

GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

**When They Turn Away:
Drawing Your Adult Child Back to Christ
by Rob Rienow**

Provides much needed encouragement and practical advice to parents dealing with the grief and challenge of an older “prodigal” child.

**Prodigals and Those Who Love Them: Words of
Encouragement of Those Who Wait
by Ruth Bell Graham**

A collection of readings one woman turned to for comfort when her children wandered from God. It offers comfort and encouragement through Scripture, poems, hymns, prayers, and more.

**Prayers for Prodigals: 90 Days of Prayer for Your Child
by James Banks**

Offers encouragement for parents to “come boldly before the throne of grace” and intercede daily for their children through a series of inspirational prayers.

GOING FURTHER CHERRY STREET SUPPORT

Sunday School

The Sunday school ministry of CSBC offers every person an opportunity to dive into a purposeful, systematic study of God’s Word. Sunday school also allows for a small group setting where questions can be asked, relationships can be built, and encouragement can take place. Please contact the CSBC office at 417.889.1999 for questions regarding enrolling in one of our Sunday school classes.

Family Resources

Available for free at the Faith@Home Center or visit csbc.com/faith-at-home.

PRODIGAL KIDS

WHEN THEY REJECT YOUR BELIEFS



CSBC Faith at Home

WHEN A CHILD REJECTS YOUR BELIEFS

Every teen and young adult goes through a season when they try to establish their own identity. Some may do this by distancing themselves from their parents' tastes and preferences. But what do you do when your son or daughter rejects your faith and embraces beliefs or behaviors that you know could be harmful?

Avoid Blaming Yourself

Rejection brings pain, especially when the son or daughter you've raised walks away from everything you care about or transfers their loyalty. It is normal to second-guess yourself, wondering what you should have done differently. But even if you did everything perfectly, your child can choose to rebel. They may follow the pattern of Adam and Eve who, despite having the only perfect parent and living in paradise, still chose to sin.

"I have nourished and brought up children," God says through the prophet Isaiah, "but they have rebelled against me" (Isaiah 1:2b).

Stay Engaged

You may be thinking "They don't listen to me. Everything I say seems to make matters worse. What's the point in trying?" But don't despair. As far as you are able, stay engaged in relationship. "[They] in fact still very badly want the loving input and engagement of their parents - more, in fact, than most parents ever realize," writes Christian Smith in his book *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. Smith demonstrates that parents have far more long-term influence than they realize - more than friends, youth pastors, professors or anyone else. He explains that:

"Just at the time when [they] most need engaged parents to help them work out a whole series of big questions about what they believe, think, value and feel...parents are withdrawing."

Stay engaged as much as possible by being available, writing brief cards, calling, sending text messages, etc. Use words that demonstrate humility and affirmation rather than hurt and judgment. Listen without compromising your beliefs or affirming theirs. Your efforts may go unacknowledged for some time, but they still serve as deposits for the future by saying "I will always love you and be here when you are ready."

Balance Grace and Truth

The greatest influence you can have on your son or daughter is to reflect both God's grace and truth [John 1:14 - And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.] It can be difficult modeling both - especially when dealing with prodigal children.

Following God's model of patient love with His rebellious people, you can show love even when facing rejection. Ephesians 5:1-2 explains:

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

Pray daily that God will use this painful season for good in both your child's life and your own. But showing grace does not mean subsidizing a child's poor choices. Some parents continue to pay all of the child's bills. Others go so far as to bail their kids out of trouble, letting them avoid the consequences of their sins. Sometimes parents must show tough love by allowing the natural fallout of wrong choices to take effect. Remember the biblical story of the prodigal son. It was not until the boy became hungry that he "came to his senses" and returned home to ask forgiveness. Seek God for wisdom in interfering with the events God may use to help your child come to his or her senses.

Parents of prodigal children may experience pain when they read:

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

But Proverbs 22:6 is not a promise. It summarizes a general pattern. Besides, your child's story is not over. You have made an impression and laid a foundation. Your child's story is not finished yet. Stay engaged by balancing grace and truth while anticipating a new chapter in your wayward child's life.

Fervent Prayer

The second half of James 5:16 is a great encouragement to believers who have an ongoing burden, "...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." As believers, you must trust that God loves your child more than you do, and His desire is for your child to walk in a right relationship with Him. Just as the prodigal's father waited for his son, expecting one day that his son would return (Luke 15:20 - ...*But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*), so does God with your child...and so should you. *Your faithful prayers are another way you can wait expectantly.*