30 DAYS OF PRAYER *for our* COLLEGE STUDENTS

Prayer Partner Edition

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a resource of LCMS Youth Ministry

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From the Author

As someone you know goes through their college years, we want to encourage and equip you to be in prayer for your child.

We know that college students are bombarded every day with temptations, struggles, challenges, and things that try to get them to find their identity in just about anything BUT who God has created them to be in Christ. We also know that prayer is one of our most powerful tools against Satan and we pray that this 30 day guide will help you fight for our students in prayer!

Blessings on the journey!

In Christ,
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Extra Ideas for Encouraging your College Student

- Every Monday text, Facebook, or call them just to simply ask them if there is anything specific they could use prayers about that week. Next week when you call or text, check back in to see how God has been working in those situations.

- When talking about school, ask more about courses and less about grades. Get the student to tell you about what they're learning, what classes they enjoy and what ones they don't and why. Asking about grades easily puts them on the defensive when you just may be trying to ask how school is going in general.

- Find opportunities to laugh with them even if it's through the phone or skype or on Christmas break. Enjoy life together!

- Send care packages. Ask their parents what some of their favorite foods, candies, cookies, etc. are. Show them that you're thinking of them through the little things. Holiday decorations, baskets of treats at exam time, and quarters for the washing machine are all ways to let them know you care.

- Occasionally send them brief notes and/or tell them over the phone/in person some of the unique gifts and strengths that you can see that God has given them. They are trying to figure out their identity and need some mentors to help call out these things in them.

Using this Prayer Guide

- You could use this for the first 30 days of this school year to pray specifically for students; and perhaps repeat it every month.

- Do it for 30 consecutive days or maybe use one page a week for 30 weeks (which is typically about the duration of 2 college semesters).

- Use the blank space on each day to journal your prayers or make note of when you see God answer the prayers you pray for students. If you do add your own prayers on the lines provided and are praying for a specific student, consider giving them this prayer journal at the end of the 30 days as a way to show them you've been praying for them.

- Put students' names into the Scriptures on each page as a way to personalize your prayers. (Example on Day 1)

- Some pages have "extra" ideas of how you can take your prayers a step further and encourage students as well. (More ideas on last page.)

However you use this, we hope it is helpful to you as you encourage students to grow in their relationship with Jesus in their daily life.

Day 1 - Grace

"May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord." (2 Peter 1:2 NLT)

Grace is something we easily take for granted. Often in Christian communities grace is only talked about in terms of the salvation Jesus bought for us on the cross. We talk about how we are saved by grace, which is crucial and important, but we also can live by grace. Grace not only makes it possible for us to live in heaven with God for ever, but can also sustain us each and every day!

Pray today that God would reveal how amazing His grace really is to the college student you know. Ask Christ to help them both receive grace and communicate grace in their interactions with all those they meet this year. Pray for grace in their relationships… grace to overcome failures... grace to make wise decisions in the midst of temptations and grace to get back up again when they fall. Pray that grace would be the standard to which they hold themselves and others. As the verse above says, pray that as God gives them more and more grace, that they would grow in their knowledge of Jesus Christ.

EXTRA: Here's an example of how you might personalize the daily scriptures throughout this study for college students you know. Try it for the days to come:

"May God give (child's name) more and more grace and peace as he/she grows in his/her knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord." (2 Peter 1:2 NLT)

Day 30 - Trust God Above All

"This is what the Lord says: 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord. That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.' " (Jeremiah 17:5-8 NIV)

Trust is something that is hard for all of us. This is probably due mostly to the fact that we've all had our trust broken by someone throughout our lives and it makes us doubt if there is anything or anyone worth trusting, even God. As we see in the passage above though, a life of trust is really a beautiful life! Can you imagine resting in a life without fear or worries, a life in which we never fail to get done what God is calling us to? THAT is a life of trust. While many things are important, I think the main thing God desires from us, is to simply trust him. Trust is especially difficult for young adults because the future is so unknown. Finishing school, starting a career, getting married, having kids… all of this is swirling around in the minds of college students, sometimes all at once. Pray today that college students would simply be able to trust in the midst of all of that. Ask God to reveal His faithfulness to them and give them a heart to trust Him no matter what life brings.

