

A Dad's Prayers *for* His Daughter

Praying for
Every Part of
Her Life

Rob and Joanna Teigen



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*To our daughters,
Emma, Leah, and Anna
You are loved!*

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A Word from Rob

Prayer goes where a parent can't. It softens hard hearts, enlightens darkened minds, and guides lost souls. Prayer is a parent's way of taking matters into God's hands.

Will Davis Jr.¹

Everybody knows me as the dad who likes to have fun. I've written joke books for kids and a whole book of daddy-daughter date ideas. My wife rolls her eyes every time I get rowdy with the girls when I'm supposed to be settling them down for the night. My favorite time of the day is when I walk in the door after work and head straight out to the trampoline to jump around with the kids. We go to concerts, have Starbucks dates before school, and demolish the kitchen every Christmas baking cookies together.

I spend all this time with my kids because I love them. They make me laugh. They're my favorite people! But I also invest the time because I believe their relationship with me is crucial to their future. If they feel loved and cherished by me, they won't be as likely to meet their needs in the wrong places. If we're comfortable and open with each other, I can share my faith and speak truth into their lives. Most of all, the love they receive from me is their first taste of the love of God himself.

I realize, though, that no matter how much time we spend together, I can't control who they will ultimately become. All

the instruction, advice, and protection I give won't ensure that all will go well in their lives. No matter how often I take them to church and have family devotions at the dinner table, I can't make them embrace my faith in God and live for him.

This is why I have to put my daughters in God's hands. It encourages me to know that even though I'm not a perfect dad, God will always be a perfect Father. I don't always know what's best for my girls, but God does. The best thing I can do is bring my daughters and their needs to him in prayer. It's not our last-ditch effort to make things come out okay—it's the *first* thing we should do because it invites the power of God into their lives.

Sometimes, though, it's hard to know exactly how to pray for a daughter. I can't always relate to her emotions. She has struggles and experiences that I'm not always aware of. I'll see an attitude or perspective that needs adjusting, but I don't know what to say. It can be hard to know whether she needs more limits or greater freedom. That's why we wrote this book—to offer some insights about parenting and prayers that put words to the concerns dads feel for their girls.

This book is a tool to help you as you bring your daughter to the Lord in prayer. It may be useful to pray through a prayer every day or every week, or to pick it up when a specific topic is on your mind. Take time to read and meditate on the Scriptures included with each prayer so God can speak to you through his Word. Don't feel limited by what's written on the page—the Lord is eager to hear your needs and praises in your own words too.

I'm encouraged as a dad when I see God responding to the prayers of other men I know. Several prayers and stories are included in the book that show how other men have prayed and seen God respond in their daughters' lives.

Prepare to be changed as you commit yourself to praying for your daughter. God will give you greater strength and wisdom in your parenting. Your faith will be stretched as you wait on him to work in her life. You'll find yourself letting go of your own expectations and asking God what *his* priorities are. You'll

become a stronger parent as you experience God's influence in your own life. You'll begin to release your dreams and hopes for your daughter as you realize God has had plans in mind for her life since before the creation of the world! You'll find more grace for her mistakes. More patience in waiting for her to mature. More courage in knowing the Lord will go through every challenge by her side. More delight in her individuality. And more gratitude as you see she is truly a gift from God just for you.

It is a privilege to share this book of prayers with you. May you be blessed as a father as you bring your daughter's needs before the Lord. I pray you will find a helper and friend in him that you've never fully known before. God bless you and your family.

Rob

A *Word* from *Joanna*

I am so very grateful that I have a praying husband. Knowing that he brings our needs to God so faithfully gives me security and makes me feel loved. It reassures me that we're not walking this parenting journey alone. The burden of responsibility for our kids can feel too heavy to bear on our own.

What I've noticed as we've prayed over the years is that God does just as much work in changing *me* as in caring for my girls. I know a lot of us moms tend to worry. We work ourselves up over their grades, health, manners, organizational habits, and social lives. Our emotions run high over their weaknesses, and it can be hard to celebrate their successes when so many fears are constantly running through our minds. When Rob and I pray for our daughters, it settles me down. I put all of my concerns in God's lap and am able to let them go.

