

## THINGS WE CANNOT ESCAPE

Nicolas Edwards

There are some things in life that we can escape. With temptation, God provides a way to escape (1 Cor. 10:33). Just as there are things we can escape, there are things that we cannot escape, no matter how hard we try.

### PERSONAL

**RESPONSIBILITY.** The Bible emphasizes personal responsibility. *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man”* (Eccl. 12:13). Every man has personal responsibilities to God (Rom. 14:12), self (1 Tim. 4:16), others (Phil. 2:4), family (1 Tim. 5:8), the church (Heb. 10:25), etc. The sooner we realize our responsibility, and step up to the plate, the better! Some don’t like the thought of responsibility and want to shirk it. It is still there, nonetheless, and you will give account.

**THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF GOD.** David penned, *“O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my*

*ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether”* (Ps. 139:1-4). *“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”* (Prov. 15:3). This truth ought to restrain us from sin and constrain us to do good!

**INFLUENCE.** Good or bad, influence cannot be escaped — that which we give, nor that which we receive. This is seen in Proverbs 13:20: *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”* The influence we have upon others ought to compel us to set the right example. There’s no escaping the principle: *“evil communications corrupt good manners”* (1 Cor. 15:33). This should place a limitation on our companions (Ps. 119:63).

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.** *“The wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23). *“Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”* (Jas. 1:15). Sin separates us from God (Is. 59:2). Those who practice the works of the flesh *“shall not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Gal. 5:19-21). Those who do not do the will of God the Father will be told *“depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Mt. 7:21-23). Whosoever is not written in the book of life will be *“cast into the lake of fire”* (Rev. 20:11-15). The thinking “God

loves me too much to punish me”, “God’s mercy and grace will take care of the rest” will not stand. God offers salvation, but if we *“neglect so great salvation”* we will not escape! (Heb. 2:3). We will reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7-8).

**DEATH.** Unless the Lord comes first, we all have an appointment with death. *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27). Man *“is of few days”* (Job 14:1-2). The preacher discussed death saying, *“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it”* (Eccl. 12:7). Death can be *“precious”* (Ps. 116:15) and *“gain”* (Phil. 1:21). The key is to be ready (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Are you ready?

**THE JUDGEMENT.** *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27). God has appointed a day of judgment (Acts 17:30-31). We cannot escape this day! He will bring *“every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”* (Eccl. 12:14). *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”* (2 Cor. 5:10). We must be ready (Mt. 24:44). Are you ready? Get ready by doing the will of God (Mt. 7:21) and keeping His commandments (Rev. 22:14).

## WAYWARD CHILDREN: PRICELESS GUIDANCE FOR BROKEN HEARTS

Ron Halbrook

God's word gives priceless guidance for broken hearts, including the broken hearts of parents with wayward children. Their hearts throb with anguish and pain as they struggle with the question, "What can we do to please God and to rescue our children as we pass through this fiery trial?"

### PRAY, PRAY, AND PRAY.

Constant, fervent prayer is needed by all Christians, most especially when passing through fiery trials. Not only will the parents of wayward children pray for their restoration, but they must also pray to be delivered from the dangers this trial brings to their own faith. Surrounded by enemies, David prayed, *"Listen to my prayer; O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught... But I call to God, and the Lord saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice"* (Ps. 55:1-2, 16-17, NIV). Like Daniel, who faced one trial after another, and like Christ, who knew His trials were stepping stones leading to the cross, we must *"pray without ceasing"* (1 Th. 5:17).

Parents of wayward children must pray that their longings to restore their children will be strengthened, balanced, and refined by the wisdom which only God can give. *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him"* (Jas. 1:5). God teaches us not to pray for the erring to be saved *in* their sins,

but that they will *repent* of their sins. *"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it"* (1 Jn. 5:16). The prayer of Jesus for His tormentors to be forgiven was answered for any when they repented (Lk. 23:34; Acts 2:36-41).

Time is fleeting, and life is fragile and uncertain, and so we pray for God's kind patience and providence in extending the lives of wayward children to grant them time to repent. We pray for every influence to be brought to bear in their lives which might humble them and lead them to repent.

**PUT GOD FIRST.** Jesus warned that exaggerated fear for the material needs of life can divert our attention from life's first priority (Mt. 6:24-34). Nothing must be allowed to interfere with our focus on a right relationship with God. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Mt. 6:33). We must not let excessive anxiety over our children's bad choices and conduct obscure our faith in God.

By no means dare we compromise the truth in a frantic effort to mollify and accommodate wayward children. We must determine to obey God no matter what our children may do. Jesus said in Matthew 10:37, *"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."* Sympathizing with our children's sinful conduct, enabling them to continue in it, or joining with them in sin will harden their hearts. As Paul

said, *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* (Eph. 5:11). Our children must know we love them, but we love God more.

### PUT OUR TRUST IN GOD.

How could any good result from the tragedy of wayward children? Let us learn to trust that God will bring spiritual good out of our trials as He promises. *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything"* (Jas. 1:2-4, NIV). Facing the most severe and painful trials by trusting in God strengthens our faith, hope, and love.

When we wonder how we will survive dark days, the promise of God in 1 Corinthians 10:13 calms our fears. *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* Satan cannot overpower our freewill, nor can he overturn our faith against our will. Legion are the number of parents who have lost their children because they chose a life of sin, and yet have survived by choosing the path of righteousness.

Almighty God stands above the storms of human life and exercises His infinite love and providential power to guide us through any trial or temptation, no matter how severe. *"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for*

you” (1 Pet. 5:6-7). He knows. He cares. He is strong to help those who trust in Him!

**PRESENT THE TRUTH ALWAYS IN WORD AND DEED.** Wayward children desperately need to see the faith of godly parents who uphold the truth in a kind, firm, and consistent manner under all circumstances. If the faith of a godly wife can influence an unbelieving husband who refuses to open the Bible, most certainly the influence of godly parents wields great spiritual power (1 Pet. 3:1).

If wayward children openly question or challenge their parents’ convictions, let us remember 1 Peter 3:15-16, which says, *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander”* (NIV). Let them see the answer in words and in “good behavior.”

Parents must answer carefully and cautiously when

wayward children complain against brethren and the church in general. To sympathize with them is to help Satan make them comfortable in sin. Treat petty complaints as petty. “I don’t like the time or length of the service, sermon topics, Bible class teacher, elders, or song leader. Someone did not shake my hand, etc.” Remind them they do not quit their jobs or other activities over such pettiness. If true problems are identified, address them with Scripture, not emotion or overreaction. Point out that we can be part of the problem or the solution — we can seek to help, not merely complain.

**REMOVE STUMBLING BLOCKS AND CORRECT SIN.** There are cases where parents have committed sins, even sins against the child, which are a stumbling block to the wayward child. Such parents should openly confess their sins, seek reconciliation, and change their conduct. Jesus said our worship is not accepted until we do so (Mt. 5:23-24). Failure to do so will bring the wrath of Jesus on us on the Judgment Day: *“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have*

*a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea”* (Mt. 18:6, NIV). Confessing and correcting our sins against other people opens a door for healing to begin.

**PRESS ON IN SERVING GOD.** Let us focus on growing spiritually and on the future reward of heaven, not on our past mistakes or the sins of our children. *“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 3:13-14). We must not be embittered, demoralized, or paralyzed by the sinful attitudes and actions of our wayward children. Every lost soul is wayward from God. If we cannot help our own children, we must remember that every soul is equally precious to God, and we *can* help someone.

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