Day 29 - Freedom from Fear

"For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." (2 Timothy 1:7 ESV)

One time when Jesus was out on a boat with His disciples, a HUGE storm came up. It was so scary that the disciples literally thought they would die. Meanwhile, Jesus is sleeping in the back of the boat. In what I imagine was a nonchalant manner, Jesus simply gets up, tells the wind and the waves to be still (which they do!), and then turns to His disciples and says "Why are you so afraid?". I don't know what storms have come or will come in each student's college career, but when they do come, often fear accompanies them. Sometimes the storms are full of good things, but having to make so many decisions paralyzes us in fear and keeps us from making ANY decision. Other times we're afraid of how a relationship will turn out or whether we'll get everything done by the end of the semester. No matter what is tempting students to be afraid, pray today that they'd be reminded that God doesn't give a spirit of fear but rather one of POWER, LOVE, and SELF-CONTROL. Ask God to remind them of that power and help them live lives unafraid. Pray that they would have hearts that would be quick to turn to Jesus who is right there with them in the boat when storms threaten to destroy. Ask God to reveal His presence and His power in the situations they face today.

Day 2 - Boldness

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile." (Romans 1:16 NIV)

Pray for boldness in the lives of the college students you know as they are in school. It can be a challenge to share and live out their faith on a college campus or in a classroom. Professors or other students may make fun of Christians or tell them that their thoughts are unintelligent. Opportunities come up every day to shrink back instead of step forward in boldness. Pray that Christian college students will not be ashamed of the gospel, but stand firm in boldness knowing a powerful God loves them and longs for the people around them to know His love as well.

EXTRA: Think about an area where YOU could use boldness and courage from God to step out in faith this week. Then, DO IT. Afterwards, write a college student a letter about your experience telling them that you were praying that they'd be bold, but wanted to accept the same challenge. Tell them what you learned. What made it difficult or easy? Where did you see God in your experience? Ask God to bless the note you send and use it as an encouragement for them to be bold too.

Day 3 - Protection from the Enemy

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." (1 Peter 5:8-10 NIV)

As Christians, we have an enemy. Every day Satan "prowls" around trying to find ways to derail us and take our focus off Christ and His love for us. College life presents a unique set of challenges and temptations from Satan. Pray for college students that they would "be alert" and see when Satan is trying to lure them away. Pray they would have strength to resist temptation and turn to the grace of Christ. Pray that God would protect their hearts, minds, and bodies from the work of the enemy, surround them with peace, and fill them with great wisdom for every decision.

Think about a specific student you know and the temptations they might face. For some it will be the typical "college" scene temptations of drinking or partying. For others it will be the temptation to find their identity and value in perfectionism. Still for others it might be filling their schedules too full or trying to please everyone around them. As you think about a student you know, pray for the specific challenges you expect they may face and that God would provide protection from the lies the enemy might tell them about those challenges.

Day 28 - Gratitude

"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever." (1 Chronicles 16:34 NRSV)

Our God truly is good. His love lasts forever and ever. He is around us each and every day and despite the struggles we face, there are always things we can be thankful for. Today spend some time in prayer thanking God for the ways you see His goodness around you, especially in or through the life of a college student you know. What about these students can you give God thanks and praise for? After you spend time thanking God, ask Him to give the students a heart of gratitude. Pray that their eyes would be opened to the countless ways God is at work around and in them every day and that He would receive the praise for all good things in their lives. Pray the above verse inserting a college student's name and maybe a situation you know is challenging for them right now (e.g. roommate difficulties, a difficult class, a tough professor, etc.). Pray that even on the tough and challenging days they would be thankful to God for His great love for them.

