

10 Ways God's Spirit-Empowered Incubator Can Help Your Prodigal Son or Daughter

Over six years ago, my granddaughter was born 10 weeks early. Since she was a preemie, she spent the first couple of months of her life in an incubator. It helped sustain her until she could survive on her own. The incubator provided the environment needed to control her body temperature, oxygen levels and the amount of humidity. While it was hard to see her in there, I knew that's where she needed to be.

During those weeks, I thought a lot about incubators and prodigal children. It occurred to me that our troubled sons and daughters are in God's incubator.

The dictionary definition of incubator: "An apparatus for maintaining an infant, especially a premature infant, in a controlled environment; a place or situation that permits or encourages formation and development ..."

Unlike preemies, our children have already been living in the outside world. But today, they're not well. Extra help is required for their formation and development to continue so they can survive. They need to be lovingly cared for by the Great Physician in his intensive care unit.

10 Things God Wants to Do in His Incubator:

1. **Warm** the child's calloused, cold, hardened heart.
2. **Breathe** His abundant life into their lungs.
3. **Nourish** their sin-sick souls with regular intravenous feedings of his Word.
4. **Care** for them as their spiritual doctor, eager to

provide all they need to not just survive, but thrive in the outside world.

5. Wash them with the priceless blood of His Son.

6. Change them to be pure both inside and out from the damage of their destructive choices through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

7. Clothe them in His righteousness.

8. Swaddle them in His tender loving care.

9. Heal all their wounds and diseases.

10. Give them a brand-new, abundant life (John 10:10). “I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

In God’s incubator, no problem escapes his are no errors. No mistakes. Nothing is missed or overlooked.

The child receives around-the-clock care from their Maker, who provides perfect attention to the smallest detail. No problem is too serious or difficult. No one is beyond His expertise. He is the best one to care for them anywhere in the world.

He has all the wisdom needed. Every advanced degree—He has it. He possesses full knowledge of them. He’s able to provide for them at the right moment and in the right way.

This specialized treatment is quite expensive. On their own our child could never afford it. It cost God His Son, but he was willing to pay the price because he loves them so much.

When we think about our child, our heart bursts with love, yet he loves them far more. He knows what they require to thrive emotionally and spiritually. He’s able to orchestrate the events of their life to provide for that.

Parents of premature infants are eager to have their children

come out of the incubator so they can hold them whenever they want, for as long as they want. (maybe your child was a preemie and you remember what it was like) Parents of prodigals feel much the same way. They're eager to hold their children in their arms again; to have them back in their lives and families; for the obstacles and barriers to be removed from their relationship. To be fully restored.

Some of you have been waiting for years.

I remember the awesome feeling when our preemie granddaughter was finally strong enough to not need the incubator any longer. What a day of rejoicing that was.

But I remember even more how wonderful it was when my daughter Renee came running to my arms in the rehab center. I can still hear her voice as she whispered in my ear, "Thank you for coming! I'm so sorry for how much I hurt you, momma. I love you so much! Can you ever forgive me?"

She was finally out of God's incubator, returned to my arms!

At that moment this Scripture verse came to my mind:

"Now to him who is ABLE to do immeasurably MORE than all we ask or imagine . . . to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever" (Ephesians 3: 20-21).

Great Physician,

Please don't release our children from your spiritual incubator prematurely. As much as we want them with us, we want to keep them in your expert care, under your scrutiny and watchful eye until your healing, redeeming work is done!

We beg you to show them your tender mercies in these 10 ways. Allow them to feel only as much brokenness as is necessary to bring them to their knees in humble surrender. Make them willing to turn to you in simple, childlike faith. And help us

wait with faith that you are able to do far more than we could ever imagine.

We're humbled and grateful. Amen. {eoa}

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