My girls know how to push my buttons too. They know if they roll their eyes when I'm talking I'm probably going to lose it! It's really difficult to see our daughters struggling with bad attitudes. Again, when I'm tempted to get angry about their choices, prayer lets me release them to God's control. He gives me patience and understanding. I'm able to see the big picture instead of fixating on minor issues. He reminds me of all the many, many things I enjoy in my girls and the privilege it is to be their mother. He rekindles my joy and fills me with hope for the future. Basically, God makes me a better mom when I pray.

Prayer also keeps a lot of tension out of our marriage. If I'm looking to Rob to "fix" our girls when they mess up, he starts feeling pushed (okay, nagged) about how he should handle things. When we pray and trust the Lord for wisdom and help in raising our kids, then I can relax and be thankful that Rob is parenting them God's way instead of mine.

We've seen God move through our prayers to change our daughters' lives—we've seen them grow in confidence, discover their talents and passions, and come to know the Lord as their Savior. We're in the trenches just like you, raising our children the best we can and praying God will hold on tight to each of us. My hope for you is that you'll find him to be all you need as you parent your own daughter. Discover how near he is to you. He wants to bless you both as you reach out to him.

Joanna

— 1 —

When She Needs God's Salvation

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

John 11:25–27

See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

Matthew 18:10–14

Loving God,

Thank you for my beautiful daughter. I know that she is your creation, planned before the beginning of time. You know every little detail about her. You cherish her and desire her salvation, so she can live her life in you and can spend eternity in your presence.

Reveal yourself to my daughter. Work in her heart so she can respond to your love. Give her an unshakeable faith in Jesus—believing he is your Son sent to seek and save the lost.

Without your salvation she has no future and no hope. She won't be able to comprehend the truth of your Word, which directs our steps and teaches us how to live. She won't receive the gift of your Spirit, who brings comfort, wisdom, and help as we make our way through this confusing world.

Claim my daughter as your own. Write her name on your hands. Put your seal on her and write her name in your book of life. Give her eternal life so no one can snatch her out of your hand.

Thank you that my daughter and I can grow in faith together. Put words in my mouth that explain your message of salvation clearly, in terms she can understand. Use me as your messenger of hope as I share my own faith story and live for you every day. Help me to abide in you and live faithfully so she sees your power in me.

I trust you, Lord, to work in my daughter's heart and bring her to full belief and trust in you. Thank you for the future we can look forward to—enjoying your glorious presence together, forever. Amen.

— 2 —

When She's My Treasure

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.

Psalm 127:3 NASB

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another;

they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

Psalm 145:3–7

Every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

James 1:17

Lord,

You did a “mighty work” when you created my daughter. She has been a “good and perfect gift,” a greater treasure than I could ever have imagined. Thank you for loving me so much that you would bless me with this precious girl.

My daughter is the most amazing gift from you that I can imagine. Becoming her father has been a life-changing experience—a *me*-changing experience. She has brought love and humor, creativity and joy to our home. Parenting her has taught me so much about myself and even more about you, my heavenly Father.

May I never take my daughter for granted. I don’t want to lose sight of the gift she is when guiding or correcting her becomes a challenge. I know that she was created by you and specially chosen to be my very own child. You have purposes that I have only begun to catch sight of.

Open my eyes to see your unique handiwork in her mind and personality. Use me to bring out her confidence and joy. Teach my heart to treasure her. Guard me from selfishness so I don’t become wrapped up in my own interests and squander the time you’ve given us to be together.

Help me to cherish my daughter the same way that you devote yourself to me. May I imitate your faithfulness, wisdom, and unconditional love. Fill me with your compassion and

understanding. May I never stop praising your name for the gift of my daughter. Amen.

— 3 —

When She Feels Inferior

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalm 139:13–16

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

Lord,

You know how my daughter struggles with insecurity about her physical body. The world fills her eyes with so many false ideals—flawless skin, hair, weight, fashion—that are impossible for any girl to live up to. She sees the young women on TV and the models in magazines and wonders, *What's wrong with me that I don't look that way?* Sometimes that question can shake her to the core.

