

**Help! My Family Is Crazy**  
**When Good Kids Make Bad Choices**  
**January 17, 2010**  
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Last week we talked about how to discipline your kids, why to discipline your kids. We showed you what we have put in place to help you turn your children into these fully devoted followers because that is our goal for our church and for everything. It's an amazing thing; over half our church fits in the under 18 category. In most churches over 50% are over 65 but in our church it's different because God is doing something wonderful. As we continue we're going to be talking about family and we're going to go into the next series next week called the vow. That's for single people, it's for people who are thinking of getting married, newly married people or people who have been married for twenty or thirty years. These next four weeks will be an incredible time as we concentrate on what it means to take these vows and then we're going to end it with this Love & Respect Conference and you will want to be a part of this conference because it's going to teach you a lot about how to live in relationship with everyone not just your spouse. Today we're going to continue with, Help My Family is Crazy by discussing what do you do when your child; your good child makes a bad choice. There are some of you in here, because we have so many young families, that are sitting here today looking and thinking about your precious babies and you're thinking to yourself, oh that's not going to be me because my children are never going to do anything wrong. My children are never going to disappoint me. The older people are laughing. My children are never going to walk away from God, that's just not going to happen. They're too sweet and wonderful. I want to tell you, bless your heart because you're out of your mind and you are the crazy person if you think your children are not going to struggle and have problems. They all do. So today I am going to talk to three different groups. The first group is parents whose children are making bad choices because you need help. When your child is making bad choices it dominates your entire life; it dominates everything you think about, it's all you can think about. The second group I want to talk to are you young parents who one day your sweet little babies will hurt you. They are going to make bad choices. The third group is those of you who are children still and listen you're a child if your parents are still living. I am not a child any longer but I'd give anything to be a child. If your parents are still living I don't care if you're sixty-seven, you're a child because you never end that relationship with your parents. Those are the three groups of people I am talking to and if you're a child who's hurting the heart of God and hurting your family's heart I want you to hear today these verses from Luke 15. We're going to look at it a slightly different way because I want those of you with those precious little ones and let me sit up here like a good grandfather, one day your child; now I hope it doesn't happen; I hope your children go through teenage years and never struggle and if they do struggle I am not going to be the one that says I

told you so because it's too devastating when your child makes mistakes. So I want you to hear that one day, your child may come in drunk. Your child may come in with a tattoo. I know some of you are thinking that's the worst thing in the world that could happen. I understand that. It's not my preference. I don't like them personally. I was always afraid if I got a tattoo I would get one of those barb wired things around my arm and now it would look like a broke down fence. So I have never wanted something that was going to on my body permanently, it's just not something that appeals to me. I want to be there when you have to explain to the 18 year old nurse who is washing you, why you have a tramp stamp. If you're a guy with one...we want to help you too but that's a whole other discussion. The only time I have ever wanted a tattoo was last week. Let me tell you why. A guy who has been coming to our church was standing in the back and he overheard one of our church members say this to a person, our church doesn't approve of tattoos. What?! First of all who has the audacity to talk for the church, second of all I wanted to get a tattoo that said The Avenue and show it to everybody today because let me tell you something. We're not going to be legalist about our preference and while I prefer not to have tattoos and I would prefer for my children not to have tattoos, and I would like my son-in-law not to have a tattoo on each arm; by the way he does. I hear one of my children has a tattoo; I've never seen it and don't plan to so if I don't see it I don't care. But I want you to know, just because it's not my preference, we don't baptize that at this church. God wants people in this church period. I'm not going to baptize my preferences and you aren't either. So, the guy that said it, as soon as I find him we're going to hold him down and we're going to tattoo his backside. With all that to say, your child may come home with a tattoo. Listen your child may come home and tell you she's pregnant or your son may come home and tell you he's got someone pregnant. Your daughter may sneak off and have an abortion. Your kid may get addicted to drugs. More than likely your child's going to marry someone that you don't like. And they may marry someone who is bad for them. Your child's going to make some decisions that may break your heart and break the heart of God. So as a parent, you need to know what you do about it. What is my place? Remember that parent child relationship never ends. So what is my place as a parent whose children are making bad choices? In Luke chapter 15 about the prodigal son and I've you've been in church anytime you've heard this story. You've all heard the story about the prodigal son and today we're going to look at that in a slightly different perspective. We're going to look at it as the father. How did the father handle this adult child who was making bad choices? How did the father handle this child that was doing things that broke his heart and broke the heart of God? So we're going to look at that today. Now, one of the problems we have as parents is a lot of us think we can make this deal with God. We think we can do things right, we can follow the rules, raise our kids in church, we can teach them the word of God, we can help them memorize the bible and then because we've done everything we're supposed to do, then God should step in and fix and make sure nothing happens that causes us pain. Now we don't say we believe that

