

THE COUNSELOR

A PUBLICATION FOR PARENTS, COUNSELORS, & CHURCHES . PROVIDED BY STEPHEN ROSSI, M.A., L.P.C.

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CULTS ...

The Road to Healing and Recovery

Restoring the Prodigal **Part 3 of 3**

Your son is coming home. You can hardly wait to see him. You fall to your knees and thank God for bringing James home after two grueling years of not knowing



where he was. He finally left the cult. You struggle to catch your breath after talking to him on the phone. What shape is he in after being brainwashed for so long? How should I react with him about his experience? Should I get professional help for him? What about his

relationship with Christ? How strong is it and what does he need to change about his current view of Christians and Christianity? Parents have many questions and concerns as they absorb the positive shocking news that their grown child is leaving a cult that had a grip on him for years. It has been a long hard road sown with thousands of tears since James left to join the religious cult. It nearly destroyed his family. You remember the depression, loneliness, and marriage conflict you had over this. The pain was unimaginable. Remnants of this hardship remain today as you carry a wound over the loss of your son.

Now, after all those years and tears, a new healing phase begins. You knew the Lord would protect James and bring him back some day, but you had to let him go and give him to Christ, so you could move forward with this loss in your life. You needed to make some changes. You were humbled by all this and God brought

you through it! A day never went by that you did not think of your wayward son.

You prayed without ceasing for his return.

You often wondered, "Is this the day Lord, that he comes back?" You can hardly wait for that door bell to ring. You now know that this is the day. Where do we go from here? This is exciting, you are filled with joy and great expectations. But you know there are still many phases ahead as your son and his family go through the process of reintegration, healing, recovery, and restoration.



The Aftermath

People leave cults for three basic reasons. Those who leave on their own and make a permanent break from the cult group. Those who drop out without officially leaving. Those who broke the rules and were expelled from the group.

Your son has been through many ordeals. It was stressful for him to leave your home the way he did in the first place. He then experienced problems leading to his withdrawal from the cult, and now he has to face everyone while he recovers from his cult



experience. This can be extremely difficult. Some prodigals do better than others, but all are deeply affected by their cult involvement one way or another. Proceed with caution and sensitivity in handling your son at this point. Be prayerful in your approach. Expect a wide range of behaviors and reactions in your prodigal upon his return. He may have left the cult but much of the cult still remains inside him. His state of mind may fluctuate based on his mood, memories, indoctrinations, fears, and grief associated with his cult experience. Many parents and family members overlook or misunderstand the difficulties their son or daughter may have when returning from a cult.

There can be many after affects of cult involvement.

The prodigal often feels **confusion** about what to believe, and how to make good decisions for himself and his future. He feels **shame** when he realizes he was involved in a cult. He usually feels **guilt** for having broken ties to loved ones, and for having recruited others into the cult. He experiences **sadness and loss** over saying "goodbye" to those ideals in the group he admired, the fellow members he thought were his true friends, or the time spent following something which turned out to be false. Leaving the cult is very similar to experiencing the death of someone close. It's like being betrayed by someone you love. There is a **grieving process**. He may **feel guilty or wrong about his grief**. Many prodigals **fear** that this was their last hope for happiness, success, or enlightenment. They believe they are no longer protected by the powers of the leader which leaves them vulnerable to evil. He may waiver and fear making bad decisions for himself without the group's guidance, or that he will be punished for leaving. Your son will probably have **trouble with staying focused and thinking clearly**. He will struggle with handling the challenges of coming back which had been put on hold while in the cult. He most definitely will have difficulty knowing who to **trust**. He will probably **feel deeply betrayed** by the cult. The cult filled a void for him. He could struggle with **loneliness** since he left deep relationships, and now has to reconnect with family and friends whom his former cult criticized. There may also be a sense of guilt for leaving the cult combined with fears of the cult's retaliation. The prodigal often has to deal with the sense of **"elite no more."** He comes to the crushing conclusion that he is not the "chosen" few who are more valuable to God than other Christians. Many ex-cult members fear they will never recover their full functioning.¹



