



PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER FOR OUR KIDS

We were asleep in bed when the urgent knocking at our front door started, startling us and leaving us a bit scared. When I went to the door, turned on the porch light, and looked out the window I saw the familiar face of a rattled and distraught father of one of the teenagers from our youth group. It is said that desperate times call for desperate measures, and this dad's desperation had led him to us in the middle of the night, looking for some immediate guidance and direction.

Earlier in the evening, his teenaged son had made a series of poor choices, and now he was facing felony charges after being taken into police custody. It was all unexpected, which added to the feeling all of us felt, a feeling that could best be summarized as "What do we do now??" It wasn't the first time during my youth ministry years that a desperate and blind-sided parent had reached out. Neither was it the last. To be honest, there would be times with my own four kids where some measure of childhood foolishness would result in our own desperate need to respond as parents with wisdom and grace. While the circumstances may differ, we all know what it's like to be at that place where we

need parenting help with the next step. We urgently cry out to God, "Help us!"

Jesus once told his disciples a parable about a man who went and knocked on his friend's door, looking for help at midnight. In this particular case, the man needed some food to set before a guest who had arrived. To have nothing to serve a guest was a major oversight in hospitality during Jesus' day. The neighbor answers from within, telling the knocker that his door is shut, he's in bed, and his children are sleeping. "Do not bother me," he says. But Jesus goes on to say that persistence of the one who is needy will cause a friend to get up, answer the door, and meet the need. Jesus then issues a call to persistence in prayer for those who have need. Why? Because our loving Heavenly Father will not withhold those gifts He deems necessary for us in our moment of need. Having just told his disciples *what* to pray (Luke 11:1-4), Jesus was now using this story to teach them *how* to pray (Luke 11:5-13).

In his classic book, *With Christ In The School of Prayer* (1885), Andrew Murray helps us to understand just what it was that Jesus

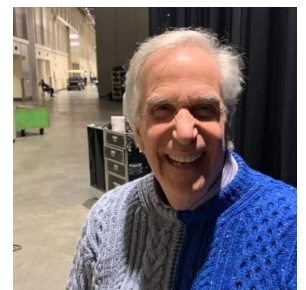
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YOUTH
CULTURE

HOT
QUOTE

Henry Winkler, talking about his home and the atmosphere he has tried to establish for his family, especially his 6 grandchildren.

"There are no plastic covers on our sofas. This house is meant for the lives of all of the children [and grandchildren] to be as free and as fun-filled as possible. And you know, if there's a spot here, a spot there, big deal. The laughter, the squeals, the running, the food throwing, the toy playing is worth a spot or two."



AARP
September 21, 2023

WE NEED TO ENGAGE OUR HEAVENLY FATHER WITH CRIES OF HONESTY, TELLING HIM THE SPECIFICS OF OUR NEED. WE SHOULD NOT BE HESITANT TO STATE AND EXPRESS THE DESIRES AND NEEDS WHICH HE ALREADY KNOWS.



was teaching his disciples in this story, then and now, about boldness in prayer. Murray says that the parable is “a perfect storehouse of instruction in regard to true intercession.” The truths Jesus taught his disciples about prayer are the same truths that needed to be tapped after that first late-night knock of desperation, in the knocks that happened since, and in our own time of need as we parent our children and teens.

First, Murray tells us that there is a *love* which seeks to help others and ourselves in times of need. We have a loving Father who wants us to come knocking, no matter the circumstance or time of day.

Second, we need to engage our Heavenly Father with cries of *honesty*, telling Him the specifics of our need. We should not be hesitant to state and express the desires and needs which He already knows.

Third, we must have a *confidence* that help is on its way. God is not one who refuses to answer the door. Rather, He is a friend who knows how to give good and necessary gifts to His children, and desires to do so.

Fourth, there may be an *unexpected refusal* to answer the door in the way and time that we expect. God’s will and way is not our will and way, and we must trust in His providence and sovereignty. He knows and gives what’s best, while withholding what’s worst, in each and every situation.