but we do. I'm talking to a young lady who is going through a horrible divorce, she's not from this area so I can share it with you and her husband has been cheating on her and they've been trying to work it out and she asked me, I'm doing everything I'm supposed to do, why doesn't God want to fix this for me? Shouldn't God fix our marriage? Doesn't he want us to be married? My answer is yes of course he does but just because we do things right doesn't mean that things are going to go right in our life. The sovereignty of God says that God is in charge and God has a plan and he has a plan for each one of us so just because you're a parent today and you're doing things right, don't think that guarantees you of your children turning out because it doesn't. God has a plan for our children's lives apart from us. God has a plan for our children's lives separate from us and we have to see that. I remember one of the times that I learned this was when my oldest daughter was seven years old and we were going on a ski trip and back during that time, I was going out of my mind with trying to grow this church. I did everything the wrong way. I worked six days a week; worked 80 to 90 hours a week just doing stupid, stupid stuff trying to grow the church. I felt I was taking away from my children and we had this church trip planned but not a lot of church members were going so I was going to take my oldest daughter. This was going to be perfect because I was going to spend quality and quantity time, one on one; I already had three kids, maybe four at this time, I can't keep up. I take my oldest daughter and we take off to go skiing and it's so exciting. We're on the bus and we get there, we go to a restaurant just the two of us and we go to the store and buy gloves and we can't wait for the next day. She's been skiing for three or four years and she's a good skier and we're going to ski together. It's going to be incredible. At ten o'clock the first day she gets off the trail and goes off the side of the cliff and falls thirty or forty feet, dislocates her hip and breaks her arm. I jump down after her and realized she is badly hurt. They take us by ambulance to Denver Hospital where they have to set her leg back into place and they are checking her for cracked ribs and other things and we're sitting in the room that night and I've more than likely got a dislocated shoulder and a huge bruise and I'm beat up and I'm sitting there and I started getting angry with God because I'm thinking, wait a minute God, I do all this for you, I sacrifice for you, I work all I can for you trying to do everything right and I ask you for one thing; give me a good week with my child and this is what happens? I'm getting more angry with God and finally they put her in a little body cast from her chest all the way down to her leg and then she has her arm in a cast and my wife comes to pick us up and I have to pick up my daughter and this pink body cast and lay her in the back of a van to travel home. I crawl in the back of that van and I am so angry. I'm thinking, God what in the world are you doing? Why are you doing this? Why did you let this happen? One of the clearest times in my life God said, David I have a plan for your daughter. It doesn't involve you. It's not about you. This is about me and her and I'm working in her life and I love her more than you do now shut up. What do you do when God tells you to shut up? If you're smart you shut up. I'm smart so I shut up. I began to realize God; you're going to do things in my kid's life that I can't control

