

A Young Man's Plea to Children and Parents

*“Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”
Luke 15:17-20.*

The young man in the story is more popularly known as ‘the prodigal son.’ The word “prodigal” means “*spending money or using resources freely and recklessly*” or “*wastefully extravagant.*” In his prayers he acknowledges that he sinned against his father in his rebellious and wastefully extravagant ways. But the young man stated something very important. He did not only rebelled against his father, but in disobeying his parent he sinned against heaven, that is, **he sinned against God.**

1. Children, Obey Your Parents

The Bible is full of scriptures that admonish children to obey their parents, and the consequences of failing to do so. Here are a few:

Honour your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. - Ephesians 6:2-3

*'Honour your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.
Deuteronomy 5:16*

'Cursed is he who dishonours his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' - Deuteronomy 27:16

He who assaults his father and drives his mother away is a shameful and disgraceful son. - Proverbs 19:26

He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness. - Proverbs 20:20

The Bible promises blessings and long-life to those children who show the right attitude towards their parents, and obey them. However, the disobedient child who dishonours his parent will be cursed and he or she will not live a full life.

2. Parents, Love Your Children

The story of the prodigal son also showed a father who was very loving toward his sons, and one who cared for his children. He is a good example for other parents and guardians to emulate. While the Bible warns children to obey their parents, it also instructs parents (and guardians) to love and discipline their children, and not to bring any harm to them:

“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”- Colossians 3:21

Children, too, can become discouraged and rebellious once ill-treated by any parent, guardian or adult.

Parents ought to discipline their children, and they have a duty to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. Like the prodigal son, although they may rebel, they will inevitably return to God, because the Word of God was firmly planted in their hearts at an early age. Proverbs 22:6 says,

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

Hebrew 12:11 reminds us of this:

“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

Parents, in spite of the wrongs that your children may have committed, do not give up on them. Like the father in the story, and our heavenly Father, we should always continue to love them unconditionally and keep them continually in our prayers.

3. A Word on Child Abuse

The abuse of children by adults (including parents and guardians) in some of the most horrific ways – at times deadly- is often reported in the newspapers. God sees this as a terrible sin and will judge the wrongdoer accordingly. But the abused child also has a part to play. First, no child should ever remain in a home where he or she is abused, and in this case, children ought to speak out, if possible, against their parents and/or guardian, or any adult who hurt them. The child should never obey their parents or any adult to remain silent about the abuse, or to engage in any acts which contradicts the Word of God. The abused child should confide in a trusting adult or teacher so that some action can be taken to assist him/her, and to help the parent or adult, if possible.

Second, fear of punishment (or some form of reward) from the adult should never prevent a child from speaking out against the abusive behaviour of parents or guardians or adults.

Although, at times the situation may appear hopeless, the abused child should never lose his/her faith in a loving and fearless God who will fight on his/her behalf:

“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” - 1 John 4:4.

“Do not fear them, for the Lord your God is the one fighting for you.” Deuteronomy. 3:22.

Heavenly Father,

“I pray for both children and parents today. Lord, children are a blessing to any parent, and ought to be loved and respected. Likewise, children ought to obey their parents and honour them, even in their old age. Father, I pray, in particular for that child who may be abused, or who lives in an abusive domestic situation. O Lord, give the child the boldness and courage to speak out against the abuse, and to confide

in a trusting adult who You will send as a helper during this difficult period in the his/her life. Convict the heart of the abusive parent and let him/her seek urgent help from a professional counsellor. Make divine appointments today, Lord. I pray for deliverance over that home, and for Your peace in the atmosphere. I declare a breaking of generational curses of abuse in that family bloodline. O God, fight on behalf of that vulnerable child, or parent who suffers abuse at the hand of another. You are their refuge and strong tower, a mighty help in times of trouble. Send Your Holy Spirt, Your Comforter, to heal the broken-hearted. May they know the love of Jesus, and find once again the joy and happiness that they truly deserve. In Jesus' mighty name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen."

Memory Verse:

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."- Proverbs 22:6.