Fifth, Jesus tells his disciples about a *persistence and perseverance* that takes no refusal. In fact, the kind of persistence we need to show in prayer is one that goes on to the point of annoyance. Perhaps the best way to understand this is to think about the kind of relentless persistence a child has in asking for something he/she wants. God requires this kind of single-minded persistence from us!

And finally, we need to expect the *reward* of such a persistent prayer, specifically how God “will give him as much as he needs.” Jesus reminds us that just as we know how to give good and necessary gifts to our children, so will God do the same for us.

As I was growing up, my parents would often remind me of the fact that they were consistent and persistent in their prayers on my behalf. “Our one prayer for you,” they would say, “is that you would grow up to love, serve, and follow Jesus Christ.” And like my parents, we all must persistently pray this prayer, knocking regularly on “God’s door,” both in times of parenting peace, and times of parenting crisis.

These words from Andrew Murray are especially helpful as we ponder the need to pray for our kids: “Let us hold fast the threefold cord that cannot be broken: the hungry friend needing the help, and the praying friend seeking the help, and the Mighty Friend, loving to give as much as he needeth.”



FROM THE NEWS

TEEN STANDS FOR TRUTH

Back in February of this year, a 16-year-old high school junior in Renfrow, Ontario Canada, was suspended for voicing his concerns and moral objections to the school’s transgender bathroom policies.

Josh Alexander was actually arrested and suspended for stating that he believes it is a biological fact that there are only two genders and two sexes. Josh says, “I got suspended for comments made during a class discussion. It was about male students using female washrooms, gender dysphoria, and male breastfeeding. Everyone was sharing their opinions on it, any student who wanted to was participating, including the teacher. I said there were only two genders, and you were born either male or a female and that got me into trouble. I have chosen to follow Christ, and that’s the path that I’m on right now.” Parents, we need to teach our kids God’s good design for their gender. And, they need to know that standing for truth is sometimes costly.



TRENDS:



Do I Need a College Degree?

Researchers have heard from high school students regarding the questions they're asking about education, work, and their futures. A survey of 14-18 year-olds conducted back in June has found that students want their kindergarten through twelfth grade education to give them more knowledge about the skills needed to help them understand what training and career options are available after graduation beyond just college. Specifically, our high school kids are asking, "Do I need a college degree?" With student loan debt rising, more and more young people are considering going into the workforce rather than heading off to college. As parents and youth workers, we need to help our kids understand their unique God-given giftedness, and encourage them into the trades as an option. All work is valuable and all work matters to God. College is not their only option.



LATEST RESEARCH:

Girls and Kidney Stones

The National Kidney Foundation reports that about 10% of people in the United States will have to deal with a kidney stone at some point during their lives. Some of you have firsthand knowledge of just how

painful a kidney stone can be. The data suggests that kidney stones are most common among middle-aged, Caucasian men. But doctors are now reporting that they're seeing a marked increase in kidney stones among teenagers, especially among our teenaged girls. While researchers are still trying to figure out what's causing this, they are speculating that it's a combination of diets high in ultra-processed

foods, the increased use of antibiotics early in life, and dehydration. Some hospitals are even opening pediatric stone clinics to deal with this issue. Parents, since we have been given the responsibility by God to serve as stewards of our children's health, make sure your kids are drinking enough water, and eating foods that are healthy.



QUICKSTATS



Someone raised as religiously unaffiliated is more likely to become an evangelical (16%) than an evangelical is to become religiously unaffiliated (13%). Since 2017, the percentage of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated has remained flat—around 20%.

(General Social Survey, Gallup, and Lifeway Research)

Approximately 20% of adolescents had symptoms of major depressive disorder in 2021 – the first full calendar year of the pandemic – but less than half who needed treatment received it. About 14.5% of Black adolescents, 14.6% of Asian adolescents and 20% of white adolescents reported symptoms of major depressive disorder. Latino adolescents experienced major depressive disorder at a slightly higher rate, around 23%.