because you have a plan for their life that I can't control. So as fathers, what do we do? The first thing we do is we pray for our kids to make the right decisions. That's the first step in this process. There is going to come a time you can't control them. Listen; when they're young it's wonderful because you can control them so easily. You can turn their heads from side to side, you get to pick their clothes, you decide what they eat, when they go to bed; you control everything in their life except their bowel movements. And you think life is hard because you have to change dirty diapers. Let me tell you it gets a lot worse because as the kids get older they begin to want to control their own lives and that's natural. I don't want to carry my eighteen year old around. That's not natural. It's natural for your kids to grow and to be independent and want to be on their own but it's hard for parents to let go but it's the natural course of life and so there comes a point that we have to say, you know what? We can't control our kids so let's just pray they make the right decisions. That brings us to our verse in Luke chapter 15 verse 11. <sup>11</sup>Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Now listen to this because this is important. This adult son is coming to his father and saying I am sick of being under your authority, I'm sick of being in your house; I'm tired of waiting for you to die, just give me what is mine and I'll be on my way. There was a relationship problem in this house. This boy despised his father and wanted to get out from under his authority so that's what he did. Now, I want you to see something in this because he has another son and his other son stayed with him. His other son lost a third of the estate but continued to operate, continued to raise crops, continued to take care of the livestock, continued to support his father and to respect and honor his father. These are two boys raised in the same home with the same values, the same mom and dad and went to the same church but one chose poorly and one chose correctly. I don't understand how that happens but it does. This is how parents feel; when a child behaves correctly they give all the credit to the child but when the child chooses poorly they take all the blame. What did we do wrong? Folks, it could just be that child made a bad choice. It could have been you did nothing wrong but that child chose poorly just like this child chose poorly. They had this relationship problem and this child left his father and walked out of the authority of that home. I want you to see in Proverbs 22:6 because this verse is so misrepresented and misunderstood. I want you to see today what this verse does not say. <sup>6</sup> Train <sup>[a]</sup> a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. That verse is quoted in every parenting class I've ever attended or taught. Let me tell you what it doesn't say....it doesn't say train up a child the way he should go and he will never disappoint you. It doesn't say train up a child in the way he should go and he'll never make a bad choice. It doesn't say he'll never walk away from God. It says this...you train him up the way they should go and they will return because they know where they came from. God may say, I may take them down a path that you don't agree with, I may take them down a path you do not

understand but I am working in their life because I have a plan for them and it may be a plan to bring them to the point of destruction. Leave them alone. For you, you did the right thing and when they're old they'll come back. Trust me God says. So there it is. Here we are with this going on and I want you to understand the second part of that is to pray for God to work in their lives and back off. One of the hardest things for a parent to do is to sit in the stands. You're watching your adult children and you know they're making mistakes that can hurt them for years to come and can destroy their family and you have to sit in the stands. It says, <sup>13</sup>"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. Now he left town because he was going to dishonor his father. We're thinking well that was respectful to leave town since he was going to bring dishonor to his father. No, that's not respectful, that's smart because in this culture if you dishonored your family, guess what they did? They took you out to the city gate and they threw rocks at you and killed you. So if you went against your family and you embarrassed your family, listen you think that sounds so harsh do you think there are many kids that talk back to their father? It's like youth group, you've only got to kill one of them and everyone else lines right up. So this is what this culture was about so this boy left because he thought I don't want them to kill me. I'm going to get out of here so I can live the way I want to live. I want to do what I want to do. I want you to notice something about that though. He left town and his father did not go to get him. His father didn't follow after him. His father didn't go catch him and beg him to come back. He let him go. He let him walk away. It says here, <sup>14</sup>After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. You know the father knew there was a famine. The father knew his son was out there suffering somewhere. He knew his son was going to be hungry. He knew how long the money would last and he knew that boy was going to be in a bad situation but you know what, he didn't go get him. He backed off and prayed for God to work in his life and he realized that God has a plan for him and God is going to take care of him and all I have to do is watch because I can't do anything about it and I'm going to pray for him and I'm going to pray for God to work in his life, but I cannot interfere with God's plan. There's nothing I can do. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup>He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. Now, you need to understand something in the Jewish culture. Pigs are the nastiest of the nasty. Pigs are at the bottom. You don't get around a pig if you're a Jewish person. If you're a Jewish young man, you would walk a mile out of your way to not go by a pig. In fact, if you touched a pig you were considered defiled and you couldn't even come into the church for a month. You had to purify yourself because pigs were so nasty and considered so foreign to what God wanted so if you'd have asked this Jewish young man, do you think you'll ever be feeding pigs he would have said, are you kidding me? I wouldn't go within a mile a pig.

