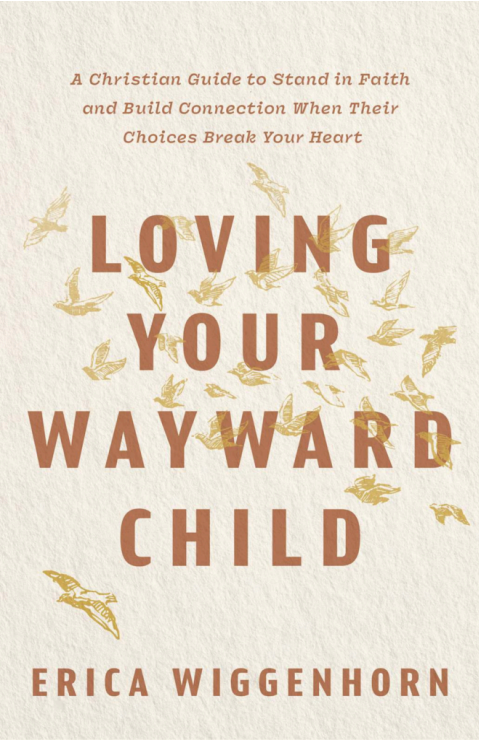
"Loving Your Wayward Child" by Erica Wiggenhorn
Publication Date: October 20, 2026
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New Bool' Helps Heartbrol'en Parents of Wayward Children Hold Onto Faith and Hope and Find Connection



BRENTWOOD, Tenn., Aug. 5, 2026—Psychologists have described parental estrangement as a "silent epidemic." Teenagers and adult children are increasingly distancing themselves from their parents—sometimes gradually, sometimes suddenly and sometimes with little explanation. Behind each fractured relationship is often a parent grieving what has been called "a loss without a funeral": a deeply painful separation that few people see or know how to acknowledge.

Families can become disconnected for varying and often complex reasons. But for Christian parents whose children are pulling away or making choices that conflict with the faith and values they were raised with, the resulting grief can bring difficult questions.

"How do we maintain a connection with a child whose choices break our heart?"

"How do we remain grounded in our faith when our child abandons everything we tried to instill in them?"

"How do we hold onto hope for a better future when our child goes 'no-contact'?"

Bible teacher, award-winning author and national speaker Erica Wiggenhorn has wrestled with such questions personally while walking the lonely and painful road of pursuing connection with a prodigal child.

In her new book, "Loving Your Wayward Child" (B&H Books, Oct. 20, 2026), Wiggenhorn draws from the truth of Scripture and her family's experience to help parents respond to a child's choices from a place of wisdom rather than fear.

To request an interview, please contact Jill Waggoner at jill.waggoner@lifeway.com.

Wiggenhorn identifies four reactions parents often default to when they feel afraid, angry, rejected or helpless. She then offers healthier ways to respond, along with practical strategies for managing emotions during heated moments, approaching difficult conversations, fostering connection when a child is pulling away and preparing for hard days before they arrive.

“If you’re anything like me, you need hope, perspective and tools for the hard days when it comes to loving a wayward child in your life,” Wiggenhorn said. “Maybe, like me, you don’t really want ten more reminders of what went wrong or how you could have done things differently—you just need hope. And perhaps some tools to help keep your head in the middle of all this, your faith intact, and hopefully some sort of connection with your child in the days to come. I know how you feel. That’s why I wrote this book for parents like you and me.”

Wiggenhorn reminds parents that they cannot force their child to believe, change or reconcile. They can, however, learn how to manage their own reactions, approach hard conversations calmly and keep the door open for future connection.

She also reassures parents that their past mistakes do not have to determine their child’s future. What has been lost can still be found, and a season that feels defined by darkness does not have to be the end of a family’s story.

“There has never been a perfect parent,” Wiggenhorn encourages, “but there’s always been a perfect God. And he’s not done writing your family’s story. If you need some consolation that past mistakes are not your child’s ruin, that what’s been lost can still be found, and that your family’s future can hold more light than darkness, this book is for you. In ‘Loving Your Wayward Child,’ grab hold of some hope and rest in grace, dear friend. Let’s explore God’s faithfulness together.”

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Erica Wiggenhorn has served in various roles in women’s ministry for over twenty-five years. She is a multi-published author, Bible teacher and national speaker who loves connecting with people at retreats, large conferences and around her own kitchen table. Her passion is helping people encounter the truth of Scripture, experience transformed lives and develop the confidence to study God’s Word for themselves.

A graduate and postgraduate of Azusa Pacific University, Erica equips readers with practical tools that help them approach Scripture with confidence and delight. She lives in Phoenix with her best friend, Jonathan, and their four children—two human and two furry

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and adorable. Free resources accompanying “Loving Your Wayward Child” are available at ericawiggenhorn.com.

TALKING POINTS & INTERVIEW ANGLES

Why Parental Estrangement Has Become a “Silent Epidemic”: More families are experiencing partial or complete estrangement, yet parents often carry the grief privately because they feel ashamed, blamed or misunderstood. Wiggenhorn discusses why this form of loss can feel so isolating and how parents can seek support without surrendering hope.

A “Loss Without a Funeral”: The Hidden Grief of a Living Relationship: A child may still be alive—and may even still live at home—while feeling emotionally unreachable. Wiggenhorn explores the ambiguous grief parents experience when the relationship they once knew changes or slowly disappears. Other parents grieve for a child who has gone “no contact” and they don’t know where their child is or if they will ever speak to them again.

Keeping the Peace Is Not the Same as Building Peace: Avoiding conflict may prevent an immediate argument, but it can also keep families from learning how to work through anger, disappointment and disagreement. Wiggenhorn offers a healthier approach to conflict that seeks understanding and continued connection without demanding agreement.

How to Pursue Connection Without Trying to Control the Outcome: Parents cannot force belief, maturity or reconciliation. They can learn to manage their own reactions, examine the fear behind their responses and approach difficult conversations in ways that leave room for honesty and future connection.

A Prodigal Child’s Story Is Not Proof That a Parent Has Failed: Parents often replay past decisions and wonder whether they caused their child’s choices. Wiggenhorn discusses how parents can take honest responsibility for their mistakes without allowing shame to define them or determine what they believe about the future.

POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Parental estrangement has been called a “silent epidemic.” Why do so many families experience this pain privately?
2. Can a parent experience estrangement even when their child still lives under the same roof?
3. Why do some parents describe estrangement as “a loss without a funeral”?
4. What is the difference between keeping the peace and building genuine peace within a family?
5. What happens when parents become so afraid of being cut off that they stop having honest conversations?

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6. How do you love a child whose choices break your heart without trying to control the outcome?
7. What are the four reactions parents commonly default to when they feel afraid, angry or rejected?
8. How should a parent respond when their child rejects the faith and values they were raised with?
9. How can parents take responsibility for past mistakes without interpreting their child's choices as proof that they have failed?
10. What would you say to a parent who believes it is too late to repair the relationship with their child?

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