



My name is Marlae Gritter and this is my oldest daughter, Michelle Rypma.

We are excited to encourage you that '**Your Persevering Prayer Matters**'.

1: Ephesians 6:18 says this: 'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints'.

God taught me exactly what this verse says: to be alert, keep on praying and never give up. Michelle and I are grateful for the opportunity to give glory to God for what He has done in showing us that our prayers matter so much.

MR. I am 32 years old, the oldest of 3 children and I accepted Jesus Christ into my life when I was six years old at pioneer club. I'll never forget that moment.

I've been a Christian all my life until I started drifting in middle school. I didn't have a good self-image and the enemy got me down. This had nothing to do with how I was raised or my parents not getting along. In fact I grew up in a Christian home and my parents were very much in love.

It didn't matter that my dad was a very successful realtor, or that my mom was in leadership with Moms in Prayer.

MG – My memories of my little girl growing up were that she was sweet, quiet, and timid. MS years were very hard for Michelle. She really struggled with her self image. I remember there were several boys who called her horrible names and were just plain mean. They didn't help the situation at all and only fed into her lack of confidence.

MR - As a freshman I was on the JV volleyball team and I had as many friends as a girl could ask for. I got A's in school and for the most part I was a good kid, or so I thought. The reality of it was that everything was going for me. But what people didn't know was that I was self-destructing on the inside. I hated myself and I was extremely depressed. It was like something was missing

inside of me, there was a hole that I needed to fill. I tried filling that hole with lots of different things like drinking, partying, skipping school, and boys. Instead of filling this hole, those things were only making it bigger. They were pulling me down fast and hard. I was making the wrong friends, I was getting bad grades in school, I quit the volleyball team and most of all I was dragging my family down with me into a dark pit that for some reason I couldn't get myself out of.

MG – It was so hard as a mom, watching my sweet, kind daughter become sullen, sad and angry. We knew she was dealing with depression and got medication for her, but that didn't seem to help. What was so hard was that she took her anger out on me. Mornings were the worst...just getting her out the door was a challenge. After she would leave, I would have a good cry and often went down to her bedroom. I would kneel by her bed and pray, pound my fist on the table and tell Satan that he was not going to have my girl. I got mad!

MR: There were nights that I would lie awake listening to my mom cry herself to sleep. The sound of her cry was like the sound of a breaking heart. But I still blamed and resented her even though I was tearing her apart. I didn't care. I simply didn't care.

At last it seemed that the world was caving in all around me and I saw no reason to continue on in this hellish life. In my mind there was only one thing to do, so I tried to kill myself by taking pills. That didn't work. It just seemed to make things worse for me. I was so angry. For some reason I was still wanted on this earth.

MG: My lifeline was my weekly MIP group. Every Tuesday I would go to my safe place and bring my Michelle to the Lord in prayer. Those precious sisters would love her through prayer, and would speak the strong truths of God's Word into her life. It took courage to be vulnerable and share through prayer what was really going on. At times I couldn't even pray, yet they prayed for her.

MIP – a safe place, a non - condemning place.....a haven for this hurting, broken mom who didn't feel like a very good mom.....they helped me to keep going, they pointed me to who my God was, they helped me not strangle her and their love and prayers gave me strength and hope in the middle of the battle. Every Tuesday, I would put a love note on my kid's pillow, telling them I loved them and writing out the verse that I had prayed in MIP that week. Michelle never said a word about those notes, but I was faithful to keep doing it.

2 The verse that God gave me to personally claim for Michelle was Isaiah 61:3.

Bestow on her a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. May she know that she is called an oak of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

I would pray it over and over, actually picturing how God was going to replace one for the other....Oh the Power of His Word to counteract the lies of the enemy.

JKD:" His promise is that His word is always fresh, always new. He is always speaking that creating, sustaining word, and it always does what he has assigned it to do." I clung to this promise.....

MR: The situation continued to get worse and my parents got to a point where they didn't know what else to do, and were very concerned for my 2 younger siblings. Through much advice and prayer, they sent me 2,500 miles away to try and help me reconstruct the life I was destroying.

I hated my parents for doing this to me, and several months after it was still hard for me to talk to them.

MG: The hardest thing my husband and I ever did was put our girl on a direct flight to family that was willing to help. Talk about exercising tough love....it was TOUGH and it was LOVE. My husband and I both cried all the way home, knowing that now, truly, our girl was in God's hands and completely out of our hands. All I truly had was prayer.....and boy did I hang on to it. Talk about learning to trust and be on my knees.....

MR: Away from all I knew, I was in a strange world. No friends, no car, and no communication to the outside world. One day a switch went off inside my head and for some reason it dawned on me that I didn't have to live this way anymore. I realized that I was the one choosing the next move and I no longer wanted to feel that pain and agony I had felt for so many years.

MG: That summer, with Michelle so far away, I asked the Lord to show me a 'calling card' each day.....I so needed the reminder that He has already been down this road and had it covered. I have a journal still today where I wrote those cards as I saw them.

I clearly remember when we began to finally hear some hopeful things. We sensed that our girl was more open to spiritual things and that she was realizing her stubbornness was what was getting her in trouble. We began hearing about a Christian guy that she had met and felt hopeful. Before her senior year, we flew out to see her and had a really good time with her, but realized that she wasn't strong enough to come back home. Another very hard thing – doesn't every mom want to experience senior year with their child? It was more 'letting go' for this mom.

