

## **What Do You Do When Your Adult Child Turns from God?**

*Phil Waldrep Gives Parents of Prodigal Children the Strength to Love*

While there are a multitude of resources available that talk about training children spiritually when they are young, what should parents do when their adult child turns from his faith? In his new book **“Parenting Prodigals: Six Principles for Bringing Your Son or Daughter Back to God”** (Baxter Press), Phil Waldrep gives these parents hope by encouraging them to live guilt-free, ask forgiveness of their child, and love their child unconditionally.

As the director of the popular Senior Adult Celebrations and president of Phil Waldrep Ministries, Waldrep ministers frequently to parents whose children have rebelled from the Christian instruction of their youth. Waldrep calls these wayward adult children “prodigals” after the biblical parable of the prodigal son, the story of a man who squandered his father’s inheritance and then returned home to the welcome of a king. “Parenting Prodigals” is a book that teaches parents to maintain hope for a repentant homecoming without becoming embittered when they don’t see that hope being fulfilled.

“Love and bitterness are both incredibly powerful,” Waldrep says. “One has the power to heal; the other has the power to kill. Parents of prodigals are challenged to respond like the father of the prodigal in the parable, with unconditional love. We don’t have to approve of the prodigals’ behavior, but we affirm that we love them no matter what they’ve done and continue to do.”

Though Waldrep calls parents to love their children unconditionally, he insists that parents should not bail their prodigal child out of his or her bad decisions. “This is a critical lesson for the parents of prodigals,” he says. “We simply must follow the example of the father in Jesus’ parable and let our beloved children experience the consequences of their decisions. If we step in and fix them, we short-circuit God’s redemptive work. We find ourselves opposing God instead of working in tandem with Him.” Letting a prodigal child feel the consequences of her actions may stimulate her to seek hope in Christ, Waldrep says.

Parents can find relief from the pain and embarrassment of having a prodigal child by applying the principles in “Parenting Prodigals.” Waldrep encourages parents to take responsibility for their side of the relationship with the prodigal. “Stop blaming, and confess” he says. “Stop justifying, and be honest. Stop hiding, and take action. None of us can be sure how our prodigals will respond, but we can be very sure how our Lord will respond. He will say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master.’ We can rejoice in His love for us as we await a change in our prodigals.”

“Parenting Prodigals” is 256 pages and will be available October 2001 in hardback format at the price of \$21.95 (ISBN: 1-888237-36-8). The website [www.parentingprodigals.com](http://www.parentingprodigals.com) has more information about the book as well as a place for parents to post both prayer requests and stories about their prodigals.

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**Editor’s Note:** For more information or to set up an interview with Phil Waldrep, contact Melanie Dobson at (719) 282-3822 or at [melanie@dobsonmedia.com](mailto:melanie@dobsonmedia.com).