And it uses that acrostic R.E.A.P.: Read, Examine, Apply, Pray. So think through those, E and A. Examine and Apply.

"Okay, well, David, I appreciate your encouraging us to do family worship, but you know how to preach. It's like, I don't know what to do when I sit down in front of my kids or just with my wife. I don't know how to teach the Word." Just read the Word, and then ask, "What does this text teach us about God? What does this text teach us about ourselves? What does this text teach us about who Jesus is and why we need Him? What does this text teach us about what it means to follow God? What does this text teach us about why this matters in eternity?"

So those five questions. We're talking about threads of the gospel: God, man, Christ, faith, eternity—they're all in that "Simple Guide to Personal Worship." So just ask those questions, and see what happens as you talk about that. And then you begin to apply it.

We're asking, "Okay, how does this apply to our lives?" This is where it's a great opportunity for you to share even what the Lord has been teaching you in your personal time with Him. Let this family time be the overflow of that. So, read the Word together. Study the Word together. Teach your children to study the Bible. What is more important than this? Teaching your kids to be able to study this Word, to know this God? Study the Word together. Maybe even memorize.

### **Memorize the Word together.**

The third: memorize the Word together. Commit God's Word to memory together. Maybe make a game out of it. Put in some meaningful competition, that always helps. Do this in your home. I can still quote King James Version Bible verses today that were instilled in my mind 30 years ago in my home. This will last. This will last. Memorize together.

### **Pray together.**

And then, after you've read, studied, memorized the Word together, then pray together. Fourth, just simple acts to take, pray together. Pray with your family. Pray with your spouse. Pray with your roommates. Pray together. Have a time where you just pray with one another. Remember that other acrostic that's in that "Simple Guide to Personal Worship"—P.R.A.Y.? Praise--We've used this at different points in our worship gatherings and prayer gatherings. Praise God, let that lead to Repentance.

Just spend some time with your family. Just go around and call out names of God. Go around and thank God for specific things in your lives. So teaching in your home, we want to be thankful in all circumstances. So we're teaching, right? Praise and Repent. To confess sins to one another; confess when we fall short of God's glory and God's Word. And then to "Ask," to pray for each other. What can we pray for in each other's hearts and minds and life right now?

I was asking my kids last night to pray for something specific for me. So ask for each other. Ask for others. So ask how we can pray for our neighbors? How can we pray for your friends? How can we pray for the city? How can we pray for the nations? So let something like Operation World or Window on the World. There's a whole list of things we're praying together through as a faith family—for our lives, for this church, and for the city, for the nations.

All that leading to Yield. P-Praise, R-Repent, A-Ask, Y-Yield your life. Saying, "Lord, here's our family, however You want to use us."

### **Sing together.**

So read, study, memorize, pray together, and then sing together. So this is where things can get awkward and enjoyable at the same time. To sing *a capella* or play a song on CD or phone—inject kids and make this fun. So yes, yes, yes—sing good, strong, theological hymns with meat. But every once in a while sing a good, strong, silly song with motions, right? So it doesn't have to be all serious. Like, enjoy—enjoy this time together as a family. It's just a great memory-making time. I want my kids to look back at times when we were praying together, and singing together and around the Word together as enjoyable moments in our home. Not, "Oh no, not again."

## A Few Suggestions for Family Worship

### **Incorporating children ...**

So a few suggestions here to incorporate children. Keep it simple. So we're not talking here an exhaustive exegetical study followed by a season of prayer and a worship set. Even if you don't have children and you try to complicate this too much, you'll think, "Oh, I've got to prepare for that." This is not something you necessarily have to prepare for. I mean, you can. You don't have to. Keep it simple.

Make it enjoyable, so that you look forward to it. I mean, we sing a song that's going to end with us wrestling on the floor in the middle of the room every time. Worship leads to wrestling. So, honestly—it doesn't have to always lead to wrestling in order to have successful family worship, but make it enjoyable. Involve your kids throughout. Look for creative ways to involve your kids.

And the most important thing: shepherd one another's hearts in the home. This is what we've been called to do, Mom and Dad—to shepherd the hearts of our children. Husbands, this is your God-given responsibility, privilege and joy to shepherd your wife's heart. One of the most powerful ways we can do that in our homes is by gathering people together to talk about what's going on in our hearts. It's what worship is all about, right?

### **If the father is not a Christian ...**

Now a couple of notes—and this is in "The Simple Guide to Family Worship"—but I want to mention it here. If the father is not a Christian in the home—so maybe you're a mom and your husband in the home is not a follower of Christ—my encouragement would be to take initiative in this but in a non-offensive, non-threatening way. So you don't want to be just doing this to kind of rub the gospel in your husband's eye every night. But the picture is, "Okay, this is important to me in my heart. I want to pass this on to my kids. Is there a way I can do that in a respectful way before my husband in my home?"

### **If the mother is not a Christian ...**

If the mother is not a Christian, maybe you're a dad and your wife is not a Christian, so take initiative, Dad, with compassion and sensitivity, praying that the Lord might use this gently to open maybe your wife's eyes to the grace and the love of God.

### **In a single-parent home ...**

In a single-parent home, where this is all the more challenging in light of all the other challenges that are on you as a single parent—but God desires to supply you with the grace you need to make up for any natural deficiency that you perceive.

## **Inevitable Benefits of Family Worship ...**

You just think, in the end, about the inevitable benefits of family worship—three that I'll list here. It brings glory to God. Family worship—gathering together with those in your home to worship God—family worship is a visible reminder to everybody in the home that God is worthy of our time, and He's worthy of our attention, and He's worthy of our affection. Family worship produces joy in the home. The joy that Jesus brings to us individually, He then brings to families who delight in His worship. Family worship effects change in the world. Think about it. As families pray and study and sing together, they're joining in their

homes, from their homes, in what God is doing around the world, in ways that will affect lives for generations to come—generations to come.

This is why I want to mirror Psalm 78 in this church. This is why I want to mirror Psalm 78 in my home, so the next generation, all the way down to our children's grandchildren and beyond, might know God. They might trust God. They might obey God. Believing, believing, believing that one day God is going to use these successive generations to bring about the culmination of the Great Commission.

Last week in this service we talked about Psalm 67, how we live for the spread of the gospel to the peoples of the world, how we spend our lives for the sake of God's glory among the peoples of the world. And one of the ways—so make the connection—one of the ways we do that is by laying down our lives for our families. Husbands, by laying down our lives for our wives. Parents—and church all together—laying down our lives for children, and for their children, and their children's children. We teach them Scriptures. We tell them stories. We warn against sinfulness. We exalt the Savior—so that they might do the same. So they might live to see God's gospel and glory spread to the next generation and to all nations.

And if we die--if I die, if we die--before the nations have been reached and Jesus returns, then we want our children to carry on the task after us. We want their kids to carry on the task after them. So what if it's my...I think, what if it's my great-grandkids that get to witness the final frontier of global missions reached with the gospel? I want to live for that. I want to lead us as a church to live for that. Among the students, children across this faith family, let's live for them, lead them together, so that the gospel might not stop with them, but spread through them to their kids and their grandkids and their great-grandkids until Jesus one day comes back and this story is complete.

**Permissions:** You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided that you do not alter it in any way, use the material in its entirety, and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to the media on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Radical.

**Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:** By David Platt. © David Platt & Radical. Website: [Radical.net](http://Radical.net)