



HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOUR CHILDREN ALWAYS IGNORED YOU?

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Alice has a 25-year-old son who recently moved out of home to get married. He's super busy with work. He's on social media a lot too. His mum knows because she can see how active he is on Facebook. But when she sends him messages he rarely responds. He says he's too busy. Peter only lives 5 blocks away but he never drops round unless he needs something; like dog minding when he's interstate for work. 'We were so close,' Alice says. 'You don't know how often I've cried wishing I had my little boy back. No one ever told me how my heart would be broken by my son.'

None of us are perfect sons or daughters. But we know in our heart there's something wrong with children who ignore loving parents. A child who's too busy to bother calling, let alone drop in, has forgotten the years of care and commitment their parents provided. They've stopped caring about the people who gave them life.

In one of Jesus's most famous stories, he tells of a father whose son demanded half of his inheritance – a huge insult while the father was still living – effectively treating him as if he were dead. After receiving the money the son left home to live it up. Eventually though, when the money ran out, he came to his senses. But with nothing in the world and no one to turn to he decided to return home.

In fear and shame, his best hope was to get work labouring on his father's farm. As he approached

the family home, he saw his father waiting at the gate. But instead of anger, his father rushed to embrace him calling for his servants to lay out a feast. Immediately the father reinstated the boy as his son. This, Jesus says, is what God is like. He's waiting at the gate, always willing to welcome us home if we've turned away from Him.

When we ignore God the pain is just as real as for any human parent. After all, He's the one who brought us into being. The consistent message throughout the Bible is that God loves us and wants what's best for us.

Yet many of us make a deliberate decision – sometimes lifelong – to forge our own lives and try to be independent and happy without Him. If that's you, don't wait until you realize how much you need God. Come back now. God's waiting at the gate – ready with open arms.

Prayer: Dear God, Please turn my heart towards you, so that I will know your love and the eternal life you promise to all who trust in you. AMEN

Psalms 86: 5 "For you, Lord, are good and ready to forgive, and abundant in loving kindness to all who call upon you." (NASB)