

I. Introduction:

- A. A Parental Nightmare.
- B. Your initial response will be very important. James 1:19 Eph. 4:29

II. Why do some children from Christian homes turn away?

- A. The problem of wayward children is not a new one.
- B. Parents influence their children. Ephesians 6:4 Prov. 29:17 1 Sa. 2:29 1 Kings 1:6
 - 1. Parental influence is not determinative.
 - 2. Our children will be exposed to other influences. Prov. 2:13,16 Ps. 1:1ff Ro. 1:30ff
- C. Our children will make choices which we cannot control, for which they are responsible. Genesis 4:6-7 Ezek. 18:5-18
 - 1. God himself has wayward children. Isa. 1:2
 - 2. Jesus warned that the gospel would divide families. Luke 12:51-53a
- D. Are some children gender confused because of nature or nurture? Js. 1:13-15 Gal. 5:16f 1 Cor. 10:13 6:9ff 1 Pet. 1:18 2 Cor. 5:17 Mark 7:14-23
- E. We are dependent upon God's sovereign grace to save our kids. Psalm 51:5 Eph. 2:1-3 1 Cor. 1:18 2:14
 - 1. Even if we were perfect parents, apart from God's grace, they would still rebel against us, just as Cain rejected the LORD's counsel.
 - 2. And we aren't perfect parents. If our children were blank slates, our parenting failures would make a mess of them.
 - 3. While it is good that we strive to be faithful parents, we are totally dependent upon God to open blind eyes and soften hard hearts.
 - 4. But the sovereign grace of God also gives us hope.
- F. You can still love your prodigal. And hope.

III. Your faithfulness to Christ may create conflict between you and your unbelieving family members – no matter how hard you try to love them. Luke 12:49-53

- A. Jesus was rejected by His own people. John 1:9-11 Mark 3:31-35
- B. Jesus warned that His followers would be rejected as He was
 - 1. Wherever the Word of Goes forth there will be division. John 7:43 9:16 10:19 Acts
 - 2. The world hates us because of our loyalty to Christ. John 3:19 15:18 Mt. 10:22
 - 3. Don't be surprised when family members who are of the world reject you because you follow Christ. Lu. 12:49-53 Mt. 10:21 Micah 7:6 Ps. 27:10,2 John 3:19 .
- C. Not every family experiences these conflicts with the same intensity. Acts 16:31ff

IV. Christ must come first – even before your family. Luke 14:25-33 9:57-62 Mt. 10:32-39

A. You can't always avoid conflict. Rom. 12:18

B. There may be situations in which you have to choose between Christ and your relatives.

1. Your family may pressure you to put them above Christ. Mt. 10:32-37 Acts 5:29

2. Some have wrongly honored their family members above God. 1 Sam. 2:29

2 Sam. 13:11-21 9:4-7 1 Ki. 1:5-6 Pr. 29:25

C. Don't betray the Lord by putting your earthly family above Jesus. Mt. 10:37-39 Lu. 14:26

1. It may be really hard. Deut. 13:6-8

2. Unbelieving family members can be moralistic, judgmental & intolerant. Jo. 16:1-4

3. They will work hard to convert you

4. Your faithfulness to Christ may produce their ire. Mt. 10:24f Lu. 12:51-53 14:26ff

V. Even if your family members and friends treat you like an enemy, keep loving them.

Luke 6:27-36 Mt. 5:43-44 Ro. 12:20 2:4

A. You don't have to shun unbelieving immoral family members. 1 Co. 5:10 Luke 15:11ff
Ps. 103:13-14

B. Their problem is not their immorality, but their lostness. 1 Co. 6:9-11

C. Maintain an attitude of grace/forbearance. Luke 22:34 Rom. 2:4 Ps. 119:67 2 Pet. 2:19

D. Don't neglect the rest of your family

VI. Hope: Jesus incorporates you into His heavenly family.

A. While we may experience broken relationships with family and friends, we can trust the Lord to care for us. Ps. 27:10-14, 1-9-21 Jer. 17:5-8

B. He offers you peace now and peace forever. Rom. 5:1 Jo. 14:27 Isa. 11:9 43:2 Ps. 66:12

C. You will gain more than you have lost. Luke 18:28-30 8:19 Mt. 19:29 Mark 3:31-35
Rom. 8:14-17 Gal. 4:4