(JAMA Pediatrics)

TOP 8



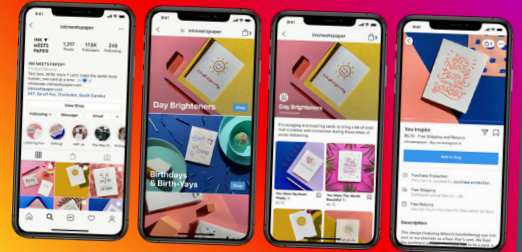
TikTok Shop

GEN Z'S PREFERRED SOCIAL PLATFORMS FOR SHOPPING AND PRODUCT DISCOVERY

1. TikTok
2. Instagram
3. Pinterest
4. Facebook
5. YouTube
6. Snapchat
7. Twitter
8. Reddit

July 2023

Source: Insider Intelligence/
eMarketer, "US Gen Z Social
Media Survey 2023"



BENEFITS OF FAMILY VACATION

by WALT MUELLER

We're only a few months past the end of summer vacation, so you might find it odd that I'm already encouraging you to think about planning now to take a family vacation together next summer. This past summer our family, which now includes our children and grandchildren, celebrated our twentieth anniversary of staying year after year at the same lake cabin for a week. Everyone loved it.

Teen and child psychologist Dr. Erika Velez recently posted a TikTok video encouraging parents to get their kids away on a family vacation. She said that even though kids may protest from time to time, get a bit grumpy, and cause some

frustration, the evidence points to the fact that memories are being made and family bonds are being strengthened. So much so, in fact, that our kids look forward to these times away.

Parents, as you fulfill your responsibility to nurture and raise your children in the Christian faith, don't discount opportunities like family vacations as great times to make that happen!

FROM THE WORD



When Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, he reminded his young mentee of the importance of knowing, understanding, and teaching the Scriptures properly. And while II Timothy 3:16-17 is typically understood to speak to the Bible's authority and the place it should hold in our lives, there is also a clear connection between this passage and the way we should pray for our kids.

Eugene Peterson has said that the starting point for prayer has to be our immersion in God's Word. You see, getting to know the truth about God and the truths of God's Word will shape our expectations and understanding in ways that teach us both *what* to pray, and *how* to pray for our children and teens. Reading Paul's words to Timothy remind us that Scripture will

teach us what and how to pray. Scripture will offer *reproof* and *correction* in ways that will lead us to pray in ways that expect answers that fall within, rather than outside of, God's will and way.

Tim Keller reminds us of the importance of praying under the authority of God's Word: "Without immersion in God's words, our prayers may not be merely limited and shallow but also untethered from reality. We may be responding not to the real God but to what we wish God and life to be like. Indeed, if left to themselves our hearts will tend to create a God who doesn't exist. . . The lesson here is not that God never guides our thoughts and prompts us to choose wise courses of action, but that we cannot be sure he is speaking to us unless we read it in the Scripture."

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

II Timothy 3:16-17

PODCAST



The **WORD**
in Youth Ministry

A CPYU PODCAST

The Word in Youth Ministry

is a podcast from CPYU for youth workers by youth workers.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT EPISODE 56:

