



# BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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Once there was a woman who walked across her small patch of land. She had a bag of seed cinched about her waist. With each stride, her hand clutched a scoop of seed and tossed it beside her to the ground. Four different things happened to the seeds: Some fell by the wayside and were devoured by birds. Some fell on stony soil. Some fell on thorns. Some fell on good soil and became fruitful.

This woman was more than a farmer. She was an entrepreneur, an inventor, an investor, a realtor, a police officer, a firefighter, a paramedic, a surgeon, a doctor, a scientist, a preacher, a politician, a musician, an athlete, a tradesman, a business professional, a business owner, a motivational speaker, a teacher, an attorney, a prophetess, a priestess, a deaconess, a queen. She was equal parts inspiration and determination. She was the perfect balance of truth and grace, mercy and justice. How could one woman embody so many different occupations and traits? That is because she was a mother.

The seed the woman used was truth. Each day she tossed the seed, hoping someday it would take root and produce a harvest in her family. She knew every seed wouldn't grow, but she never gave up her sowing. She didn't do it through great acts that everyone noticed. Most of the time, no one even knew she was trying to plant anything at all. Sometimes she gave a word of encouragement. Other times she spoke a kind word after a child's pity party. Her gentle doctor's touch made everything okay when her infant came crying after a hard fall. More seed was scattered as she faithfully did household chores such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, and ironing clothes. Like a business professional, decision after decision, experience after experience, moment after moment, memory after memory — the woman planted a seed and painted a picture.

Even though the woman's patch of land was small, the seeds had varying levels of success in growth. This was not because of a lack of life in them, but because of the quality of the soil where they had been planted. The soil is the heart of the woman's children.

When the seed of truth fell by the wayside and was eaten by the birds, it is because the children's hearts where it was sown were too hard. They were missing a real desire to know Jesus Christ and take spiritual things seriously. They were quick to follow the advice of the crowd rather than pay any attention to their mother's wisdom. They had been hardened by a spirit of doubt.

Where the seed fell on stony soil, it experienced visible growth. The children made a profession of faith in Christ and were even baptized. But the joy of salvation was soon swallowed up by the adversities of life. It was not long before they gave up on their faith.

The seed which fell on thorns began to take root. It wasn't eaten by the birds, but its life was cut short. The children's love for worldly distractions — family, friends, money, possessions, and sex — choked out the desire to take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ.

Even though it seemed the woman's sowing was almost a total loss, some seed actually reached maturity. The hearts which heard the truth and brought forth fruit had a sincere desire to understand the Word of God. They had a teachable spirit. They sought after a relationship with Jesus Christ. The return from their harvest made all the woman's sowing worthwhile.

This month we celebrate our mothers. Yes, sometimes your soul has ached over the hard hearts, stony hearts, or thorny hearts of your children. For all of the times when you felt insignificant, unheard, or unqualified to sow seeds of truth, I want you to know your work did not go unnoticed. It is not without reward. God can take the little seeds of truth you have sown and grow a harvest greater than you can even think or imagine!

Grateful for my mother,

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

# The Prodigal's Parents

Parents haven't changed much over the course of human history. Neither have children. Over the 6,000+ years of human existence, for the most part parents have provided for their children's basic needs until they were ready to fend for themselves: food, clothing, shelter, and education.

But sometimes children follow Burger King's "Have It Your Way" slogan, and they flutter solo out of the nest early to seek their fortune. They forget Mom, Dad, and the structure in which they were raised to embrace life on their own terms without the excess baggage of rules and restraints to encumber their flight.

Sometimes the inexperienced fledglings make it on their own. Most of the time they don't. Sometimes it takes a bad landing or wind turbulence to wisen them to the error of their ways. Sometimes it takes a lawsuit.

In October of 2013, 18-year-old Rachel Canning of Lincoln Park, New Jersey, was suspended from school for her unexcused absences, according to court documents filed by her parents' former attorney, Laurie Rush-Masuret. In the article "Fair or Outrageous? New Jersey Teen Sues Her Parents to Pay up for College," CNN reporter Kelly Wallace explains that as a consequence of her suspension, Rachel was told by her parents she could no longer date her boyfriend. Rachel's parents also removed her car and phone privileges.

As soon as she discovered the terms of her punishment, Rachel left school again and fled from her home to live with her boyfriend. After spending two nights at her boyfriend's house, Rachel moved in with a friend in another town and sued her parents.

Wallace reports Rachel sued her parents so they would reimburse her for the remaining tuition of her last semester at school, pay her current living and transportation expenses, commit to paying her college tuition, and pay her legal fees. Rachel alleged that her parents forced her from their home at a time when she was unable to support herself and that they verbally and physically abused her. Her parents, on the other hand, said Rachel left the house because she refused to obey their rules.

The New Jersey judge who presided over the court case dismissed Rachel's appeal for immediate financial assistance from her parents. Less than two weeks later, Rachel had returned home with her family and dropped the lawsuit. Rachel's parents welcomed her back without condition, and the ordeal was over.

This story isn't about Rachel Canning. It's about her parents. After all of the conflict and publicity caused by their daughter's rebellious rampage, Sean and Elizabeth joyfully welcomed Rachel back into their home. That's what unconditional love is. That's what real parents have for their children. It's the same love the prodigal's father showed him in Luke 15. And it's the same love God has for us.

We look at Rachel Canning's actions and marvel that a young woman with a great upbringing and loving parents would run away from home. The same question can be asked of God's children who run away and charge Him with abuse or neglect. Though we give many excuses for our disobedience — none of which are reasonable — like Sean and Elizabeth Canning, God welcomes us back each time we return to Him. The Bible says in 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Maybe you have deliberately run away from the care of your spiritual parents. Perhaps you have unconsciously drifted away. Do you like being away from home? The Father is watching and waiting for you. He still sees you as part of the family. If you humble yourself and return to Him, He will welcome you with open arms.

- Cameron Edwards



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