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Praying for Your Child's Future Mate

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance...
—Colossians 3:23–24

We have hopes and dreams for our children. We look into the future and imagine them as happy, responsible, resourceful, talented and strong in God's love. We take parenting and our Christian values seriously! Of course, any child ultimately will decide his or her own path, but there is much we can do to help prepare for that future. One factor is the power of our prayers.

Some parents pray specifically throughout their child's life for the person their child will marry. If you want to pray specifically for your child's potential future spouse, here are some ideas: Pray your child's future mate will know what he or she wants to do in life. Pray this person will become an effective communicator with deep, satisfying personal relationships. Pray they will have a hunger for God, and find prayer and Bible study personally meaningful. Pray for protection from the dangers of sexually-abusive situations or sexually-explicit knowledge that is harmful. Pray this person will be honest and sincere, and have a deep capacity for love. Pray for your child's future in-laws as they guide their child.

Your prayers and conversations can be invaluable in your child's preparation for a potential marriage. Share information, discuss values, help them realize the importance of choosing healthy relationships. Pray for your child's emotional, physical and spiritual safety. Pray your child will be mindful of the needs of others and be a loving agent of change and transformation in this world. Pray your child will be a person of compassion who treats all people with dignity and respect. Pray your child will be a whole person with a deep love for God and his ways. Ultimately, everyone with whom your child is in relationship will benefit from these prayers.

It is important we recognize that just as God provides the gift of marriage, singleness also is a gift and should be no less treasured. It is important not to send messages that everyone

needs to be married to be happy (or for us to be happy). We want our children to be whole, healthy people who marry because they want to, not because they need to please us. Our happiness should not hinge on whether they make the same life choices we do. Pray for yourself, too, that you will be a welcoming adult in the life of the person your child may someday choose. Pray you will find love in your heart even if your child's choice is not what you would have chosen.

Writing extensively about the power of prayer, Stormie Omartian encourages parents: "Your role is to become an intercessor for your child. ... No one else on Earth will ever pray for your child with the fervency and consistency that you will. What an awesome opportunity to powerfully affect your child's life for eternity."¹

What is important is that your children understand what an important decision it is to choose a life partner, so that they will not make this decision lightly. Tell your children you are praying for their lives. When your children are old enough to date, encourage them to pray about the people with whom they spend time.

Susan E. Murray is a professor emerita of behavioral sciences at Andrews University, certified family life educator, and licensed marriage and family therapist.

1. Omartian, Stormie. *The Power of a Praying Parent Study Guide*. Harvest House: Oregon (1981)