I pray that the truth in your Word will put her insecurities to rest. Help her to believe when you say she is wonderfully made and that her body is a miraculous gift. Help her to see that her life is no accident because you had her in your mind's eye

for all of time. May your deep love and devotion be a comfort when she's brought down by other voices saying, "You're not good enough."

As her dad, give me wisdom with my words. Use me to build her up and affirm the beautiful creation she truly is. Guard my mouth from speaking any criticism that could feed the self-doubt she's already feeling. May she experience your love through me as I cherish her inner and outer beauty.

You say that perfect love drives away fear—may your great love bring peace to her heart. May she discover your wonderful grace and acceptance. Let us worship you as you rejoice over us. Amen.

— 4 —

When She Covets More

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

James 4:1–3

Father God,

You know our hearts—we want what we want, and we want it now! It causes a lot of conflict in our home when our children compete for possessions, being first, or the attention they desire. Everyone wants to be heard first, to have more *stuff*, and to feel like they're on top.

I pray that you would soften my daughter's heart. Calm her passion to be first and to have what she's craving at the moment. Give her the humility to put others first rather than herself. Give her patience as she waits for answers from me and from you when she makes a request.

Please bring peace into our home. May we have a loving, giving, sharing household that is free from selfish fighting and arguing. Teach us to value one another over material things. Keep us from "murdering" each other with hateful words and behavior when we feel cheated out of what we feel we deserve.

Teach us the difference between real needs and the cravings of our flesh. May we become more and more prayerful, bringing our dreams and desires to you. Make us patient and thankful as we wait on you to receive what's best for each of us.

Use me as a voice of gratitude in our home. Keep me from faultfinding and complaining. Rule my heart so I can live out an example of contentment before my daughter's eyes.

Thank you for being our source of every good thing. May we count our blessings and live in peace with one another. Amen.

— 5 —

When She's Afraid

The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? . . . For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. . . . I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. . . . This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. . . . Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Psalms 27:1, 5; 34:4, 6, 8

Father,

A child has so much to be afraid of—strangers, the dark, getting lost, embarrassment or failure at school, rejection by friends, and the disapproval of her parents. Some children even have to fear violence, hunger, and being alone in the world.

Please comfort my daughter by your power and strength. Help her to truly believe in your promises to protect and care for her. Give her faith to know that you hear her prayers and are waiting to comfort all her fears. May trusting in you give her confidence to face every person and situation that comes her way.

As her dad, may I never be a source of fear in her life. Keep me from out-of-control anger that will destroy her trust in me. May I be a strong protector of her body, her mind, and her emotions. May I be gentle and kind by your Spirit. Give me wisdom to know when to set boundaries for her safety. Give me courage to say no to people or experiences that could place her in harm's way, even if she doesn't agree or understand.

Sometimes she is timid or fearful of new opportunities. Help her to step out and try new things even if it's uncomfortable at first. Keep fear from taking control of her decisions. Give us both the wisdom to know if her doubts are based simply on emotions or real threats to her well-being.

Thank you for being our stronghold and shelter. You are our hero! Amen.

A Dad's Story

I grew up in a Christian home, and for that I am eternally grateful. My grandfather Fred was an incredible man of God who served as a pastor in Jacksonville, Florida. As Christians, my mom and dad have both prayed for me and with me my whole

life. When I was a very lost teenage boy, God answered their countless prayers for my salvation and more. Jesus saved me and placed a unique calling on my life that I'm still seeing unfold. He called me to himself as well as into vocational ministry as a sixteen-year-old young man.

As I look back, I can see God's sovereign hand of providence guiding me each step of the way. Today, I'm the daddy of a little girl, Tovah (three), and a little boy, Jude (twenty months), and I have the greatest privilege of helping my wife, Jana, with dinnertime, baths, story time, songs, prayers, and bedtime. I say this is a privilege because I genuinely believe that snuggling by the fire, talking about kitties, and tracing squares and circles in an activity book is holy work. God prefers to be called *Abba* (Daddy) by his children (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15), and so it's out of an overflow of my relationship with him that my children directly benefit. As I put Tovah to bed every night, I pray for several things like her health, that God will save her very early on in life, that she will spend her entire life knowing that Jesus loves her, and that she will share his love with others.

