

## Big Prayers

Big prayers are not necessarily long prayers. They are big in scope. Jesus' words at the end of Matthew 6 suggest this. After pointing us to the "birds of the air" that "neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns," and the "lilies of the field" that "neither toil nor spin," Jesus says, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."<sup>31</sup>

It would follow from this passage that when we pray for the next generation, our first prayers should be for the greater things—the big things—the Kingdom-sized things, as we trust God for the lesser things. This does not suggest we should neglect praying for the smaller things, but rather we should prioritize our prayers toward the greater. In the example He gave earlier in Matthew 6, Jesus taught us to first pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," and then He prayed "Give us this day our daily bread."<sup>32</sup>

When praying for the next generation, I want to urge us to invest heavily in praying the big prayers that clearly align with God's Kingdom purposes for the next generation, though we are not wrong in asking God for small things on behalf of our children.

It is certainly fitting to ask our heavenly Father to give our children a fun day, help them learn to share with their siblings, do well on their math test, heal them when they are sick, encourage them when they are discouraged, provide for their education, give them a godly spouse, and provide us with lots of grandchildren! However, too often, our prayers for the next generation are limited to our concern for the lesser things, and we neglect to pray God's greater purposes for our children and their generation, and the generations to come.

Notice Jesus told us that when we seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness (big things) that "all these things" (small

<sup>31</sup>Matthew 6:26, 28, 31, 33

<sup>32</sup>Matthew 6:10-11

things like food and clothes) “will be added to you.” When we pray big prayers for the next generation, the lesser things are often included.

King Solomon discovered this when he asked God for an understanding mind to govern the people of God with wisdom and justice, and to discern good and evil. “It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold...I give you a wise and discerning mind...I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.’”<sup>33</sup>

Asking our Father in heaven to let the hearts of my children be glad and their whole beings rejoice,<sup>34</sup> and to give them the “fullness of joy” in His presence and eternal pleasures “at [His] right hand”<sup>35</sup> can include the desire for our children to have a fun day. Asking God to equip my children “with everything good” to do His will, and to work in them “that which is pleasing in his sight”<sup>36</sup> encompasses the desire that they would share with their siblings, and more! Having a child do well on a math test can be important, but that importance fades compared with the importance of our children having “all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.”<sup>37</sup> If I am earnestly seeking God to give my child all spiritual wisdom, doing well on the math test seems less urgent. In the end, what will make us happier—a child who is good at math, or a child who is walking in a manner worthy of the Lord? It is true that one desire does not necessarily rule out the other, and it does not displease the Lord to ask Him for help on the math test. My concern is that we plead for help with the math test while neglecting to plead for something massively more important, and more explicitly aligned with the will of God for our children.

---

<sup>33</sup>1 Kings 3:11-13

<sup>34</sup>Psalms 16:9

<sup>35</sup>Psalms 16:11

<sup>36</sup>Hebrews 13:21

<sup>37</sup>Colossians 1:9-10