MR: God began to change my heart and I began feeling less angry and more peaceful. I was enrolled in high school/college, got a job, had a new boyfriend and began to rebuild a relationship with my parents. My life felt like it was getting back on track. Then at 18 and recently engaged I found out I was pregnant. Yet another thing the enemy tried to use to throw me off course. Trying to explain my situation to my parents was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. I was petrified what my parents would think. But the one thing that sticks out in my mind still today about that phone conversation was this . When my dad got

on the phone he didn't threaten me, or tell me how disappointed he was . He prayed with me. He prayed that I would be strong and know the right thing to do. God knew that this was exactly what I needed to hear. My dad gave me comfort and again showed me he loved me even though I had made a terrible mistake.

MG: None of us ever want to get that phone call.....'Mom, dad, I'm pregnant'. I'm so grateful that God gave us the grace and words to react in love and truth and to be a support to Michelle. Yet, another huge issue the Lord gave me to pray through. We planned a wedding and Michelle and Josh got married very young. The gift of Makayla Michelle was born several months later.

MR: It was very, very hard being such a young mom, being married so young and being so far away from my family. I had to grow up fast. I did the best I could, but several years into the marriage, it fell apart too. Yet another heartache and place that I felt like such a failure.

Several years later, God brought a guy into my life who I ended up marrying. What's amazing is that Ben was someone that I had dated in high school. We now have been married 8 years and what a gift Ben has been as a husband and a steady 'other dad' in Makayla's life. Makayla is now 12 years old and we also have Carson who is 6. It's not easy with the joint custody arrangement Makayla's dad and I have, but I continue to do my best and trust God A LOT. I'm learning the importance of prayer and that my persevering prayer matters as my girl is now in Middle School

Here's a picture of our family today.



MG: I remember when Michelle began dating Ben – God had more He wanted to teach me. You see, Ben was a guy whom she had dated in high school and gotten into trouble with. God wanted to teach me about grace and forgiveness and could I trust Him once again that His purposes for Michelle were being played out? Ben is such a gift to our family, loves our daughter well and is a steady, calm influence in our Makayla's life.

MR: From that point on my life has been a miracle. I can tell you today that

when my parents sent me to Washington, it saved my life. I'm standing here today because my parents drew the line and loved me enough to break their own hearts doing it. And never once through all my pain did the thought cross my mind that my parents didn't love me. I didn't understand it then, but now I know that my mom's prayers carried me often, and protected me always. But because I hated my life and myself so much, I chose not to believe it.

Now being a mother and raising my own daughter I understand how my mother was feeling. I understand why she said the things she said, and why she made the rules she made. I can understand why her heart was crying out for her little girl. Today we are the best of friends and have the relationship I had always wanted. I work as my dad's RE assistant and we love working together. God truly does redeem and restore!!

MG: One unassuming day, I said to Michelle: 'remember those notes of scripture that I put on your pillow every Tuesday?

MR: I said, yes I do mom and told her that what she didn't know was that I would cry myself to sleep on Tuesday nights because her note always reminded me that she still loved me even when I knew I was being so unlovable and treating her so awful.

I happened to have my backpack close by and pulled out a folder with every prayer note inside. What she didn't know was that I took every one with me out of state and I still have them today.....here they are.

MG: Don't every underestimate the power of saying I love you through a note – through a scripture – through a written prayer. Even if it feels like there is a huge wall between you and your child.....TELL THEM. Today when I get home from my college MIP group and my GIP....I text my son and his wife a verse and I email a verse and love note to each of my grandkids. TELL THEM you are praying for them. They need all the 'love notes' they can get in today's world. What a way for us to be cheerleaders in their lives.

MR: Moms/Grandmoms who are here today, can I encourage you with a few thoughts:

1. Never and I mean never give up on you child. Even if they don't seem to show they care at all.(because I didn't)

Inside it is giving them comfort to know that you will not give up on them, no matter what and that they know you will keep praying. Through all the pain and suffering I caused my mom, she never gave up on me. She was strong through it all and tried to find ways to show me in some way that she loved me and she kept praying.....no matter what.

2. In small ways, even if you don't feel it will make any difference what so ever, Show them you love them. AN example from my life (HOLD UP FOLDER)

I was too proud to tell her, but it spoke loudly to me.

3. Your Persevering Prayers DO MATTER. If you pray for your children Every day and love them with all you have in you, even through the difficult times, then you can trust that God will do the rest. Keep praying. God always hears, even if you feel like your prayers are bouncing off the walls. And commit to meeting with other moms to pray. What a support to have other mothers love your child through prayer.

I want to personally thank all of you who prayed for me. I know some of you are here today. I wouldn't be where I'm at without your prayers.

YOUR PERSEVERING PRAYERS MATTERED!!

MG:

In my Bible, in the margin of Isaiah 61:3, I have the words MICHELLE/ ANSWERED and the date! God answered my many, many prayers and today my Michelle is standing here before you and

she HAS a crown of beauty instead of ashes,

The oil of gladness instead of mourning, and

a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair!! Isn't she beautiful?!!

AND she knows personally that she is an oak of righteousness – a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor and she is SHINING BRIGHTLY.

Moms.....If I could, I'd gently take your sweet face into my hands and say to you: 'You're a good mom'.....don't give up.....God is working in the unseen.

Keep believing His Word – it WILL NOT RETURN VOID.

YOUR PERSEVERING PRAYERS MATTER!!!