

## Functional Families In A Dysfunctional Age

### “Dealing With Prodigals”

Luke 15:11-32 \* June 15, 2008

- I. One of greatest concerns of parents – for the salvation of their children
  - A. How does this become an ‘image’ thing for parents?
  
  
  - B. A lesson from the movie “Hook”

<h3>Three Things To Do To Keep Our Children Off The Prodigal Path</h3>
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- I. Teach them \_\_\_\_\_ and teach them \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. What dangerous parenting philosophy is out there?
  
  
  - B. Scripture Verses which speak to this matter:
  
  
  - C. What are the two stages to educating a mind?(2 Tim.3:14)
    - 1. First, we must \_\_\_\_\_.
    - 2. Second, we must become \_\_\_\_\_ of what we have learned.
  
  - D. The greater danger to children is not that they’ll be brain-washed by our teaching, but what?

II. We must help them \_\_\_\_\_ faith in Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ life.

- A. What will our kids do with what we taught them as they start to get out on their own?
  
  
- B. So what does it mean to ‘connect faith to everyday life’? Some examples:
  
  
- C. What is “Spot The Lie”?
  
  
- D. What’s the best way possible to connect Jesus to life?
  
  
- E. How can we guess that the father in the story did not do a good job connecting faith to life for his two sons?

III. For Parents Whose Child Is Already On The Prodigal Path: We Must Give Them \_\_\_\_\_ But Never Give Them \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. What does this **not** mean?
  
  
- B. What **does** it mean? Some implications:
  - 1. When in your home, \_\_\_\_\_ that your beliefs and values are respected.
  
  - 2. Cease and desist from \_\_\_\_\_ to them.
  
  - 3. Stop \_\_\_\_\_ them out when they get into trouble.
  
  
- C. What does it mean that the father never gave up?

# Functional Families In A Dysfunctional Age

## “Dealing With Prodigals”

Luke 15:11-32 \* June 15, 2008

I. One of greatest concerns of parents – for the salvation of their children

A. How does this become an ‘image’ thing for parents?

Parents whose adult children go to church and follow Jesus are thought of as ‘good parents’, and those whose children aren’t did something wrong, fell short in some way. Pastors are absolutely terrified of verses like Titus 1:6: “An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.” Which unfortunately over the years has set pastors and their families up to play this performance game with their church, keeping up appearances as it were of the perfect Christian family, which inevitably leads to what is called the PK syndrome.

B. A lesson from the movie “Hook”

### Three Things To Do To Keep Our Children Off The Prodigal Path

I. Teach them early and teach them often.

A. What dangerous parenting philosophy is out there?

When it comes to things like politics and religion that we really need to let our children find their own way, and discover their own truth. That we need to be careful not to impose our own particular doctrines and beliefs upon them, we shouldn’t force our children to go to church or Sunday School.

B. Scripture Verses which speak to this matter:

Deut.6:6-8

2 Tim.1:5, 3:14

C. What are the two stages to educating a mind?(2 Tim.3:14)

1. First, we must learn.

2. Second, we must become convinced of what we have learned.

D. The greater danger to children is not that they’ll be brain-washed by our teaching, but what?

The greatest danger is that they’ll be brain-deprived if they’re not; they’ll be soul-starved of the most essential, most nourishing, most invigorating, most enriching teaching that they could ever be exposed to. A child who never learns the Ten Commandments, never hears the great stories of the Bible, who never hears the greatest story of all – of the God who loved us so much that he became human and came to earth to love us and teach us and die for us and then rise for us – that child is poor indeed.

II. We must help them connect faith in Jesus to everyday life.

A. What will our kids do with what we taught them as they start to get out on their own?

Once our kids get out in that world on their own, if not sooner, they’re going to start evaluating that teaching. Asking themselves: Is this true? Is this relevant? Do I need this?

B. So what does it mean to ‘connect faith to everyday life’?

Some examples:

Don’t just say to your children, “Be honest. Don’t lie.” As you’re going through life and see examples of what dishonesty does to people, point it out. Perhaps the biggest area of instruction where we must engage our children is in the area of our sexuality, how to take care of our bodies. But don’t just preach to them. Don’t just give them all the lines. “Save sex till your married. Your body’s a temple of the Holy Spirit. The greatest gift you can give your spouse is your virginity.” Don’t just go through the rites and rituals. Here – put on this Promise Ring. Sign this purity pledge. Do those things, but then talk to them by looking at life around you, and point out what are sadly the all-too-numerous example of lives that are being ruined, or at the least being made so much harder and less fun because they didn’t do it Jesus’ way.

C. What is “Spot The Lie”?  
“Spot The Lie” looks for the message/agenda/worldview which is behind commercials, movies, and music – even candy wrappers!

D. What’s the best way possible to connect Jesus to life?  
Make sure they see *you* connecting Jesus to everyday life. Your kids are watching how you react to life.

E. How can we guess that the father in the story did not do a good job connecting faith to life for his two sons?  
Both sons did not understand how essential faith in God was for living life well. We know the younger son didn’t get it of course because he’s the one who trashed it all, threw it all away. But why the older son? Because of what the older son says when his brother returns and he sees his father throwing the party for him. In verse 29 he says one of the most astonishing things which shows us what’s really in his heart. Verse 29 – “But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.’” How do we know the older brother didn’t get it either? – didn’t understand how necessary and good and awesome it was being a believer? Because he thought it was a drag. Thought it was boring. Worse – thought it was slavery.

III. For Parents Whose Child Is Already On The Prodigal Path:  
We Must Give Them Over But Never Give Them Up.

A. What does this *not* mean?  
It does not mean we turn our backs on our adult children who do not share our faith; it’s not saying we disown them or cut them off. Notice the father gave the son the inheritance that was due him.

B. What *does* it mean? Some implications:

1. When in your home, insist that your beliefs and values are respected.

2. Cease and desist from preaching to them.

3. Stop bailing them out when they get into trouble.

C. What does it mean that the father never gave up?  
He always loved him. How do we know it? Because when the son appeared on the horizon walking up the road that led to his home, he dropped everything he was doing and ran to him. With tears in his eyes and his arms open wide. The lessons learned, the wandering over, the sinning confessed, he welcomed him back as his son. Don’t you give up either. You keep praying for them. You keep loving them. You keep believing the best for them. Give them over, but never give up.

Which is exactly what God does with us, isn’t it.