

Introduction: What are the most powerful influences in our life? What should be the most powerful influence in your life? A father should be the most powerful, positive influence in your life.

I. The parable of the prodigal son - the father's view

A. Four important qualities about the father

1. He knew when to turn the rebellious son loose and let him leave.
 - a. His wisdom was great for he knew how to love and still give up control.
 - b. The father grieved when the son left not knowing if he would be safe or would return.
 - c. He knew the son's heart and love were gone.
2. The father was a positive force in his son's life.
 - a. Realizing the consequences of his actions, the son thought of his father and home.
 - b. Going home was an option to accept responsibility for his actions
3. The father's love for the son never faltered
 - a. He continued to hope his son would come home because he loved him.
 - b. He continued to look for his son to return home.
4. He encouraged his son and welcomed him when he had been defeated.
 - a. There was a welcome kiss, no lecture.
 - b. There was immediate rejoicing, no mourning for what was wasted.

B. In this parable, the father represents God

1. Fathers are God's representatives in a special way.
2. People who have struggled with their fathers, been rejected, abandoned, or felt unloved struggle with their relationship with God.
3. People with negative feelings about their fathers often transfer those feelings to God.
4. Christian fathers must be a powerful, positive influence in their children's lives.

II. The father symbolizes God

- A. God loves you no matter the negative influence that exist because of your human father.
- B. God want to be the most positive, beneficial force in your life.
- C. God loves you even if you abandon him or rebel against him.
- D. God will not stop hoping you choose to return to him; He continues to look for you.
- E. God will welcome you back into his family when you come to him. He is never ashamed of you.

Conclusion: One of the most difficult challenges in life is to accept love. Will you accept his love and forgiveness?