



Read Luke 15:11-32

The prodigal son left home and took his inheritance to a far away land. His parents were left at home wondering if he was safe or healthy, or if he was ever going to return home. Jesus says the prodigal son wasted his wealth and used up all of his resources just as a famine hit the far away land. It was so bad that the only

job he could find was feeding pigs, and his pay was to get to eat what the pigs did not eat.

Today, when we go into town, we see prodigal sons and daughters everywhere. They may not have traveled hundreds of miles, and we may actually know them, but they are truly living in a “far away land.” Their addiction to opioids has cut them off from their home and community, and now they wander around town like strangers.

Today as you fast, pray, listen, and respond, ask God to show you what our response should be for these strangers in a strange land. Should we feed them or ignore them? Should we provide them a warm place to sleep, or chase them off to another town? It is true that they are dirty, are an eyesore, can be scary, and are wasting all that their parents and God have given them. However, they are someone’s child...more than that, they are children of God, just like you and me. Ask God to help you look past their appearance and see the lost children who have parents and a God who are worried about them. What should the church’s response be to the child whose only hope is what the pigs don’t eat?

If your child were lost in a far away land, how would you want them to be treated by a local church?

It is not enough for us to open our church doors and hope the strangers in a strange land sober up, clean up, and come in. We must follow God out of our sanctuaries and feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, and welcome the stranger.

Dear God, show us how.



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Recovery and All That Is Involved: Part 2 - Long Term Recovery

Recovery from opioid addiction involves multiple steps.

The first step is detoxification. Detoxification is the process of getting the opioids out of one's body. This can take 30, 60, or even more days. The second step is long-term recovery and it continues for a lifetime.

After the body is free from opioids, it is just beginning to recover. The brain is craving opioids. That little voice that tells us we want some chocolate ice cream when we know we don't need it is shouting to the person in recovery that they must, at all costs, get some opioids. Long-term memories of the high from opioids and the muscle memory of preparing the drug for use, along with the memories of buying the drugs from dealers in certain houses, live a long life in the brains of the recovering addicts. These memories can be very challenging to overcome and the person in recovery must overcome them every day. Can you honestly say that you do not crave hot buttered bread after just smelling it fresh out of the oven? The person in recovery can have the intense craving for opioids hit them at any given moment because of something their brain remembers about their past opioid use. The person in recovery must have support from other persons in recovery, from family, and from friends. They must have the ability to reach out in a moment's notice to someone to help them fight the craving for opioids. A person in recovery will very likely relapse into opioid use again because the brain's craving is so very strong.

A person in recovery is also dealing with their emotional feelings regarding how they have treated the very people who love them. They have to learn to live with the frustration of lost opportunities, lost careers, and lost family members. They may also suffer diseases such as hepatitis and HIV that result from their drug use.

Long-term recovery can begin in a residential program, intense outpatient program, or just on a person's own determination. Many persons trying to recover have to make several attempts at staying in long-term recovery. Cost, availability, and determination all play a part in how a person will begin long-term recovery. Once started, a recovering person needs support from peers, family, and the church in order to stay in recovery.



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