

HELPING YOUR FRIEND WHO'S A PARENT OF A PRODIGAL

WHAT TO KNOW

- They may experience a roller coaster of emotions, struggling with joy and trusting in the Lord.
- They may be struggling to recognize their lack of control and the realization that they cannot save their child.
- They may battle against idolatry, pride, and self-dependence in their own hearts.
- They're longing for their home to be a place of love and acceptance while also holding to biblical faithfulness.
- They may be wrestling with fear and feeling powerless to fix their child's problems.
- They may be wrestling with the fear of not being able to fix their child's problems.
- They may be questioning themselves and wondering what they did wrong.
- They may be learning to trust in God's sovereignty and not relying on their own strength.
- They may be experiencing grief and heartache as they watch their child make destructive choices.
- They may find encouragement in resources that teach about the sovereignty of God and contentment in Christ.
- They may be continuously praying for their child and need encouragement to hold onto hope.
- They may seek support from friends and are relying on the power of prayer.
- They're wrestling to understand that their hope is ultimately in Christ, not in the actions of their child.
- They're growing in their own faith and displaying the heart of Christ in their parenting.
- They may be persevering through the ups and downs of the journey, trusting that God is at work.

WHAT TO DO

Parenting a prodigal child can be a challenging and painful journey. Here are some key points to keep in mind when supporting parents of prodigals:

- **Understand the Struggle:** Parents of prodigals often experience a roller coaster of emotions, including struggles with joy and trusting in the Lord. It is essential to empathize with their journey and remind them to trust God throughout the process. Psalms, Lamentations.
- **Recognize Powerlessness:** Parents need to acknowledge that they cannot save their children. It is God who does the work and the power of the gospel that brings transformation. Encourage parents to surrender their children to God and focus on their own hearts, seeking rescue from idolatry, pride, and self-dependence. Rom. 8:29-30, Eph.1:4-5, John 15:16, John 6:44; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Pt. 1:2
- **Avoid Parental Guilt:** Parents may tend to rely on their parenting skills to produce desired results. Remind them they can do everything right and it does not guarantee results. Encourage them to create a loving and accepting home environment while continuously sharing the gospel with their prodigal child.
- **Embrace Hope and Perseverance:** Remind parents that the story is not over, and as long as their child has breath, there is hope. Encourage them to continue praying, relying on God's wisdom, and being faithful in their role as parents.

- **Focus on the Heart:** Help parents understand that heavy-handed control and outward conformity are not the solution. Instead, encourage them to address the heart issues and trust in God's sovereignty. Teach them to rely on the power of the gospel and the loveliness of Christ to bring transformation.
- **Apply the gospel to self before applying it to others:** Encourage parents to shift the focus from their child's sin to their own sin and to apply the grace and sufficiency of the gospel to themselves first so they can lovingly model an authentic faith to their child.
- **Offer Support:** Be a source of encouragement and support for parents of prodigals. Pray with them fervently, provide resources such as sermons or books that address their specific struggles, and remind them that their hope is ultimately in Christ, not in the actions of their child. Mat. 17:14-23.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not quote the proverb "train up a child" without understanding the biblical context of this scripture.
- Do not promise that their child will come to their senses and come home.
- Avoid minimizing their experiences or not fully grasping the weight of their situation.
- Do not question their ability to disciple others when they are facing challenges with their own family.
- Remember that God is the best father and had the worst prodigals, so avoid making judgmental or insensitive comments.

SUPPORT FROM THE SOUL CARETEAM

Contact: soulcare@doxa.church

RECOMMENDED COUNSELING CENTERS

Doxa Biblical Counseling: [INTAKE](#)

Fieldstone Counseling: Christ-centered, clinically informed biblical counseling center. [INTAKE](#)

RESOURCES

[Hope for Hurting Parents](#) - Brad Bigney, 4-Part Sermon Series

[The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment](#) - Jeremiah Burroughs

[Devoted](#) - Tim Challies

[Habits of the Household](#)

