

Foundations Week #1 What Is My Responsibility?

When a prodigal emerges within a family, controlling behaviors by other family members are likely to occur. Some control is appropriate, especially with minors, but over-controlling can contribute to deterioration of relationships with negative ramifications spilling out to the entire family. While this is more dramatic in the prodigal situation, it can occur frequently in families without prodigals.

Understanding this, everyone will benefit from being familiar with a valuable paradigm which clearly defines their own responsibility in regard to their prodigal. Specifically, it clarifies what they are responsible “to” and what they are responsible “for”.

Healthy individuals understand their own boundaries. They understand what their responsibility is and also what is outside of their responsibility. If we have healthy boundaries ourselves, we can better set the proper boundaries and enforce consequences for our prodigal.

If we can't say “no”, how can we expect our prodigal to say “no”?

We must have faith that God is actually the only one in control. As mere humans we really cannot control much of anything outside of our own actions.

Proverbs 21:31 *The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord.*
Our responsibility TO our loved one includes leading ourselves well first and foremost. Modeling Christ out of a grateful heart and bringing glory to God should be our ultimate priority in life.

I Cor. 10:31 *So whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, do it all for the glory of God.*
We need to be responsible TO our children by teaching them Biblical principles of right and wrong.

Proverbs 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

We also need to warn our children and others we care about if we see aberrant harmful behavior as we live in Biblical community with them.

Ezekiel 33:1-10 *...But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life.*

Ultimately, if our loved ones rebel against Biblical authority, then they may need to suffer the consequences of their action for their own well-being.

Proverbs 29:19 *A slave will not be instructed by words alone; for though he understands, there will be no response.*

We need to place our loved ones in God's hand. His love for them is perfect and beyond our comprehension. Although we are responsible for our children for a while, eventually when they become of age, we must give the responsibility for their own lives back to them. When we let go of responsibility FOR our loved one and give that onus to God, we begin to revive our own personal relationship with God and start to experience the fullness of life God has always wanted for us.

John 10:10 *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

The added benefit of this approach is that it gives our loved one the greatest chance of growth and recovery and relationship with God. This fact can not be overlooked.

Our responsibility remains TO our loved ones instead of FOR our loved ones. The table that follows compares and contrasts the differences clearly.

Action Item: Read the What Is My Responsibility document. Review each column from top to bottom and come prepared to discuss which column best describes you and why.

If I Am:	Responsible FOR Others I CONTROL	Responsible TO Others I CARE
What I Do:	Fix Protect Rescue Control Carry their Feelings (Burdened) Don't Listen Join In (Chaos)	Show Empathy Encourage Share (Transparency) Confront Level Listen
What I Feel:	Tired Anxious, Fearful Responsible, Guilty Angry, Enraged Embarrassed Lonely	Relaxed Congruent – clear goals Peaceful Aware (of reality) Calm Free
What I Am Concerned With:	The Solution/Answers Circumstances, Details Being Right, Performance	Relate to the Person- <i>Not</i> the Solution Allow responsibility for their actions
Who I Am:	A Manipulator A Controller A Disabler/ Enabler	A Helper, A Guide A Friend, A Mentor A Parent, A Spouse
My Self-Worth	Declines	Improves

This chart has been used extensively by the Watermark Recovery community and has been adapted from works by Melody Beattie.