

Fathered by God Part 2: The Loving Father (9-8-2019)

Introduction: My Freshman year college experience – my parent’s welcoming me home.

Luke 15 – not the prodigal son story, not even the story of the 2 lost sons, it’s **the story of the “Loving Father”**

Three ways we see the Love of the Father . . .

1) Gives his Sons Freedom

Luke 15:11-12 (ESV)

(11) And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. (12) And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them.

Note: “There was a man” – Notice the uniqueness of this father!

- He follows through on the sons request – “give me what I get when you die!”
- He divides his property between them – he gives everything: His resource, standing, legacy, name
- He doesn’t parent out of “embarrassment”
- He doesn’t parent out of a need to “control” (he’s not a helicopter mom)

(Listen: I believe in healthy boundaries & saying no, in fact when used properly these can give a safe place for children to learn to use their freedom well – we’ll discuss more later in this series!)

- **Look at God in the garden:** He was the perfect dad, his kids were in a perfect environment, but they still blew it – for everyone, always!
- He let them play in a garden alone, with serpents! (That apparently could talk)

The Story Continues: The younger son not many days later leaves for a far country, and squanders the cash on prodigal (reckless) living. A famine follows and he is so desperate that he goes to work for a pig farmer. He has no food, so the pig’s food starts to look good . . .

Luke 15:17-19 (ESV)

(17) "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. (19) I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"

Note: What are the son’s motives to return – does he miss his father? He prepares a humble speech no doubt, but his motives appear to be driven by something similar to when he left: “It’s now better at my dad’s house”

2) **He prioritizes Relationship** – so he works for Redemption & Reconciliation at great cost!

The Son Returns . . .

Luke 15:20-24 (ESV)

(20) And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (21) And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' (22) But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. (23) And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. (24) For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

Note: Notice the Father's response . . .

- Saw his son a long way off – He was watching & waiting (He had already forgiven)
- Had compassion that not only stirred his heart, but moved his legs! (That's true compassion)

Now watch this, I never noticed this before (all 5 love languages are on display) . . .

- **Physical Touch** – Embraced & kissed him!
- **Acts of Service** – Servants immediately spring into action to meet his needs – clothes, shoes, food!
- **Words of Affirmation** – My son was dead, now he's alive – let's party (gave him a ring – identity!)
- **Gift Giving** – Ring, robe, shoes, dinner party!
- **Quality Time** – "They began to celebrate"

He does not withhold Love in the face of disappointment, hurt, rejection, and disobedience.

- You can celebrate & embrace the person, without condoning sinful & broken actions.
- How else can we ever experience the Father's Love? Even when we repent, we often have wrong or flawed motives, but His love is pure . . .

1 John 4:10-12 (ESV)

(10) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (12) No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

Note: He loves first, and his love is costly! Now we are called to costly love too – it might be the only picture of Jesus someone ever has!

What if the story of our spouses, kids, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers is that they didn't have to have a broken view of God the Father – because we gave them a good look at His love!

So, how can we live like that? Because not only does his love allow freedom and work for redemption, but. . .

3) He loves us by His Pursuit & His Presence

The Older Son hears the party & discovers it's to celebrate his brother that has returned "safe & sound" . . .

Luke 15:28 (ESV)

But he was angry and refused to go in. His father **came out** and **entreated** him . . .

Note: The Father goes to him & pleads with him to come in!

The elder brother's heart towards his father and his brother . . .

Luke 15:29-30 (ESV)

(29) but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. (30) But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!'

Note: It's always about more than behavior – He served & obeyed! The problem is that he didn't want to enjoy His Father's presence. He was a prodigal at heart. And had no love for his Father or brother.

The Father's response . . .

Luke 15:31-32 (ESV)

(31) And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. (32) It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

Note: The only way to receive the Father's Love and have any hope of loving like that ourselves, is to spend real time with him! To realize that more than his gifts, we have the greatest gift of all – His Presence.

Conclusion: God is a **Loving Father** – who gives **Freedom**, runs to **Redeem** us, & pursues us with His **Presence**. He does this so that we can learn first hand what love is, and can enjoy giving & receiving it!

Will you join the party?