The Prodigal Son Returns

Don't let the potential cult aftermath problems overwhelm you. The Lord brought your son back and He will restore him again. Let Christ guide you through the process and stages ahead. Your son may experience some of these after affects now and the others later. It's all part of the healing process. The prodigal's return can take on



a number of scenarios. He may be quiet or talkative about his experience with you. He may seem very subdued and even depressed. Listen to him, whatever he has to say, don't bombard him with a thousand questions. Receive him. Love him. This is a time of joy mixed with sadness over his and your

ordeal. This can be a very tearful reunion. Be yourself. Trust God to give you the words at the appropriate times. Let your fears and anxieties go as you fall into our Savior's Arms over your son's return. Praise Him! But don't ignore or suppress your feelings. Over time you will be able to discuss everything with your son. Allow for some peace and quietness first. You know there will be challenges ahead. You and your family have much to work through, but that will take time. For now, focus on your son's safe return. Don't expect him to be compliant and level headed. He may have returned confused, broken, and destitute. He will probably have some lingering, remnant cultic habits and thinking. Other family members probably carry unresolved hurts and wounds over the trauma this has caused them. The healing process will be uneven with many ups and downs. Sometimes parents have to help their children leave these cults. In these cases, your prodigal's return will be somewhat different than if he left on his own. You may have had to "rescue" him or her from a dangerous cult. Maybe you went to get him at his request. The same after affects will occur, the circumstances of his return will alter the atmosphere. Though it is not recommended to snatch your adult child from a cult against his will, it may have to be done sometimes. These situations usually invoke significant anger in former cult members.

Wounds

The wounds can be many and very deep depending on your son's cult involvement. They can also range from moderate to severe with a whole range of symptoms, some persisting for years. Most struggle with a deep sense of **betrayal** and **abandonment**. They realize they



were deceived and then discarded once they challenged the cult's teachings. Your son trusted his cult friends implicitly. This can really hurt because he felt accepted and loved by his cult "family" for so long. He has no

friends outside the cult now. This can bring on **deep emptiness**. Many cult victims describe their experience as **spiritual rape**. They felt abused during a time when they were vulnerable, naive, and lacking in self-esteem. Spiritual abuse can damage a person deeply since it involves twisting God's Word to indoctrinate and control people. Your prodigal son or daughter may carry an **abiding sense of doom** for leaving the cult. He was taught to believe that those who defected (oftentimes labeled Judases and reprobates by the cult group) were cursed, and condemned to hell. They probably know of ex-cult members who had horrendous times after leaving the cult. He will probably **mistrust religious groups** and refrain from affiliating with them for quite some time. He **fears commitment**. Your son probably has **bitterness** over **being manipulated** and **sadness for the lost years**. These wounds may be manifested in extreme periods of **depression** and **guilt**. He realizes now that the people he was told not to listen to (you, friends and family) because he was told you were liars and satanic, were not his real enemies, the cult was. This really hurts. He feels guilty, **ashamed, confused**, and **lonely**. There is a sense of **alienation**, that he does not fit in with anyone at this stage. He feels like no one understands him. His **belief in himself is seriously damaged** at this point. This **emotional overload** and confusion cause problems. He has difficulty making decisions. The realization that **he sacrificed everything for the cult** (education, career, finances, time and energy) hurts greatly. The deepest wound may be the **grief** your prodigal experiences **over losing his cult friends**, it's like the death of a loved one.

Family Approach

Family members carry wounds too. There will be many issues and feelings resulting from your son's past behavior and involvement with the cult. Everyone was deeply impacted. Everyone may be on edge, have feelings of joy mixed with anger, hurt and sadness over the whole ordeal.