Day 27 - Person of Prayer

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NASB)

Sometimes I think we underestimate prayer. We say our "Come, Lord Jesus" and our "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep", put a check mark next to "pray" on our to do list, and head on to the next thing. Hopefully if you've been consistent in praying for college students, you're beginning to see answers. God has given us this wonderful gift to be able to talk to Him and listen to Him through prayer. Today ask God to help the college students you know to be a man or woman of prayer—someone who seeks God daily for wisdom, encouragement, comfort, forgiveness, hope, and truly all they need. Pray that they would bring their requests before God knowing that he hears and answers. Ask God to also give them open ears to hear what He has to say to them. Pray that He would give them a heart that is often prompted to pray for and with other people in their colleges and universities and that they could use prayer as a way to draw people closer to Christ

Day 4 - Christian Community

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:23-25 ESV)

One of the biggest indicators of whether or not a student will continue to grow in their faith walk in college is whether or not they are involved in some kind of Christian community. The reality is that we ALL need support and encouragement from others as we go through life. College students are no exception. Students who get involved in a local church and Christian campus organizations are much more likely to grow in their faith during their college years.

Pray that students would find a local church or campus organization where they can be challenged and encouraged to grow closer to Christ. Pray for the leaders of those groups/churches that they would have wisdom to be able to meet the needs of the students. Pray that students will find solid Christian friends and mentors to walk through life with. Ask God for wisdom about what your role is (or sometimes even hard, what maybe isn't your role) in this process of them finding that Christian community.

Day 5 - Joy

"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." (Psalm 126:3 NIV)

Joy. This is another gift from God that I personally found myself taking for granted a lot. When we (especially most college students) think of our lives as Christians, sadly "joyful" or "exciting" probably aren't words many of us think of first. But that doesn't have to be the case! Pray that they, and all Christians, would be overflowing with joy about their relationship with Christ. Pray they find joy in the work God calls them to do each day, in college and in their future. Pray that the joy of Christ would overflow from them and impact the lives of people around them. Perhaps use the quote below to help shape your prayer of joy for college students.

"What I am anxious to see in Christian believers is a beautiful paradox. I want to see in them the joy of finding God while at the same time they are blessedly pursuing Him. I want to see in them the great joy of having God yet always wanting Him." ~ A.W. Tozer

Day 26 - Encouragement/ Perseverance

"May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." (Colossians 1:11-12 ESV)

No matter whether you're using this prayer guide daily or weekly, by this point in the semester or year, college students could use some prayers for encouragement and perseverance. Every day things come up that will try to discourage them and pull them away from what's important. Ask God to surround them with the people and things that will encourage them and give them a spirit of perseverance. Pray that they'd be able to keep at their studies as well as their time with Him. Think about ways you might be able to encourage a student today and remind them how loved and precious they are, to both you and God, in the midst of whatever joys and challenges they are experiencing right now.

Day 25 - Generosity

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:5-7 NASB)

"The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered." (Proverbs 11:25 NASB)

God is a generous God! How gracious and abundant He is with His blessings. It is amazing to think that, as His children, He has given us the ability to have generous hearts as well. Ask God today to pour down blessings on college students so they may be generous to others. Whether it's money, belongings, forgiveness, time, compassion, or grace, pray today that students would imitate God's generous heart in their interactions with the people around them.

Day 6 - Hope

"We who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf." (Hebrews 6:18b-20a NIV)

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13 NIV)

We all need hope. Without it, there is no reason to get out of bed each morning. Whether it's hope that the semester of tough classes will eventually end or hope in the midst of a life crisis, college students need hope. Statistics show that this stage of life is especially known for hopelessness. The pressures of life mound up and there seems to be no way out. Pray that when students experience a tough season, that they would not turn to alcohol, drugs, self-injury, perfectionism, unhealthy relationships, or anything other than Christ to try to fill that void. Pray that their hearts would find Christ to be the hope that anchors their souls and that by the power of the Holy Spirit their lives would overflow with great joy and peace!

Day 7 - Rest

"This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls." (Jeremiah 6:16 NIV)

NYC is sometimes known as "the city that never sleeps." I'm pretty sure that phrase could also be used to describe the life of most college students, especially those that live on campus. The number of possible clubs or organizations to join, activities to attend, or sporting events to watch are countless, even on small campuses. That doesn't take into account time spent doing homework or going to class. Students can easily find themselves going a mile a minute with no time to just rest.

What I love about the verse above is that it shows exactly where rest is found! Sadly, if you read on in Jeremiah it talks about how God's people chose not to rest in Him. It is easy for many college students to make that same decision. Today, pray that students would be able to rest in God. Pray they would stop, look around, seek God's wisdom for the best path, and then walk in it, finding peace and rest for their souls. Pray that they would do this both in the big decisions, like picking a major, as well as everyday happenings. Pray God would give their souls rest in Him.

