



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST® CHURCH

CENTRAL JAMAICA CONFERENCE

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MINISTRIES & COUNSELING SERVICES

WINNING BACK OUR **OWN**



November is *Parent Month!*
*** Let's make it extra-special ***

4th Reading
Sabbath, November 26, 2022

All loving parents want their children to have a long, happy, and successful life. They work and wish for them successful careers, financial prosperity, exceptional health, loving marriages, and happy homes. Of all the glorious dreams that parents project for their children, the greatest ambition to possess for them is that of rejoicing together with them around God's throne at the Second Advent of our Lord. One of the heaviest burdens a parent (especially a Christian parent) can carry throughout life is that of watching their child slipping further and further away from God into the firm clutches of the devil, leading to sure everlasting damnation.

While the story of the Prodigal Son speaks eloquently about a straying child, it also conveys much about the parent whose child has gone astray. Some of these lessons are encapsulated in the father's respect for personal choice, thoughts of a caring parent when a child has strayed, and the parent's eagerness to welcome back the one who wandered from the fold.

Christian parents desirous of winning back rebellious children must, indeed, acknowledge that their work in laying a solid foundation for their offspring's salvation is a God given responsibility which cannot be neglected without consequences. Yet, ultimately, the destiny of each human being lies in his or her own hands. Along these lines, parents should do all they can to win and keep their children within the faith, while recognizing that the time will come when each child will choose for himself.

Whenever a child of Christian upbringing strays, it not only brings disappointment, pain, and suffering, but usually persistent introspection on the part of the parents, which can sometimes be overwhelming or even injurious to the process of winning back the straying child. Once the parental influence ceases to be primal in the life of the child, the best parents can do is to pray, hope, and illustrate a readiness to welcome the penitent back to the fold. Any strategy to personally engage the offspring in study, or even mere encouragement to return to safe haven, must be carefully considered; for if such efforts are perceived as coercion, an almost insurmountable mountain will be instantly erected. The best thing to do is to pray. Earnestly pray and

hope. Hope that what your child was taught at home or even something they might discover beyond their home, will be good enough to win them to the Lord who is always ready and waiting to welcome the returning prodigal.

Unlike the boy in the scene of Luke 15, not all attempting to return home receive a joyful welcome speech. Imagine that the father's response went like this: "Son, I am happy that you have come to realize that all along I was right, and you were wrong about the matters of life. Although you have squandered all your rights to be here, we will accommodate you and give you a second chance because we love you." As fitting and justified as this lecture would have been, it was not what was needed. Usually, the straying child already knows the facts; and when he or she is ready to attempt a return to the fold, *Love*, not lashes nor lectures, is needed to finally bring the wanderer home.

Let us never fool ourselves into believing that it is our excellent training that will cause our children to be saved or lost. It is still Jesus who saves! We must understand, though, that in our role as parents, we ought to train our children well. We must pray for our children earnestly and continually, and even when they stray, ours is the privilege to demonstrate our unconditional love for them, making abundantly clear our earnest desire to welcome them back to the family of God where they truly belong.

Let us faithfully stick to the task!



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