

## Introduction and Welcome!

To those traveling down a Prodigal Road...

The Prodigal Ministry idea was birthed several years ago, but the seed for this journey began in 2003, when my wife, Ginny, and I began to notice a change in our adopted son, who was a high school senior at the time. We saw our child become angry and inconsistent and begin to deteriorate academically. Even though he continued to excel athletically, this too eventually deteriorated once he went to college. Academic failure and an almost sudden realization of drug abuse led to years of pain, rehabilitation, and relapse.

Fortunately, we were guided by the wise Biblical counsel of those who not only loved and comforted us but also challenged us with truth (Proverbs 15:22). We were eventually able to see some glaring parenting mistakes and enabling behavior on our part. By God's grace, we were able to slowly but surely realize that this prodigal journey was ours as much as it was our son's. We began to change the only thing we could control—ourselves. We altered our behaviors to allow our son to suffer the consequences of his actions for the first time. We were able to restore our lives and relationship with God by giving our son to God. When we relinquished control, we experienced a freedom we had not felt in years. At the same time, we created an environment that provided the best opportunity for our son to recover and return to the Lord.

As Ginny and I began to move forward out of the darkness and chaos, we had the opportunity to counsel other families in similar crises. Eventually, we gained clarity from God and our community that such a ministry was God's purpose for us.

Initially, we directed our ministry at families with prodigal children. However, we rapidly found that some prodigals were in their sixties, and some prodigals were dads, moms, husbands, wives, friends, siblings, co-workers, and the like. The biblical principles we teach apply to all prodigals regardless of their age or situation in life.

Prodigal is a recovery ministry for anyone who struggles with a loved one who is making poor or harmful choices. People make bad choices every day, so how can you decide if you need such a ministry? If you have a dysfunctional relationship that is negatively impacting your marriage, your other relationships, or your life in any way, then we believe that the Prodigal Ministry can help.

We have humbly embarked on this journey, trying diligently to put God first and let Him lead. Our motivation can be summed up well by the apostle Paul: *3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be*

*able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV).*

We love God, who has been faithful. We are here now simply because we love you and we want to help (Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 1:5).

We want to offer you hope in the midst of chaos. We believe that true hope is found only in Jesus Christ. We want to share with you valuable tools based on Biblical truth that you can utilize to restore your relationship with God, family, and friends. These tools, when applied in the context of Biblical community, will provide an environment that optimizes the chance of your prodigal's recovery and reconciliation with you and with the Lord. Unfortunately, we can offer no guarantees concerning the outcome of your prodigal. However, we do know with 100 percent certainty that you alone have the ability to control yourself. You have the opportunity to restore order and peace to your life and gain a deeper intimacy with God. The Prodigal community is a safe place with no judgment, as we have all walked this path in some manner. However, if you decide to join us, we love you enough to speak the truth in love, for it is God's truth alone that will set you free.

Welcome.

Warmly,

Jay and Ginny Burns (on behalf of the entire leadership team)