Day 24 - A Love for God's Word

"Open my eyes so that I can see all the wonderful things in your teachings." (Psalm 119:18 ESV)
"I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word." (Psalm 119:16 ESV)

No matter how a child is raised, there come a point when they have to make decisions on their own. How comforting though to know that they aren't really alone. God walks with them and give Him wisdom through His Word. Today, ask God to instill in college students a passion and love for His Word. Pray that God's Word would lead and guide them, comfort them in troubles, overwhelm them with His grace when they mess up, and challenge them to share His love with others. Pray that students would be in His Word each day and find others to study with as a way to be strengthened in their walk with Jesus.

EXTRA: Send a college student you know a little note today (snail mail is the best, but text or email work great too) simply sharing something God's been teaching YOU in His Word lately and a reminder that you are praying for them.

Day 23 - Diligence & Hard Work

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23-24 ESV)

Today, spend some time in prayer asking God to give college students you know the wisdom, motivation, and focus they need to work hard and be diligent in all they do while in college. This goes much deeper though than "being a good student" or "working hard." Pray that students listen to God each day to show them how they need to spend their time. This can give them a sense of purpose as they do what Jesus calls them to each day. Some days that might be working hard on their studies, other times He may call them to love on people around them who are in need of Christ's compassion. Pray as they make decisions about majors and careers that God would lead them to decisions based upon where He can use their gifts and abilities in this world to make a difference for Him, whether that's in a mechanic's shop, a cancer research center, a daycare, or a business office. Wherever they are and whatever they do, they have a chance to do it to God's glory. Pray that what they do today, and every day of the rest of their lives, would be done not out of pressure and expectations from others, but rather with a heart desiring to serve the Lord.

Day 8 - Courage

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong." (1 Corinthians 16:13 NIV)

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9 NASB)

We mentioned a few days ago some of the temptations and challenges college students might face. One of the greatest challenges when it comes to really living out their faith is a lack of courage. It takes a lot of courage to stand your ground when a professor openly belittles Christianity. It takes a lot of courage to NOT go out drinking when you don't have many friends and everyone you do know is hitting up the parties. It takes a lot of courage to set boundaries when the world is reminding you of all the freedom you now have as an adult. Young adulthood takes a LOT of courage. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind your student what they stand for. Pray that God would fill college student with courage to stand firm in the faith, to be on guard against attacks of Satan, and to remember that they can be confident and courageous because God is with them everywhere they go!

Day 9 - Heavenly Priorities

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:1-2 ESV)

"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31 NASB)

For most of our life leading up to college, many of our priorities are set for us. Parents and the government tell us we have to go to school. Our family traditions often dictated how we spent our free time. Occasionally children may have to prioritize between activities but often have a lot of help in doing so. College is really the first time that a person has to set their OWN priorities.

Will I go to class or sleep in? Which clubs and organizations will I join? How will I spend money I make? How often will I come home to visit or call my parents? Should I stay in tonight and study or go out with friends?

The freedom that comes with these options also comes with great responsibility. As the students you know begin to set their own priorities in life, ask God to give them heavenly wisdom in doing so. Whether the decision is over whether to go to church on a Sunday morning or about how to spend the hour between lunch and class, pray that in all things they'd be able to seek choices that honor Christ and that they'd be able to do everything to His glory.

Day 22 - Purity

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:9-11 NIV)

When we think of "purity," often our minds go automatically to sexual purity. While that is an important aspect of purity and something to pray about for college students; purity runs even deeper. It's purity of the mind and the heart as well as the body. Sometimes we get a distorted picture of purity as something we can "loose" but the truth is, in our sinful state, purity is something we never had; at least not until Jesus came to restore it. A better way to think of this issue is like this Psalm says, "a path of purity". Throughout our lives we'll wander off this path from time to time, but God is always ready and willing to lead us back. Pray through the passage above for college students. Ask God to help them live according to His word and hide his Word in their hearts to help them in times where it's tempting to wander away from a life of purity. Pray for protection against Satan who desires to steal, kill, and destroy their purity. Ask God to make His grace and forgiveness clear in the moments when students may wander off His path for them.