I bring this out because I want to explain something to you. When you turn your back on God there's no limit to the sin that will enter your life. The very things that you say I would never do that, when you turn your back on God you will open your eyes and realize I'm in the middle of it. That's what you need to hear today. When you want out of the authority of God, when you want to walk away, when you turn your back on him, you may be in places that shock you because sin has no limit when you turn your back on God. This Jewish boy is defiled working with pigs and starving to death. Now, you know people came to that father and said I was traveling and I saw your son out in the field and he was herding pigs and feeding slop to pigs. What are you going to do about it? The father said, nothing, I'm just going to wait. Hey man, I heard your son was at college and he is partying every night and he's getting drunk and man if you love him you'll go do something about it. He's 21 years old. Your son got a DWI, what are you going to do? Nothing he's a man. You see what happens is we love our kids so much that we run to rescue them and we don't let God work in their life and break them so there is no repentance and they keep doing it over and over and over again because you just keep bailing them out. When God's saying, back off and leave them alone, I've got a plan. They've got to fail, they've got to fall and when they're at the lowest and think they are going to starve, when they think they're going to die, they're going to look up and the bible says he will come to his senses. When he looked up he came to his senses. That's why that verse says, train him up in the way he should go and when they are at the bottom, when they're at the lowest point of their life, they will look up and say this is not where I'm supposed to be and that's what this boy did. He said man; there are servants in my father's house that are eating better than I am. I am starving to death. I don't deserve to be his son but I'm going home because that's where the father's love is. I'm going to go home and be a servant so at least I can be full. So he starts preparing his speech. I'm going to go back and say I've sinned against you father, I've sinned against heaven. I'm not worthy to be called your son. Let me be one of your hired men and he's practicing this sermon all the way. Why did this happen? Because the father refused to bail him out. He's an adult. He came to his senses and started on his way home and parents this is the third part, you need to pray for your willingness to love unconditionally because let me tell you your children can hurt you and you can wall them off in your life and you can set up walls so they don't hurt you again. This father loved unconditionally and that's what we need to do. Some of you are thinking, well our kids could never do something for us not to love them. Yeah, sometimes they are hard to love. Sometimes they do things that make them very hard to love. So we need to pray for God to open up our hearts and love unconditionally because when this boy was on his way home, look what the bible says he did.... "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he wasn't sitting there saying ha, look at there, he's coming back. I knew he would. I knew he'd get hungry. Here comes my loser son. My good son's out here in the field working. He's the one that made all A's, he's the one that graduated from college.

Here comes my C student that dropped out of college. There's my good son in the field and here comes my slacker. Listen, he didn't do that. When he saw that son he was filled with compassion and the bible says he ran to him. In the Jewish culture you don't run as a man. The bible says he ran to him and he threw his arms around him. Do you know why he threw his arms around him; because that boy was supposed to die when he came back in that culture? They were supposed to get around him and throw rocks at him and kill him because he dishonored his father and so he ran to him. His father was filled with compassion and he threw his arms around him and he said you're not going to kill him. You can kill me but my son was lost and he is back and you're going to have to go through me to get to him. It says he kissed him. Jewish people are thinking he worked with pigs. You've defiled yourself. His father said I don't care where he's been or what he's done, he's home and because he's home he is my son and hear goes the speech, remember the boys been preparing it all the way back. 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer...shhh, put a robe on and put a ring on his finger. Kill the calf we're going to celebrate. But father.....be quiet. My son was lost and now he is found. Unconditional love; how does that happen? Today if you're a parent you need to pray for your kids to make the right choices. You need to pray for God to work in their lives and you need to back off, but you need to pray that you'll love them unconditionally when they come home because the bible says train up a child in the way he should go and when he's old he'll come to his senses and he'll come home. What about you? Some of you have gone off to a far off country and ran away from God. You didn't want to be under God's authority anymore. You didn't want God telling you what to do, you wanted live your own life and you've gone out there and fallen flat on your face and God today wants you to humble yourself and come running back to him and he will run to you and protect you because even though the wages of sin is death, God says I'm going to throw my arms around you and my son is going to die in your place. Those sins are going to be paid for but not by you. They're going to have to go through me. Maybe you're the child today that's breaking your father's heart and today you need to come home. Let's pray. Today in your life where do you find yourself? Are you the parent longing for the child to come home? Sovereignty of God says he'll come home. It's hard to sit in the stands and I know if your children are making mistakes that are all you think about but let it drive you to your knees and to the presence of God. Some of you need to pray for your kids right now and I can't give you a guarantee but they need to see you living for Jesus to have something to come home to. Some of you kids, anyone who has parents, you're breaking your parents heart and need to make it right. You need to come back to your heavenly father and restore the earthy relationships in your life. Father God I pray for those of us who are in this room, and we open this altar, those of you who want to pray for your families, those who want to pray for themselves, God we open this altar for you. We're about to sing a song called Walk On and in the journey of life that's all we can do is pick up our head and walk on. We have something wonderful to walk towards; that is a heavenly home

with a God that loves us and is compassionate toward us. When you stand in just a moment, the alter is open, the staff's available for you after if you need to speak to us but listen to the Holy Spirit of God in your life. You don't have to reach the bottom to look up. Let's stand together.