Avoid getting into **heavy discussions** or venting **negative feelings** toward your son and the cult initially. This is a time for

receiving your son or daughter back, **a time for recuperation**, a time **for healing**. The time for processing wounds and feelings will come. Healing and trust building will come. Relationships will be repaired and restored. At the same time, it is important to **listen to what your son has to say**, but let him do the talking as he opens up about his experience. **Don't pressure him** not to talk about his cult experiences. You might find this distasteful, but it allows your son to move through the healing process. **Move slowly** in helping your prodigal adjust away from the cult. **Remember** all the potential wounds and issues he carries at this stage.

Ask God to help you make your prodigal's return as peaceful as possible. Everyone has been traumatized by the whole ordeal. **This is reunion time**. Don't be surprised if your son acts aloof, and distant. He may be quite reserved, (quiet) and passive about things for quite some time. He has to sort a lot of things out. It will take God, him, and time to process his post cult life and rid himself of the negative cult influences. **Trust God to guide you** in relating to your prodigal at this time. **Let the rest of the family know that it will take hard work and time with God's help** for everyone to heal from this. **Encourage** them to **be patient** and **trust God**. Rely on **His love** and **power** to bring you through the days, weeks, and months ahead with your prodigal. **Involve your trusted Christian friends**, prayer warriors, and body of believers in coming along side you in this process. **You may also need good Christian counseling** with highly trained and experienced professionals in the cult recovery process.

Healing and Recovery Process

Some prodigals heal faster than others. Those with the least emotional issues before joining the cult may recover faster, once they work through and abandon the false doctrines they once believed. They can, however, still suffer many wounds and take a long time to heal. Other factors also influence the healing and recovery process. The greater the wounds and issues during and after the cult, the harder the work ahead. The stronger the victim's faith, generally the faster the recovery, but not without many ups and downs. The greater the prodigal's support system in understanding, helping, and praying for him, the better. Different personalities, levels of Christian walks, the time, type, and manner of cult experienced, all affect the recovery time. Know this. God can and will restore your prodigal (and your family) no matter what past, present, or future obstacles and adversities lie ahead.

The after affects, wounds, and issues previously mentioned will need to be addressed and resolved over time. Healing and recovery from cultic involvement and trauma is an ongoing process involving God. Your prayers have been answered thus far. Keep praying! God is using you, even as He heals you and your family, and your prodigal in this process. Some people only need a few months to get themselves moving again after dealing with a few post cult adjustment problems, but most individuals take from six to twenty-four months to reach a level of functioning that matches their histories and talents.² In time the negative feelings will be replaced with clear thinking, joy, peace, and trust.³ The most powerful factor in complete healing from any emotional wound in life, especially those caused by the cult, is **forgiveness**. Your prodigal must work through all the hurts, including the frustration and rage associated with uncovering the biblical gaps behind the doctrinal errors.⁴ He has to wade through the truth and error and keep the

good. This can take a long time. Moving on will involve letting go and forgiving.⁵ Forgiveness comes easier when your son realizes that his cult "buddies" are victims involved in the same web of manipulation and violation as he was. Many are still trapped! Your son or daughter will also come to understand that their relationship and walk with God is their responsibility. This is a hard lesson. They must learn to abide in Christ alone and not depend on others to define this for them. This will come as they spend more time alone with Christ. Your son will come to understand what has happened to him, and what he is experiencing is quite typical of the cult experience. He is not alone, even though it hurts. God will also show him through his cult experience how subtle, and deadly satan's deception can be.⁶ A tough lesson. He also realizes that his emotional vulnerability made him "susceptible to the manipulative dynamics of a Thought Reform Environment."⁷ It may also help your prodigal to read the work and testimonies of others who overcame their cult experiences.