Day 21 - Contentment

"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." (Philippians 4:11-12 NIV)

The better cell phone. The bigger TV. The newest laptop. The most beautiful/handsome girlfriend/boyfriend. The easier classes. The "ingroup" of friends. The best brands. We live in a society that breeds discontent. We're told that if we get the newest, the biggest, the best, that we will be satisfied. Sadly, as we seek after those things, we're always left wanting more. In the book of Psalms, God tells us why: "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." (Psalm 90:14 NRSV)

We're left wanting more because we're seeking satisfaction in all the wrong places. Renee Swope, in her book A Confident Heart says, "Until God's love is enough, nothing else will be." The "secret" to being content that Paul talked about in the Philippians passage is being 100% secure in God's love. When we are satisfied completely in God's steadfast, never-ending, always-enough love, we will be content. Pray that college students would find contentment and satisfaction in Christ.

Day 10 - Peace

"The LORD gives strength to his people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace."
(Psalm 29:11 NIV)

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27 NIV)

Peace. As the verse above reminds us, "the world" does not often give peace. In the midst of school work, jobs, relationships, and general college craziness, pray today that your student would find real, deep, true PEACE. Peace that surpasses all understanding and that comes from God alone. Ask God to pour His peace that He has promised into the life of college students you know. Pray that as they experience God's peace they would be a testimony of peace on their college campus.

Day 11 - "Whatever" Thoughts

The previous prayer guide talked about peace. One of my favorite passages in Philippians shows us where peace can be found:

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9 NASB)

Pray that college students would think on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and praiseworthy. Pray that by doing so, they truly would have peace in the midst of whatever trials and chaos they face today and always.

EXTRA: As a fun activity, perhaps think of something about a college student you know that corresponds with each of these word. (e.g. Emily is excellent at math. I saw her pure heart when she cared for those in need. It was honorable when she put others before herself the other day, etc.) Then maybe even send them a quick note letting them know you're praying for them with the above verse and the things that you're "thinking" about them. Consider inserting their name into the verses above when you send it.

Day 20 - Truth

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6 NIV)

The idea that there is no real "truth" in life is becoming more and more prevalent, especially in academic settings like colleges and universities. Students are often challenged to question if anything could really be 100% true. When it comes to matters of faith and religion, there is pressure to shy away from anything that can't be proven. However, the passage from John above reminds us that Jesus Himself IS truth. Pray today that in the midst of a skeptical world, students would seek truth, because when they do, they WILL find Jesus. And when they find Jesus, The Truth, they will find freedom. To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32 NIV)

Day 19 - A Witness for God

Last words are powerful. Whether it's the last words of a speech or the last words of someone's life; we tend to remember and hold on to last words. Today, let's look at some of the last words of Jesus: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV)

These are some pretty powerful words that Jesus passed on to His disciples and are words for us as His followers today as well. These few sentences outline God's basic desires for how we are to live our life. The word "go" really means "as you are going". Pray today that as students "go" through their college years that it would be a time that they can truly make disciples, bringing friends to know Christ for the first time and grow in Him. Pray that they would be a witness in their words and actions on their campuses, in their work places, in the dorms, and wherever they go. Ask God to remind them that they are never alone as they live out this call each and every day.

Day 12 - Forgiveness

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB)

At some point in every student's college career, they WILL mess up and/or be hurt by someone. Something may happen that can't be undone and they will experience or cause someone else great hurt. It could be a broken relationship, a failed class, or some decisions that weren't wise. Pray that when these things happen, they'd be met with grace and forgiveness. Pray that they'd be able to forgive themselves and whoever else might be involved as God forgives them. Pray that they'd remember their identity as God's daughter or son and be able to live as the new creation He made them in Christ. Pray this would be true despite what earthly consequences the situation may have. Seek God's wisdom in how to guide them to be able to live as a new creation and walk in freedom from guilt or shame.

