

HOW TO GET CLOSER TO GOD

50 Days of Transformation - Part 1 (Spiritual Health)

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THE LOST SON & LOVING FATHER: LUKE 15:11-24

...Jesus told them this story: *“A man had two sons. ¹² The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. ¹³ “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. ¹⁴ About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. ¹⁵ He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.*

¹⁷ “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.” ’

²⁰ “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. ²¹ His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’

²² “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. ²³ And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

HOW PEOPLE DRAW CLOSE TO GOD

1. I get **FED UP** with where I am.

*“he wasted [everything]...and he began to starve...When he finally came to his senses...”
(Luke 15:13,14,17, NLT)*

“When you come looking for me, you’ll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else,” (Jeremiah 29:13, The Message)

2. I **FACE UP** to my sin.

“Finally, he came to his senses and said, “...‘Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you.’” (Luke 15:17–18, CEV)

“It is because of your sins that he doesn’t hear you. It is your sins that separate you from God when you try to worship him.” (Isaiah 59:2, GNB)

“Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love. Because of your great mercy wipe away my sins! Wash away all my evil and make me clean from my sin! I recognize my faults; I am always conscious of my sins. I have sinned against you—only against you— and done what you consider evil. So you are right in judging me; you are justified in condemning me.” (Psalm 51:1–4, GNB)

“...no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool!” (Isaiah 1:18, The Living Bible)

The HABIT of a Regular Spiritual Check-up:

“Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don’t drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups...If you fail the test, do something about it.” (2 Corinthians 13:5, The Message)

3. I **OFFER UP** myself.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed...” (Romans 12:1–2, NIV84)

THE FATHER’S RESPONSE

Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him...said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest...’ vv 20, 22

4. I **LIFT UP** my gratitude.

“...We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has returned to life. He was lost and is found.’ So the party began.” (Luke 15:23–24, The Living Bible)

“Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him...his name is the LORD; exult before him!” (Psalm 68:4, ESV)

“I will sing to the LORD because he is good to me.” (Psalm 13:6, NLT)

ACTIONS:

Daily Devotions

Small Group Session 1: Spiritual Health