Your prodigal may have extreme periods of depression, guilt, and anger. Be available for him to talk to and monitor his progress without being too intrusive. Check on him and let him know you are available to listen and offer suggestions as he is ready. He may need professional help depending on the depth of his depression and affects on his life now. Watch for any suicidal thinking or gestures. Pray against any demonic strongholds that may still have their grip on him. They will leave because they are no match for God Almighty! Many former cult victims are very angry at themselves for getting into the cult, and sometimes God, and their families too. Your son may also have the following symptoms in addition to those described already: insomnia, amnesia, fear, floating in and out of altered states, and violent outbursts.⁸ These symptoms will subside as your prodigal moves through the healing process, but watch that they don't linger indefinitely. Recovery time can be very difficult but it is "made easier if former cult members are made aware of what they are experiencing."⁹ They come to realize they are not alone in their suffering and it is part of the healing process.

There are things you can do to help and protect your prodigal while he is adjusting, healing, and recovering from his cult abuse. It is advisable that he live with others during this time, preferably in a family environment, such as yours. That way someone will be available to screen letters and phone calls for several months, with his consent of course.¹⁰ This helps protect him from the group influence on him while he is still healing. It may help for someone to go with him when he goes out of the home. Cults have been known to go to great lengths, "including direct confrontation on the street to get the person back."¹¹ Your son's healing will be accelerated when he experiences normal people outside his cult world. Be ready to offer some reality testing when needed. For example, your son may "zone out" (floating) and withdraw. Talk to him and gently

advise him about what just happened. These episodes can be triggered by a memory or object associated with the cult. It is also advisable that you help him remove all these reminders (cult paraphernalia) until he is fully recovered.¹² Your prodigal son or daughter will have many specific needs throughout his recovery period (which can be a year or more). They are as follows.¹³

To receive unconditional love and support - to feel normal.

To talk to sympathetic and or/empathetic ears - to be understood.

To be able to pace his own rehabilitation - to feel worthwhile.

To be able to question and be answered - to feel wanted.

To be recognized as free thinking again - to feel secure.

To be free to talk to people he met in the cult - to feel trusted.

To learn your language while you learn his - to feel accepted.

To have a 'safe' place to live at little or no cost - to be free of doubt.

To have an opportunity for manual work to give his mind a rest - to be respected.

Like most people involved in cults, your son will come to realize that he joined the cult while he was in a major transition and he was vulnerable during this time for the cult's influence.¹⁴ Your prodigal will be resolving his true identity as he heals. The question of "Who Am I" will be answered over time as he returns to Christ the way he is meant to be, abiding in His Love. His identity in the cult will evaporate as he emerges one in Christ, loving and obeying His Heavenly Creator and Savior. He will love himself and his neighbors as Christ commands (Matt. 19:19) He will also realize that the answer was always Christ, not the cult. As noted previously, your prodigal will have to sort out his beliefs and get his doctrine right which means throwing out the pollutant ideas and twisted beliefs and keeping the Truth. This will take time, maybe years.

Margaret Singer, a pioneer in cult studies and research, wrote **Cults in our Midst**.¹⁵ There have also been others, including Carol Giambalvo¹⁶ and Steven Hassan¹⁷ who have done ground breaking work on healing from cults. I encourage you to become familiar with their work. Use their material as an aid to understanding cults and their influence on victims. They are useful in understanding the healing and recovery process. There are also many testimonies of people who came out and

healed from various cults. It may be helpful for you to read them. Be careful that you don't leave God out when you do this. These people are authorities in their respective fields and God uses them to bring healing to former cult members, but He must be involved in the process for deep, complete healing and recovery to occur. This cannot be overemphasized.

