

**Skegness Community Church - Weekly Bible Study 2025**  
**52 passages of Scripture that every believer should know**

**Week 32 - PRODUCTIVE PARENTING**

**Proverbs 22:6**

**“Train a child in the way he should go  
and when he is old he will not turn from it”**

The interesting thing about this verse is that there is no promise here that the child will never sow some wild oats. The promise is the child will eventually return home to the truth upon which he or she was raised. Of course, the operative word in all of this is the very first word of the verse - **train**. This promise is not for all parents with prodigals. This promise is for those who “train” their children during their formative years in proper conduct, with positive correction, and with personal counsel “in the way he should go.” There is no more powerful example of this truth than the old and often told story of the prodigal son found in Luke 15. The irony of this parable’s title is that Jesus told the whole story not about the boy but about his dad. Here is a father who appears to leave centre stage in the drama to his two sons, one in rebellion and the other in self-pity. But this familiar parable is really about the father. The story begins, “There was a man who had two sons” (v.11). The father is the subject of the sentence. Jesus put the father on centre stage here, not the sons. So let’s look at that father and learn from him.

**SEE HIM WITH AN OPEN HAND SAYING “I release you” (Luke 15:11-13)**

This dad was wise enough to know that the way to keep his child was to open his hand and let him go. Here was a father who was prepared to stand by the truths he had poured into that boy since childhood. In fact, here is the truth of Proverbs 22:6 unfolding before us. Some parents hold onto their children so tight they lose them. This dad was wise enough to know there came a time when he had to open his hand and let his son go. In every generation, there are always some prodigals who choose to learn life’s lessons the hard way.

**SEE HIM WITH OPEN ARMS SAYING “I receive you” (Luke 15:20-24)**

When the boy “came to his senses” and headed home, the father saw him “while he was still a long way off” (Luke 15:17-20). The father ran to meet him with open arms of welcome. No pointed fingers, no “Where have you been?” And no “How could you have done this to your mother?” Just open arms. The boy came walking but the father went running. We are not talking here about a boy who came home with the same rebellious spirit he had when he left home, now simply sorry he had been caught. Here was a boy truly repentant. And here is a faithful father receiving him with open arms.

**SEE HIM WITH AN OPEN HEART SAYING “I restore you” (Luke 15:25-32)**

The most notable characteristics of this model father are his presence and his transparency. He was there for his sons no matter what their problems were. The most valuable gift he gave them was his presence. When the festivities and homecoming party were at their peak, where was Dad? We find him outside with the wounded older brother assuring him of his love and support. We all need to be parents like this one, a father with an open hand and with wisdom enough to know that the way to lose our kids is to hold them too tightly and that the way to ultimately keep them is to let them go when the time comes. We need to be parents with open arms, always ready to make a way for our children’s new beginnings. And we need to be parents with open hearts that are both transparent and encouraging. The real message of Jesus’ story is that our heavenly father deals with us in the same way that this father deals with his prodigal. God our Father has open hands towards us. We are not puppets; we are real people. And the love we voluntarily return to Him is indescribably valuable to Him. He too meets us with open arms. And never were those arms opened as wide as the were on the cross. Finally, God shows us shows us His open heart. He opened it on Calvary for the whole world to see, and He invites us into His arms today. That parable of the prodigal son is a vivid portrayal of the deeper biblical truth, “Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it”

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As you memorise this verse, meditate on the loving and forgiving heart of our Lord and ask Him to put a heart like that in you. Open your hands, open your arms, and open your heart this week to those needy and hurting people around you

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