

If you are dealing with a wayward friend or family member your soul is no doubt in deep anguish. As you watch them make harmful, negative decisions you long to sit them down and MAKE them behave. Oh, to have back some control!

In the parable Jesus told, the father saw his son returning **"while he was still a long way off."** (Verse 20) This means he must have been out watching for his son all the time. He anticipated his return but he didn't know exactly when so his eyes constantly searched the horizon.

This is active waiting. You can be busy watching too; praying bulls-eye prayers that hit the heart of your wayward friend or family member even if they are far off. That's far more control than you realize.

Praying of course is the most effective thing you can do. But what kind of prayer? Is there a prayer that short circuits rebellion? Is there prayer that cuts through the destructive patterns and produces the heart change spoken of by Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)?

"But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!'" (Luke 15:17)

Finally seeing the light, the young son returned to his father's house and was fully welcomed. That's what you want for your friend or family member too.

Recognize that your friend or family member has free will and must choose to repent, as did the prodigal, if they are going to be restored to a place of fruitfulness and blessing in their relationship with God.

However, through your intercession, you can provide them with greater opportunity to repent, much like the caretaker of the vineyard in the parable Jesus told in **Luke 13:6-8**.

The following are strategies taken from the story of the prodigal son (**Luke 15:11-32**) to use in praying your prodigal home.

1. Pray for grace and endurance to pray for the prodigal (v. 20).

It can sometimes take years to see the fruit of intercession for prodigals. Don't give up; don't lose heart. The father saw the prodigal returning **"while he was still a long way off."** (Verse 20) This means he must have daily been watching for his son. You do the same for your prodigal. Don't quit.

2. Approach the Father in from the covenant position that the prodigal has with Him (v. 11).

Remind the Lord that the prodigal is one of His children, and that He is the Father of the wayward. Ask the Lord to go rescue him as a shepherd rescues a lamb that strays from the flock.

3. Pray for the Grace to let go of the prodigal (v. 12).

When a believer refuses to pray, "Your will be done," the Father will then say, "OK, then YOUR will be done," and will allow them to learn by experience the folly of waywardness. Sometimes, the only way to get a person to look up is for them to be knocked flat on their back. Pray for the grace to "let go" and let God carry out the discipline necessary to bring the prodigal to their senses.

4. Pray for the prodigal to realize the illogical and irrational nature of the path he is on (v. 13).

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

5. Pray for the prodigal to experience spiritual famine (v. 14).

Pray that whatever or whomever the prodigal is placing their trust in outside of Jesus would dry up.

6. Pray for a hedge of protection for them (vs. 15-16).

Hosea used this prayer strategy to bring his harlot wife back. **"Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths. And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them; and she will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my first husband, for it was better for me than than now!'"** (Hosea 2:6-7)

Imagine a person inside a thorny hedge, unable to get out. They may try to go their own way but they can't hack their way through the dense hedge. You can pray that though the prodigal tries to go in the paths of sin, they are stopped in every effort. Pray that they come to their senses as they are hedged in and can't get out. The pig pen was the prodigal son's hedge.

7. Pray for a holy hunger and homesickness (v. 17).

Pray that they might remember the sweetness of what it was like to be in fellowship with God. Pray that they would long for the cleansing relationship they once had with the Father.

8. Pray he would come to himself (v. 17).

Pray that the prodigal would realize something is wrong. Pray for his eyes to be open to the truth of his situation, and pray against the delusion the enemy would try to bring him.

9. Pray for them to be granted the gift of repentance (vs. 18-19).

"I will arise and go to my Father." Repentance is a gift. It brings life and freedom. Repentance is breakthrough and deliverance.

"... if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

10. Pray that the prodigal will have the ability to receive the grace of God (vs. 20-21).

Pray that the prodigal would be able to receive the Father's love and forgiveness. Some of the prodigals may have lived very immoral lives, and they can't imagine the Father ever wanting them back. They feel they have crossed some sort of line that the Lord would not be able to bless them again.

11. Pray that the Lord will pour out his riches when the prodigal returns (vs. 22-24).

Ask the Lord to dump on him blessings of every kind. Pray that the Lord would lavish His love on the prodigal. Pray that when he returns that the prodigal will receive blessing upon blessing - spiritually, emotionally, physically, and financially.

12. Pray for the elder son (vs. 25-32).

Church members (the elder brother) need the Lord to prepare their hearts to receive the prodigals back. Pray that when the prodigal comes home, judgmental attitudes toward them would be gone. Pray against jealousy and envy as God's blessing is poured out on the prodigal. Pray for grace that when the prodigal is blessed that those in the church would not be envious, but excited. God does not show partiality. If the blessing comes to the prodigal it will come to the other children too!

Praying the Prodigal Home

