

The Power of a Father's Influence

Introduction: Commonly, what *are* people's most powerful influences in life? Our answers would depend on two things: how we look at life, and what we define as powerful influences. What *should be* people's most powerful influences in life? A father should be one of the most powerful, positive influences in each person's life.

I. Background to the Prodigal Son Parable (Luke 15)

II. Four Lessons From the Father

- A. He knew when to turn loose. (v. 20)
- B. He was a positive force in his son's life even when turned loose and his son left home. (v. 17-19)
- C. The father's love for his son never died.
- D. He knew how to extend encouragement and welcome when his son had been defeated.

III. The Parable's Powerful Message of God As Our Father

- A. In the parable the father symbolizes God.
- B. The parable teaches some primary lessons about the power and effectiveness of repenting.
- C. Regardless of the kind of father you have or the negative influences that exist in your life because of your father, God loves you.
 - 1. God loves you enough to turn you loose to do "your own thing."
 - 2. God wants to be the most positive, beneficial force in your life.
 - 3. Even if you rebel against and abandon God, God's love for you will not die.
 - 4. When you come to him, not matter what has happened in your life, He knows how to welcome and encourage you.

Conclusion: One of the most difficult challenges in life is to accept love. The greater our struggles and the deeper our troubles, the harder it becomes to accept love. God wants us to know His love is there. "Will God forgive me?" is never an issue. "Will God love me?" is never an issue. The only issues are these: will you accept the love? Will you accept the forgiveness?