Day 13 - Relationship with Friends

"And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God." (1 Samuel 23:16 NIV)

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (Proverbs 27:17 NIV)

God created us to be relational beings. He created us to need each other. Through the next few devotions, we'll focus in on various key relationships in the lives of college students and pray God's blessings over them. Today, pray for the friends of college students you know. Pray that God would surround them with people during their college years that will encourage them and be a positive influence in their lives. Pray that the friends would, like we see Saul did for David in the verse above, help students find strength in God. Pray they would also be able to BE a great friend to others, that whoever the college students you're thinking of spends time with would be people who sharpen them and who they can sharpen. Pray that Christian college students reflect Jesus in all their relationships and that God uses them to draw others to Himself.

Day 18 - Identity & Self-Esteem

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10 ESV)

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.'" (1 Samuel 16:7 ESV)

We live in a world that constantly tries to tell us we're not "enough". We're not smart enough, good enough, thin enough, big enough, quick enough, bold enough… on and on. These lies are around us in so many different ways; it becomes difficult to remember what our real identity is. Our self-worth and value suddenly become slave to whatever "they" says is "enough" (whoever "they" even are). The truth of the matter is that God has created each of us unique and whole just the way we are. He has handcrafted us as His masterpiece to do the things, great and small, that He set out for us since before the creation of the world. Pray today that through their young adult years, college students would grow to have a strong sense of their God-given identity that is unique from anyone else in the world. Ask God to show them what that identity looks like and give them confidence in living it out to His glory each day. Pray that they would find their self worth and wholeness in Christ alone.

Day 17 - Self-Control

"Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city." (Proverbs 16:32 NIV)

"… But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Galatians 5:22-25 NASB)

Once words are spoken, they can't be taken back. Once actions are completed, they can't be undone. What we say and do in haste can often hurt and damage ourselves and others. Pray that college students would have the self-control to think before they speak, act, text, or tweet. God's spirit gives us patience and self-control. Pray that they would see and use their gifts from God today and every day. Ask God to help them live by the Spirit and be guided by the Spirit rather than worldly desires. Ask God to remind them of the power that lives inside them when self-control and patience are difficult.

Day 14 - Relationships with Family

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you." (Exodus 20:12 NIV)

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2 ESV)

Whether a college student moved all the way across the country for college or still resides in the same bedroom they've lived in since they were born; their relationship with their family has likely changed in some way. While this may be frustrating at times for parents and family, it is good. This is a time in a young adult's life in which they begin to discover who they are as the individual God made them to be. Their growth may involve distance from the people closest to them. It is a confusing time of figuring out the balance between God's command to honor parents while finding their own identity in this world. Pray today that as students go through this process, they would still know the love and care from their family. Ask God to give them wisdom on how to be independent and yet honor and find joy in their relationships with their family. Pray also for their parents and family, asking God to give them understanding of the space their student needs to grow and patience and wisdom in the journey.

Day 15 - Dating Relationships

"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." (Proverbs 4:23 NLT)

"Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29 NASB)

Dating relationships are key for many young adults. These relationships during college years can lead to the joyous union in marriage or lifelong friendships through adulthood. They could also be opportunities for heartache all wrapped up in one. Pray that if/when college students find themselves in a dating relationship that God would guard their hearts and be the center of those relationships. Ask God to protect them and help them make decisions that please Him and benefit the young adults. Pray that students would see what God tells them in His Word as loving guides to keep them safe from brokenness and full of joy. Pray that they'd be filled with an awe and respect of God and themselves so deep that they refuse to let anyone who doesn't have that same awe and respect anywhere near their hearts or bodies. Above all, pray that God would help your child find their identity, worth, and value in Christ!

Day 16 - Relationship with God

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart." (Hebrews 12:1-3)

As was mentioned in "Relationships with Friends" (Day 13), God created us to be in relationship. The first verses in the passage above reminds us of how crucial our "cloud of witnesses" is. However, we can't forget that the most important relationship is our personal relationship with God Himself. Pray that despite all the other relationships, tasks, classes, fun activities, and whatever else fills a student's college years, that they'd always find time to invest in their relationship with Jesus. Ask God to help them keep their eyes on Jesus, the one who began writing their story, is perfecting it, and will one day finish it. Pray that they'd let Him have the pen, yielding their own will to His. Ask Jesus to remind students of how precious they are to Him and how much He loves them. Pray that their relationship with God would be the most important relationship in their life now and always!