Christian News 15 November 2026 | English article

Matt Chandler Shares Daughter Audrey's Eight-Year Rebellion and Return to Faith

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"With Chris Powers, and his message to other parents was blunt:"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Pastor Matt Chandler has shared that his daughter Audrey rebelled against the faith she grew up with for eight years before returning to it, asking to be baptized at his church, reading Scripture and sharing her testimony. Chandler, the 52-year-old lead pastor of The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas, told the story in a 11 November episode of the "POWERS Pod" with Chris Powers, and his message to other parents was blunt: "I can't make them love Jesus."

For Chandler, the parable of the Prodigal Son is not just a sermon illustration. It is the story of his own family, lived out over eight long years in which he and his wife Lauren had to decide how to love a daughter who was walking away - and how to keep the door open without forcing her through it.

Matt Chandler Powers Pod: Audrey's Eight-Year Rebellion

Chandler described Audrey as energetic and adventurous from birth, a girl who travelled the world with her parents and saw the Gospel lived out in their home. She grew up inside the church, inside a pastor's family, with faith all around her. And then, for eight years, she rebelled against it.

Chandler did not dress the story up. He spoke about the difficult decisions he and Lauren made to keep their relationship with Audrey intact while she was walking away, and about the pain of watching a child you raised in faith choose a different road. Any parent who has sat at a kitchen table wondering where they went wrong will recognise that pain at once.

The hardest part, Chandler said, was acepting the limits of a parent's power. A father can pray, model faith, keep the conversation open and refuse to give up. What he cannot do is reach inside his daughter's heart and make her believe. That admission - from a man whose job is literally to preach the Gospel - is what makes the story hit so hard.

Parents of teenagers who have walked away often carry a secret guilt, as if their child's rebellion is proof they failed. Chandler's story pushes back against that guilt without pretending the years were easy. He kept showing up, kept loving her, and kept the relationship alive through the rebellion, even when he could not control where it was heading.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

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