

Pain of a Prodigal; A Mother's Perspective

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by Stephanie Reck



Every mother to be dreams that her children will be productive, love their parents and honor them, be who God destined them to be, and fulfill the call and purpose in their life. Mothers dream early on that they will have a close, loving relationship with their child. Mothers see themselves shopping with their daughters and having lunch dates, and mothers see themselves at every ball game of their son's life. Mothers dream of harmony and peace for their child. They desire their child to have to go through minimal pain and heartache in their lives. Mothers dream of the day their child will find and marry their God-given mate and produce Godly grandchildren.

What happens when all those dreams become shattered, crushed, and torn? A mother is thrown a lot of the times into deep despair and discouragement and sometimes even depression. A mother will often go through a series of grief encounters. Sometimes a mother accepts this tragedy and finds some comfort from the things of God, and other times the mother grieves in her spirit. She has a pain that no one can see. A type of "hole" in her heart, a slow leak. You may see this mother at the grocery store or even at your church. Most likely every mother's day and every holiday she feels pain. She gets that reminder, as she sees the other children with their parents, that her child is once again not there. She tries not to show too much emotion but she is overcome in private with a whirlwind of them. She wonders what went wrong and how much longer it will go on. Every phone call she holds her breath, for she does not know if this time it will be the dreaded phone call. Every unexpected knock on the door startles her. Fear takes over her mind more times than she would like to admit. She realizes that fear does not come from God, but sometimes fear gets the best of her. Sometimes, this mother is up at night, can't sleep; is disturbed. Other times she is up "warfare praying" for her child. Regardless, her sleeping is not as peaceful and restful as it once was.

This mother waits year after year for the return of her prodigal child. Each year she grows more wearied and despaired. The waiting is excruciating. There are good moments and even

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peaceful times, but a mother never forgets their child and never forgets what or where they might be. Sometimes to survive she has to put this out of her mind and "pretend" all is okay with her. She has tried to discuss this with other mothers, but they cannot fully understand the unresolved grief that plagues her, and how sometimes she is strong and other days weak and wearied from the crying and waiting.

What is a mother to do in this type of pain? How does she continue to hold on when her world seems to be flooding her with overwhelming circumstances? She sees and knows her child is in a desperate situation. Some prodigal children lose everything and a mother has to sit there and watch her child suffer. She knows if she intervenes as she has done in the past so many times, that it only makes matters worse. How difficult it is not to intervene! A mother's love will always want to intervene when they see their child in trouble; it's natural and normal. It is not normal for a mother to do nothing when she sees her child suffering. But we learn with time that if we continue to bail out our children from their difficulties, they may never learn and turn from their destructive ways.

So what is a mother to do as she waits?

1. Take time for yourself in order to reduce the enormous stress caused by your prodigal child. I like to call them retreat days. Pamper yourself during those times.

2. Have daily time under the cover of the Lord and Savior. Also, incorporate at least 1x monthly retreat days with God. Journal during those times, listen for God, pray, worship, sit outside and rest and wait for God to refresh your soul and spirit.

3. Exercise. Walking is a great stress reliever.

4. Find at least one friend who you can trust and pray together, laugh together and have a "girl day."

5. If you are married, have your spouse pray over you regularly and pray together in intercession weekly for your child. Praying in agreement is powerful.

6. Worship and sing praises to our Lord. Praise will defeat the enemy and send him running!

7. Play relaxation music at every chance you can. Soft melodies, jazz, nature music, and even classical.

8. Take bubble baths and light candles, bring your relaxation music in your bathroom as well.

9. Do something fun at least 1x per week.

10. Find a creative outlet, painting, drawing, and writing.

11. Go to the movie or rent a movie on something funny or inspirational.

12. Date your husband. Go on at least 2 planned dates a month with your spouse.

13. Do not talk non-stop about your prodigal child. Assign 20 minutes a day to discuss your child and then move on to something else.

14. Incorporate nature into your life, walk on the beach, watch and/or feed birds, ride bikes or walk on nature trail.

15. Be gentle with yourself and forgive yourself. Love yourself, take care of yourself. Let go of all false guilt and false responsibility.

16. Live one day at a time and do not live in fear and terror.

17.. Stay away from getting entangled in other people's problems and lives. You can pray and encourage someone but do not get entangled. The enemy would love to burden you with not just your prodigal but everyone else's problems.

18. If you are not able to attend church on holidays or mother days because of the intensity of

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the grief, don't.

19. Find other things in your life to focus on instead of your prodigal all the time.

20. Live in HOPE! Never, lose hope and wait expectantly upon the Lord. *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

If you are in need of additional help or prayer, contact author

@www.christianhopecounseling.com for online counseling, support and prayer. She understands your pain

Stephanie Reck, LMSW, LBT,BCCC. Christian coach & counselor, author, speaker, and teacher. Stephanie has a passion to bring hope and encouragement and to see people made whole.

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