

# LOOKING FOR THE “perfect” PARENT?

by Sarah Bowling

Parents should be our caretakers, protectors, and providers. They should challenge and comfort us. They may love us and try to do what's best for us. Yet, there is one thing that parents aren't... PERFECT!

Your parents are as human as you are. They are flawed, they make mistakes, they may have hurt you deeply. Yet, we really only have two choices when it comes to responding to our parents' mistakes. We can judge, or we can forgive.

This is a make-or-break issue for many of us. Why? Because many of our personal problems can have their root in our relationships with our parents. Troubles with co-workers, struggles in your marriage or with your kids, even misunderstandings with your friends may be related to that first formative relationship with your parents.

## ***Flawed Fatherhood***

The Bible gives us a perfect example of an imperfect parent, David. King David was a great king, but not-so-great parent. If you look at his relationship with his son, Absalom, you'll see what I mean.

In 2 Samuel 13, another of David's sons, Amnon, raped Absalom's sister, Tamar. What did her powerful, respected father do about it? Nothing! He did nothing as king, and even worse, he did nothing as Tamar's father. David's inaction was wrong and Absalom knew it. But there is a big difference between acknowledging our parents' mistakes, and judging our parents. Look at how David's son reacted.

## ***The High Cost of Unforgiveness***

Absalom was furious. He judged his father and allowed the hurt to fester in his heart and take root. One day he took matters into his own hands and killed Amnon. Absalom made a fatal mistake—he harbored unforgiveness in his life.

There are three phases of unforgiveness that we see in this example. First, Absalom recognized David's failure and judged him for it. Then Absalom gave David the silent treatment. For five years after he killed Amnon, Absalom avoided contact with his dad. That silence became a brick wall between son and father. It created distance, prevented growth, and opened the door to destruction.



The third phase of unforgiveness is broken relationship. Absalom's hardened heart caused him to covet David's throne. Ultimately the plot to overthrow his own father cost Absalom, and 20,000 others, their lives!

## ***Forgive...and LIVE!***

Absalom's entire life was infected by his bitter outlook. The same thing can happen to us! Broken fellowship with our parents can lead to lives filled with ruined relationships and innocent victims.

However, you can make a different choice than Absalom did. The better response to our parents' humanity is forgiveness. You must forgive to fully live!

**Colossians 3:13** tells us to “bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another...” and “...as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (NKJV).

Your life will be full and free when you leave the painful past behind and make a quality decision to FORGIVE. Ask God for the grace to honor, love, and forgive your parents. Pray for them. Then, realize that God is the only perfect One. He knew your parents would fall short—just like we all do.

God loves you unconditionally. If your parents or others have hurt you, you can run to God. He wants to be your all in all and give you the perfect love you desire!