

Personal / Small Group Sermon Study

The Prodigal Son

Week of February 4, 2018 A.D.

God loves you unconditionally! Run to Him. He will never let you go. Let's talk about that in this week's study.

Read Luke 15:11-32

1. With whom do you more closely identify in this story: (a) the younger son or (b) the older son? Please explain why.
2. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: "By asking for 'my share of the estate' the younger son was telling his father 'I wish you were dead'. We say the same thing to God when we place limits on what we are willing to do for God."

Read Luke 15:13-16

3. Compare your life on earth to the life of the younger son in the "distant country"? In what ways are they (a) different and (b) the same? Please explain your answers.

Read Luke 15:17-19

4. Which is better: (a) to be a worker in a strange country making barely enough money on which to live or (b) to be a hired-hand in your father's business in which every person is paid more than enough to have his needs met? Please explain your answers.
5. Which is better: (a) to be very wealthy and to have no contact with your family or (b) to have a modest savings account (i.e. "food to spare", see verse 17) and to have a loving relationship with your family? Please explain the reasons for your answer.
6. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: "Many 21st century American Christians can identify with the younger son because we place a high priority on the freedom of having money and not being required to work. If the younger son had not wasted his wealth while in the "distant country", many 21st century American Christians would agree that the younger son would be wise to remain away from his father and enjoy his new life in the distant country."

Read Luke 15:20-24

7. In what sense is every person on planet earth “the younger son” in this story? In what sense is Jesus the “father” in this story? Please explain your answers.

Read I John 1:5-10 and Luke 15:21

8. Can a person have a father-child relationship with God without first confessing that he or she has sinned against God? Please explain your answer.

Read Luke 15:25-32 and Galatians 3:26-29

9. Consider the older brother as being an Old Testament Jew. Did the Jews of Jesus’ time understand that God loves the non-Jews as much as God loves the Jews? Were the Jews happy or angry when the non-Jews (i.e. the Gentiles) were offered forgiveness for their sins through faith in Christ? Can it be that the older brother in this story represents the Jews and Christians who still try to please God by obeying the Old Testament commands? Please explain your answer.
10. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: “The ‘distant country’ in Luke 15:13 represents planet earth and the ‘world system’ which is under the power of Satan.”
11. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: “This world and its desires are temporary. And, when Christians choose to embrace the values of this world, they squander the wealth which they would otherwise inherit in the kingdom of heaven.”
12. Is God’s love for you unconditional? If you have faith in Jesus for your salvation, will God ever disown you as His child? Can you squander your eternal inheritance by the way you choose to live on earth? How can you use this parable to explain to your friends that it is God’s desire to spend eternity with them in heaven? Please explain your answers.

Consider: God’s love for mankind is unconditional. Every person who confesses their sin and asks God for forgiveness through faith in Christ will live for eternity as a child of God regardless of their behavior. “You think about it!” Amen.