Steven Hassan is widely respected as the premiere expert on treatment intervention for former cult members.¹⁸ He wrote a book on this titled **Releasing the Bonds; Empowering People to Think for Themselves**. He covers the history of interventions and details his approach. He points out that deprogramming, which is outlawed in the U.S., really doesn't work because it can do serious harm, is too simplistic and does not involve the family members.¹⁹ Hassan also mentions that exit counseling is limited in its effectiveness, and like deprogramming, does not address the process of healing. Hassan's Strategic Interaction Approach (SIA) emphasizes the process of change rather than the content or information. He involves the entire family over a long period of time to facilitate healing in cult victims. He helps families model and grow as they "adopt positive beliefs, productive attitudes, and more effective modes of communication."²⁰ Hassan begins with the premise that mind control "can never erase a person's authentic self; that the individual will leave the group (that it is a matter of how soon and how easily); real love is stronger than conditional love; people want to be free and know the truth; everything in life can be used; cult behavior is predictable; cults don't deliver; and change and growth are inevitable."²¹ He uses a lot of sound behavioral and psychological principals and techniques while respecting and involving Christian approaches to healing. That is important because we know that frequently God's Word was twisted and used by cults to manipulate their victims.

Most of the common range of symptoms and after affects experienced by former cult members have been listed throughout this article. Margaret Singer presents a good review of all the symptoms and challenges former cult members potentially face.²² Remember, not all cult victims experience these symptoms and those symptoms experienced vary in degrees. Your prodigal may experience and resolve these issues in his post cult adjustment as goes through the healing process. They usually involve facing **practical, psychological-emotional, cognitive, social-personal, and philosophical-attitudinal**, challenges. He will struggle to regain his "mission in life." Be patient with him. He will have to mourn and explain the time lost while he lived with the cult. He will have to regain his sense of self that he gave to the cult. Your prodigal may also have to work through his fear of retribution from the cult. This will get better as time passes without any retaliation from the cult. He will live in peace again. You will see your son go through a long series of doubts and emotions but he will come through this healed by Christ!

He may even have an extended period of experiencing panic attacks but they too will subside as he heals. He will regain his memory without the cult distortions. For example, he was brainwashed to believe that you were his "enemy" and may have even written you hateful, accusatory (disconnect) letters. He feels remorse now and realizes he was manipulated by the cult to send them. He reconnects with what is real; you, and the family that really loves him. After a period of feeling extremely lonely and alienated from everyone, your prodigal will trust again and build a healthy social network of friends. Eventually, once his mind clears, he will begin building his life in terms of school and career.

Family members sometimes grow very weary and mistrustful about "religion." They blame their son's cult problems on "religion" and harbor anger and resentment toward any group who proclaims God. We must all remember that "religion" is not a relationship with Christ. "Religion," is man reaching up to God; man's way of trying to know God through organized rituals and traditions to worship and obtain his "worthiness" before God. Christianity, is God through His Son, Jesus Christ reaching down to us and offering salvation through His blood atonement on the cross. (John 3:16) It is completely understandable that non believers and even Christians could lose sight of the true nature of God and His relationship with us, when they have been traumatized by the whole cult experience. Your son's cult involvement caused you so much pain that you may turn your back on God for a season. Don't let your resentments rule you. God did not twist His Own Words and seduce your son to join a cult. Your son joined through his own free will. God allowed all this to happen for reasons we cannot understand but to His Glory. Sometimes He allows these tragedies to shape us for His use later on. These may be hard words for some of you during this time. Believe God. He exists and He is faithful whether you believe (doubt) Him or not.

Sometimes former cult members experience a group of symptoms and problems known as the clinical condition Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (**C-PTSD**). This syndrome can result from long-term, recurring abuse. C-PTSD differs from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) in that it is an accumulation of traumas over time, which results in a more pervasive disorder that effects emotional and interpersonal functioning.²³ This emotionally debilitating disorder can occur when one leaves a harmful cult and battles them. Not everyone involved in a cult develops C-PTSD. The key symptoms are: "Psychological fragmentation; loss of sense of safety, trust, and self worth; the tendency to be re-victimized; the loss of a coherent sense of self; difficulties regulating emotions, including symptoms such as persistent sadness, suicidal thoughts, explosive anger, or inhibited anger; variations in consciousness, such as forgetting traumatic events, reliving traumatic events, or having episodes of dissociation (during which

one feels detached from one's mental processes or body); changes in self-perception, such as a sense of helplessness, shame, guilt, stigma, and a sense of being completely different from other human beings; varied changes in the perception of the perpetrator, such as attributing total power to the perpetrator or becoming preoccupied with the relationship to the perpetrator, including a preoccupation with revenge; alterations in relations with others, including isolation, distrust, or a repeated search for a rescuer; loss of, or changes in, one's system of meanings, which may include a loss of sustaining faith or a sense of hopelessness and despair."²⁴