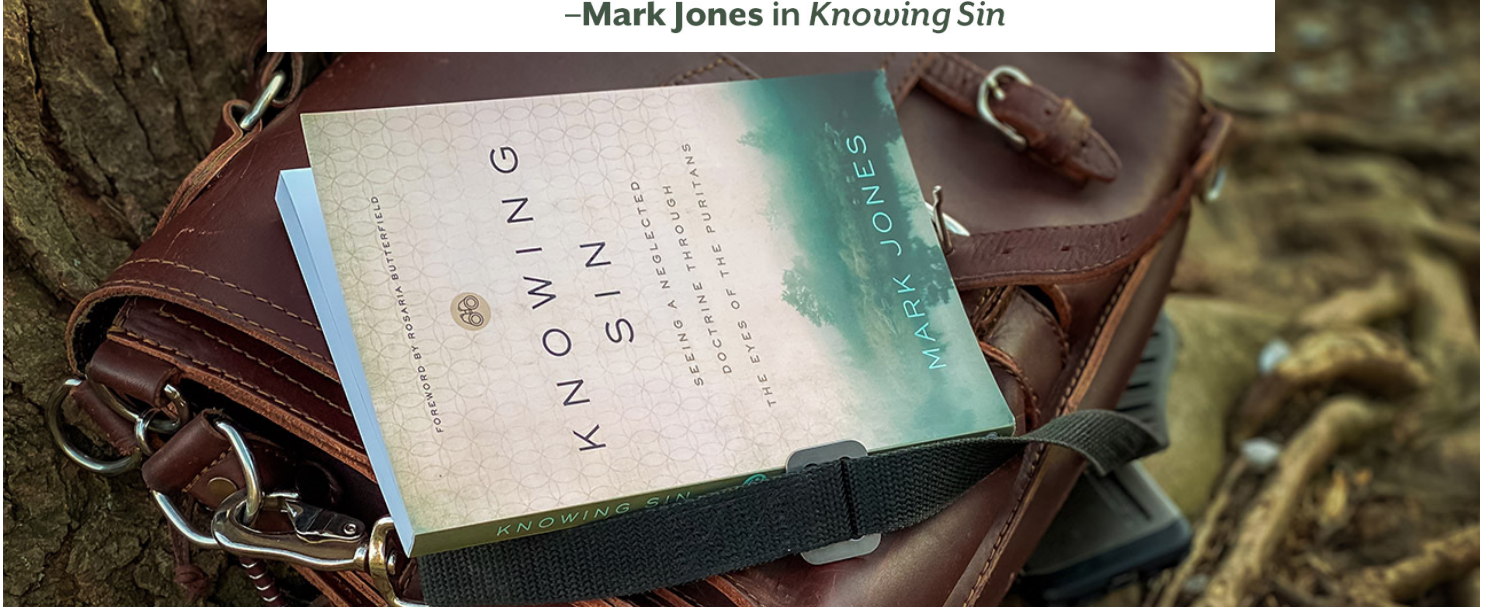
"WHY WE NEED TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT SIN" WITH MITCHELL CHASE



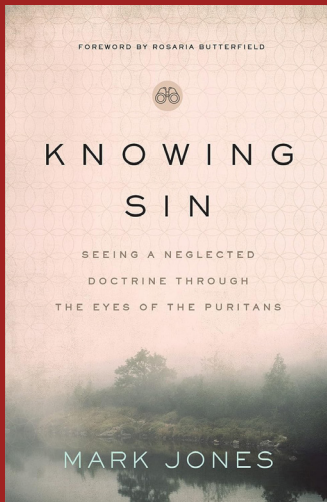
LISTEN AT WWW.CPYU.ORG/TWIYM

“A Proper Understanding of Grace Requires a Thorough Grasp of Sin”

—Mark Jones in *Knowing Sin*



HELPFUL RESOURCES



BOOK

The first rule of combat is: know your enemy.

We don't talk a lot about sin these days. But maybe we should. The Puritans sure did—because they understood sin's deceptive power and wanted to root it out of their lives. Shouldn't we want the same?

Though many books have been written on the “doctrine of sin,” few are as practical and applicable as this one. In *Knowing Sin: Seeing a Neglected Doctrine Through the Eyes of the Puritans*, Mark Jones puts his expertise in the Puritans to work by distilling the vast wisdom of our Christian forebears into a single volume that summarizes their thought on this vital subject. The result isn't a theological tome to sit on your shelf and gather dust, but a surprisingly relevant book to keep by your bedside and refer to again and again. You'll come to understand topics like:

- Sin's Origin
- Sin's Grief
- Sin's Thoughts
- Sin's Temptations
- Sin's Misery
- Sin's Secrecy
- and of course . . . Sin's Defeat!

None of us is free from the struggle with sin. The question isn't whether we're sinful, it's what we're doing about it. Thanks be to God, there is a path to overcoming sin. And the first step on that path to victory is knowing what we're up against. Start *Knowing Sin* today!