



# Parenting Prodigals

The shocking and tragic news of the murder of celebrities Rob and Michele Reiner brings a tough lesson to our parenting series. Their troubled son, Nick has been arrested and charged with murder. This is more than a story of a crime, it is a look into a broken life and broken family.

## A. One of the most difficult lessons for parents is dealing with a prodigal child

### There are various degrees of "Prodigalism"

- You have a good relationship with your child, but there is a \_\_\_\_\_ difference.
- You \_\_\_\_\_ have a good relationship with your child. Trust has been broken. Lies have been told. Long periods of very little communication.
- You have \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with your child. You are not welcome in their world. You have not seen each other in a long time.

1. Often parents of prodigals carry huge amounts of shame, guilt, regrets and pain.
  - it is not uncommon for parents of prodigals to feel like they are failures
  - this is the one of the leading reasons why some men do not serve as shepherds in the church (1 Tim 3:5)
2. One of the greatest pains parents carry in their hearts is knowing that their child is not \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord
  - some are worshipping God incorrectly
  - some have no interest in the Lord

3. It is hard to understand how in a household of several children, one becomes a prodigal and the others don't

## B. The Two Major Concerns in this area:

1. What can I do to keep my child from becoming a prodigal?
2. What can I do with the prodigals in my family?

## C. The Lord's Parable (Luke 15:11-32)

1. Contextually this is answer to a \_\_\_\_\_ against Jesus (15:2)
2. The point of the parable is to illustrate the \_\_\_\_\_ of God

### What causes one to become a Prodigal?

In Jesus' parable we are not given the specifics, but the clues would include: the call of the far country; the desire to be independent; rejection of his father's life; association with wrong people.

- Influence of drugs and wrong people
- Mental illness
- Witnessing the ugly side of brethren
- Repercussions of dysfunction and divorce
- Neglect and lack of acceptance and love
- No real reason

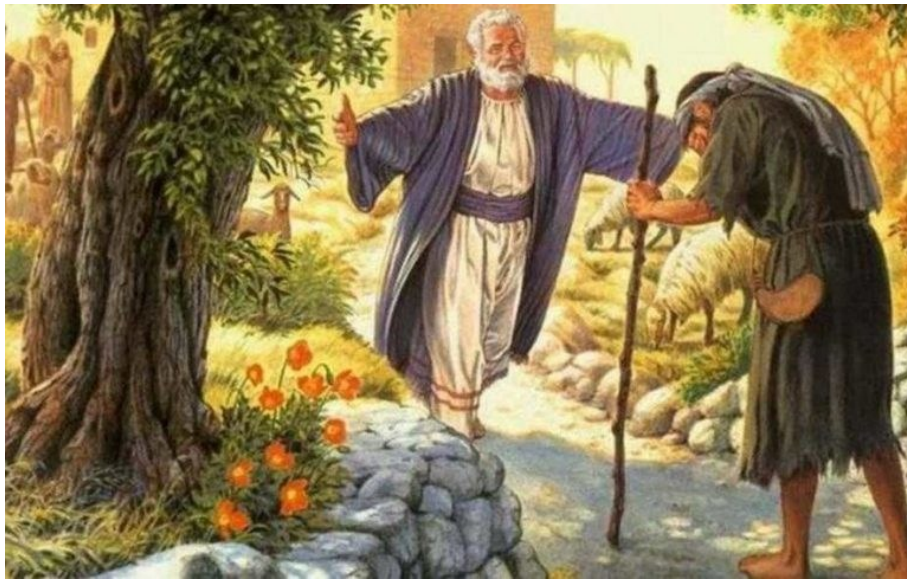
### Some things to notice from the Parable

- The heart of the prodigal was already \_\_\_\_\_ even before he approached his father
- The father \_\_\_\_\_ ( you never stop caring or praying)
- The father didn't \_\_\_\_\_ him, nor send \_\_\_\_\_ to help him out
- The dreams of the prodigal quickly became a \_\_\_\_\_
- Becoming \_\_\_\_\_ was the first step in the prodigal coming to his senses
- \_\_\_\_\_ how things were at home led him to change his heart
- The father became a \_\_\_\_\_ of grace (gentle, forgiving, patient, peace maker)
- The 'Next Day,' what changed was the \_\_\_\_\_ (temptations do not cease; consequences can stay with you even though you are forgiven; some will not understand nor forgive you)

## **Prevention:**

1. Don't live in the land of \_\_\_\_\_. Addictions and mental illness need a lot of professional care (that is time consuming, slow and expensive)
2. Create an \_\_\_\_\_ where differences and discussions can take place ('Let's talk about it')
3. Be \_\_\_\_\_ (some brethren and some congregations are wrong and have failed)
4. Always stand upon what the \_\_\_\_\_ says
5. Let your child know that you will always \_\_\_\_\_ him (even when he has hurt you)
6. Allow your child to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Don't hold this over them nor keep reminding them of their mistakes

**Luke 22:31-32**



## **What to do with the Prodigals in my family?**

1. For your safety, sanity, and salvation, establish \_\_\_\_\_ (see *Boundaries* by Henry Cloud)
2. Don't avoid the \_\_\_\_\_ in the room, but neither preach and harp on this all the time
3. Keep your \_\_\_\_\_ of discipleship (pray before you eat, go to worship). You becoming weaker will not help them become stronger
4. Pray. Pray. Pray.
5. Continue to be \_\_\_\_\_ (Phil 4:5)
6. Don't make \_\_\_\_\_ in order to change behavior
7. Often there are \_\_\_\_\_ of reasons and issues. Work through them slowly and gently
8. Don't be \_\_\_\_\_ into doing something that you are uncomfortable with
9. Be the \_\_\_\_\_ that God wants you to be

**Joshua 24:15**