We cannot overlook or leave out the spiritual aspects of healing, which means the Holy Spirit, spiritual warfare, prayer, Christ's love, and Healing Power, faith, hope, and Christian understanding of what has happened and how Christ heals. Secular psychological approaches are problematic since they attempt to restore the person back to his sinful self "improved." Most of these approaches downplay, negate, dismiss, or attack Christianity or God's role in the healing process. They don't really address the spiritual nature of cult abuse. They attempt to restore the person back to a "healthy" self which still leaves them vulnerable for relapse. They oftentimes refer to spirituality in New Age terms. Secular approaches do not address the deepest sense of healing, especially when the problems involved spiritual confusion, demonic influences, and false doctrines. How can they help restore a person if they themselves know nothing or very little of the beliefs, doctrines, prophecies, and Bible? How can they significantly help fallen believers if they are not believers themselves? They may help on a superficial level but not completely. Spiritual cult abuse involving a distortion of Christianity requires qualified Christian counseling professionals along with a whole array of Christian believers as a support system. Christian counselors are needed, who are spirit-filled, discerning, and experienced with cults and spiritual warfare, along with proven strategies for helping former cult members recover.

It may take years for your prodigal to heal and fully recover. Some carry certain scars and residual affects the rest of their lives. It will take time for the prodigal to restore his relationship with God and get his theology right.



Your son will smile again. He will begin to enjoy life more. He will be happy again. In fact, he will become freer and freer as he comes out of the bondage he was in. There will be ups and down, even regressions as he moves through the healing process. You will experience these too. There will be times when you can talk to him about your anger and grief over his cult behavior and this will help you both. All family members will have the opportunity to heal. It will take time for you to renew your

trust in him, and he with you. Go slowly. Don't fall into the negative pattern of trying to "shape him up" with a long list of rules and demands. The military approach will backfire. Strict structure enforced without compassion will invariably invite setbacks. Structure is important but allow an adjustment period first. Help your son develop a plan that lets him gradually take on more responsibility as he heals. Don't force the process. Your fears may cause you to take charge for him which can be a big mistake. Your son will come out of this, he will not remain brainwashed forever. This process will challenge you, but you need it too. Trust God. Don't do His work. Get out of God's way. Your son will be restored.

God's Love

You will witness first hand again and again the power of God's love through the healing and restoration of your son and family. God loves them more than you. He wants His children healed and to return to Him. God welcomes your wayward son home just like the Prodigal Father did in Luke 15:20-32. "And he arose and came to



his father. The Prodigal father, "and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." (Luke 15:20) He forgave his son and welcomed him back despite the bad things his son did. Shouldn't you do the same? There was a celebration, "for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." (Luke 15:24) Figuratively, your

son has been brought back from the dead (the cult's evil clutches). The Prodigal's father described in the Bible is a picture of God the Father welcoming sinners back into the kingdom, saved from their wicked ways and eternal death, by a loving, forgiving, Father (God). Your son's return is much like the prodigal in the Bible. And God's love is the same in welcoming your son back and restoring him. Rejoice in God's love, even though the road ahead may still be long. Wherever you are in the process of your prodigal's return, allow God to take you the rest of the way. He takes you (and your son in his brokenness) and heals. . . .