Every night, I pick and pray for a different decade of my daughter's life, all the way up to one hundred years old. For example, I pray for Tovah that in her preschool class next year, another child who loves Jesus will befriend her. I'm praying that in her elementary school years God will give her a soft heart just like Jesus has toward all kids from all races and socioeconomic backgrounds, and those with physical challenges, and that she will not fall into small-mindedness. Other nights, I pray for her teenage years. I pray that God will use her as an example of what it means to have character that is given to her by Jesus and not just follow whatever some crowd says is cool. I'm asking God to give her a deep love for the truth during high school and to walk in the light as he is in the light. I pray for her early college years that she'll not only have a soft heart and solid Christian character given by the Holy Spirit but that she'll also have an incredibly sharp mind that can reasonably defend and effectively share her faith in the university setting, with the hopes of more people meeting the Jesus she loves and worships.

I have dreams and goals for my kids and want to provide the best life possible for them, from home, to school, to whom they date and marry, as well as their careers. However, my prayers are not simply a means for me to get my way. Ultimately, my prayers for Tovah are an act of worship as I hand her back to our great God who loves her more than I ever will, has greater plans than I could ever imagine, and will care for her long after I'm in glory. I will be her daddy for a matter of days. God is and will always be our heavenly Father forever and ever. Therefore, I'm speaking to him often about his (my) baby girl, Tovah Kate.

Alex Early,
pastor of preaching and theology,
Living Stones Church, Reno, Nevada

— 6 —

When She Thirsts for God

*As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you,
my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

Psalm 42:1–2

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4:13–14

Lord,

We are all born thirsty. Our hearts are dry and lifeless and we never feel satisfied. We dig our own wells as we search for water—material things, popularity, a perfect appearance, success at school or work—and our thirst just intensifies.

Please create in my daughter a desire for you and you alone. Teach her that she can only find satisfaction in you. Help her to find you, to know you personally, and to walk with you every day of her life.

Allow my daughter to experience your living water. Give her a taste of how wonderful you are so she will reach for you again and again. Help her to seek you with all her heart and discover that the answer to all of her longings lies in you alone.

May I have a deep yearning for you as well. Don't allow me to ignore my thirst when I've become distant from you for any length of time. Keep me from going back to the old wells I made before I knew that *you* were the life I was looking for. May I love your Word and never end the day without connecting with you in prayer.

Keep us from hoarding your water for ourselves. Let us freely share the hope we've found in your gospel. Use us as bearers of your message to the world.

Thank you for your salvation. I praise you for the eternal life we have in you. Amen.

— 7 —

When She Needs Peace

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

Psalm 133:1

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:8–9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9

Father,

You know how girls can be! They bicker, gossip, pick favorites, and break off into groups that one day let you in and the next day shut you out.

I pray that my daughter will be able to rise above the crowd and be a peacemaker. Please keep her words free from gossip or from tearing others down. Allow her to be a leader by setting an example of kindness and humility. May she set a standard of friendliness and acceptance in her school and circle of friends.

Give my daughter the courage to reach out to kids who have been insulted or pushed to the margins. Help her to encourage anyone around her who feels lonely or insecure. Give her wisdom to know how to handle the petty arguments and gossip that she finds herself in the middle of.

Let my daughter be slow to take offense and quick to forgive. Fill her with a gracious spirit that refuses to hold a grudge. As far as it depends on her, may she live at peace with everyone (Rom. 12:18).

For my part, help me to set an example of peacemaking by the way I interact with the people in my life. May I consistently seek unity with my wife, my children, my coworkers, my church, and my extended family members. Don't let my pride keep me from getting along with others. Keep my speech from any slander that would hurt others and set a poor example for my daughter.

Thank you for sending Jesus to make peace between us and God. May that peace flow through us to everyone we meet. Amen.