



Part 4: When Reality Strikes

INTRODUCTION

We all have hopes and dreams when it comes to all our relationships, but especially when it comes to our own children. Sometimes the reality of our current situation is far different than what we once imagined it being and we're not sure how to cope with that. One of the first steps is recognizing that God understands our parental pain.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Describe an experience or time in your life when the Love and Freedom cycle played out in your own life? (God loves → we sin → God disciplines → we return, repeat)
2. What about the story of the Prodigal Son speaks to you? Which characters have you been able to identify with throughout different seasons of your life?
3. What do you think about the idea that while we do need to set boundaries, restricting our kids doesn't seem to help much? Have you seen this to be true when you were a child? What about as a parent, if this is your current season of life?
4. Buck gave three ways to cope when you have a prodigal son or daughter: unwavering prayer, unending patience, and unconditional love. Which of these did you have growing up, if any? Which one do you feel is easiest to show your child? Which is the hardest? Why?

THIS WEEK

If you are a parent and this message is applicable to your season of life with your children, think about how you can grow in each of the three areas Buck mentioned: unwavering prayer, unending patience, and unconditional love. Who do you have that can help support you in this? If you are not in this season or not a parent, who can you help support? Remember, sometimes the best support is prayer support!

"And while he was still a long way off, his **father saw him coming.**"

Luke 15:20