He will use your son's cult experience to bring others to Him. Unbelievers and former cult members, even those in the cult now, learning that your son was healed and is thriving today, will be drawn to Him. All the threats and curses prayed against your prodigal son came to nothing because of God's Love and Protection. Your son's healing is a miracle. It would be hard to refute this, given the horrendous ordeal, mental, and spiritual damage your son experienced. He may not be completely healed and restored yet, but he will, because God is faithful and loves Him. We must do our part. He always requires some participation from us in response to His Love. We must cooperate. You must cooperate. Don't resist Him.

This will not be easy. Our fallen sin nature resists the things of God. It is called pride! The original sin. God, through Jesus Christ, reconciled all mankind unto Him, we have a way out from sin, self, the world, satan, and death. We must trust, obey, and abide in Him. He chose us, now we must choose to follow Him. You will see God in the healing process of your prodigal son. This is God's will, He does make all things new. (Rev. 21:5) "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13) The Lord knows all about the pain and grief you have carried over your son's cult involvement. He is not callous or removed about your anxieties and fears. Fall into His arms and let Him carry you through this process. Things will go a whole lot better this way. You will become stronger for doing so. He will not disappoint you. Let Him love you and your prodigal as He heals you both.

Restoration

Your prodigal will eventually be made new, better than before, wiser and matured, renewed in Christ! You will see His Power and majesty reflected in renewing your son. The cult experience took away his innocence and God used it to make your son able to accomplish more for Christ than ever before. After he remembers, reflects, mourns and heals from his cult abuse, your prodigal moves forward with his life, letting the past strengthen him for the work he does now. You too are restored over time. The Lord gives you "beauty for the ashes, the oil of joy in the morning." (Isa. 61:3) He consoles you and heals you. The restoration process is completely supernatural. It's not something we can do on our own. It is a God thing. The memories may remain but they have no real power like they did before. The flashbacks are gone. The mistrusting is over. The regrets over the lost years - gone. God "restores the years the locust have eaten." (Joel 2:25) Supernaturally He heals you backward and forward. He adds years and life to your prodigal. He is free from the lies and baggage that bound him. You may find this hard to believe, but it does happen. "But with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26)

Helping Others

Your son may develop a passion for helping others come out of cults. This happens quite frequently. He may feel led to use his experience to warn others about the deceptions and dangers of cults. Many cults today use the internet to lure and snare their unsuspecting seekers into their trap. We are living in the End Times.



There is no doubt about it. Bible prophecies described events that have and are taking place. It is certain that God will draw the curtain on mankind as described by our Lord in Matthew 24 and through the disciple John, in Revelation. Things are bad and getting worse, it won't be long, but no one knows the exact date

and time. We may have but a few years left, decades, or more. That is why so many people, especially Christians are drawn to the prophetic these days. There are modern day prophets. I suspect that there are many more false prophets, and they use the End Times concerns to build "ministries" to accomplish their own selfish ambitions. Prodigals like your son are in a good position to warn others about these false prophets and ministers who prey on those seeking the truth. They will also be available to help people leave cults and go through the healing process. What an honor to God and help your son may be if he chooses so. You may have reservations about him going back into the "line of fire" as so to speak. That will be his choice. Remain open to the possibility of God using him to restore others. Let him be a blessing like those who God placed in your path throughout this ordeal.

Life After the Cult

Now your son's life takes off! It's hard to believe he was even in a cult at this point. He is passionate about life and really serving God! Every day brings new opportunities for your son to make his contribution and serve God. He found his calling and loves what he is doing! Some former cult members struggle for quite some time afterwards, but they do launch into a new direction There is life after the cult. You thought this day would never come, but it has. If it has not happened yet, it will. You have done all you can do. Let God do His part. Hope in the Lord. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. (Jer. 17:7)

A few final notes:

Read **2 Peter Chapters 1-3**.

This talks about false prophets and living in the last days.

Also consider listening to a sermon on the End Times:

The Terrors of the Great Tribulation, Part 1

by Pastor-Teacher John McArthur.

<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/42-260>

Finally. . . This series on cults was inspired in part by my own personal experience.

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