

w/b 12th March 2017 ONE-ANOTHER-ING: PROTECT ONE ANOTHER - LIFE APPLICATION

THEME: GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR DEALING WITH WAYWARD CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION: Following Doug Horley's powerful and challenging sermon on protecting our children, this study takes up the theme of parenting by looking at the story of the prodigal son from a parental perspective. It looks at the way in which the Father (representing God) handles his wayward son and asks whether we can learn from him in the way we deal with our children.

Don't worry if you are not a parent. The parable could equally be applied to dealing with prodigal friends who are drifting away or people that you have pastoral responsibility for who are involved in fellowship less and less.

Read Luke 15:11-32

LAUNCH

- Can you remember when you were a child or a teenager and you rebelled against your parents or in some other setting. Why did you rebel? What did you do? What was the response and what was the outcome (try to keep this section light and funny - it's a sort of icebreaker)
- How was your rebellion similar to that of the prodigal and how was it different?

DISCOVERY

- How do you think the Father must have felt as he was confronted with his son's decision?
- (Optional) Why would the pain have been even greater in the context of the society in which the story was told? (think about generational, authority, lack of anonymity issues etc)
- How does God show his love in the first part of the story as the son departs?
- How does he show his forgiveness in the second half of the story as his son returns?
- What lessons can we learn from this as parents, friends and those with a spiritual responsibility towards each other?
- Do you think that if parents are to err, they should err on the side of too much discipline or too much grace? Explain your answer. (A good question for healthy debate - be careful!)
- How can a parent know when to let his child go down a wrong path and when to stop him? Discuss in relation to issues like the internet, morality, alcohol consumption, smoking etc

APPLICATION - Prayer

- Pray for parents and grandparents for the wisdom and determination to raise their children and grandchildren in a Godly manner.
- Pray for any prodigals (children or adults) that they would return
- Pray for our children and young people (as we did on Sunday) that they would be able to win the spiritual war that rages in their and indeed our generation.

Thanks to Steven Cole: Bible.org Lesson 73 a model for hurting parents for the idea behind the study and at least 2 of the questions.