

School Days Ahead

Thinking back to my days in school, many memories come to mind. Memories include happy memories, sad memories, fun memories, overwhelming memories, exciting memories, frustrating memories, and the list goes on and on. I will never forget many of my school memories and cherish them to this day. However, in my life today, new school memories are being made. In fact, I find that I am reliving many of my previous school memories, just from a different perspective. The memories include anxiety experienced on the first day, nervousness over an upcoming test and relief when the bell finally rings. Daily, I find myself experiencing all these emotions once again.

The only difference in my current experience is that I really cannot control the circumstances that trigger my daily emotions. No. I am no longer in that driver's seat. You see, like many of you, the school baton in my family has passed to the next generation. As a result, I find myself in the bleachers watching to see how the new generation will play the school "game." As I watch, I often find myself wringing my hands or pacing the sidelines wondering, "How will this work out?" Often frustration sets in, as I feel helpless to direct the choices being made between 8:10 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.

I wonder if you have experienced the same type of frustration. Issues involving friendships, schoolwork, teacher/child interaction, and extracurricular activities keep many women anxious about the upcoming school year. Whether you are a mother, grandmother, aunt, teacher or older sister, you can probably relate to the inner struggle of letting the kids in your life grow up. As you and I face this challenge, we take our seats in the bleachers and wonder, "What can I do?"

Thankfully, the Bible teaches many things can be done in order to help the children in our lives. Whether the child is home schooled, public schooled, or private schooled, you and I do not have to sit on the sidelines wringing our hands. No. The Bible calls us to do something different. Romans 15:30 states, "**Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Do this because of your love for me, given to you by the Holy Spirit.**" (New Living Translation) From this single verse, we see one tangible thing we can do for the children in our lives. We can pray. Yes. You and I do not have to sit on the sidelines wringing our hands. No. Through prayer, we can join our children in the struggles they face. Paul, the writer of Romans, gave a clear reason for this call to pray. We should pray for our children because God has planted a love in our heart for our children. Now, for my fellow bleacher friends, that is something to cheer about!

I will never forget my oldest sons first year in school. Let's just say Jake had a lot of energy. Each day I sent Jake to school and wondered how his day would unfold. As my husband Jay would drive Jake to school, they would pray. One day when Jake was really struggling to make it through his days, Jay asked Jake, "Son, what time of day do I need to pray for you the most?" Jake's response tickles me to this day. Jake said, "Dad just

pray all day!” My husband and I have taken Jake’s response to heart and often find ourselves praying for Jake and Andrew.

As the children in your life return to school, I challenge you to join them in their struggle by praying for them. Pray for each child by name. Ask God to work in his or her heart during the upcoming school year. Often when I pray for my children, I pray in the following ways:

- “Lord, place a hedge of protection around _____.”
- “Lord, surround _____ with good friends.”
- “Lord, help _____ to make wise choices this day.”
- “Lord, help _____ to remember that he represents You.”
- “Lord, may _____ learn much more than reading, writing, and math. May he learn something about You.”
- “Lord, continually remind _____ to be respectful of the authority figures You place in his path.”

No matter how God leads you to pray, just pray! I too will be praying that God blesses you and your family during this upcoming school year.