

Fearing God and Causing Demons to Flee!

Part 5: Returning Home to your Father

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Prodigal Sons

In Luke 15, we read the story of the prodigal sons:

11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

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

20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

25 "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’

31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”

Megan was reading a book about year ago which talked about the goal of parenting. It made a profound statement, which is this: the goal of parenting is not the independence of the children.

We think the goal of parenting is the independence of children, but that’s not scriptural. At one point does the Father want us to become independent? Independence is different than liberty.

Another point that book made was that only parents are able to give unconditional love. Your peer group cannot give unconditional love.

So what’s typically been happening with children across our nation is they go to school and try to please their peer group / belong to their peer group, but their peer group is not able to give them unconditional love. In fact, this book goes on to say that unfortunately a lot of the sexual sin that goes on with adolescents has to do with them trying to find belonging ... with a peer group that really can only give lust, not love. Their peer group is not able to give other children unconditional love. They don’t have the goods. How can a child unconditionally love another child? The child is still a child and doesn’t have anything to give.

Look again at what happens in the classic story of the two prodigal sons. The one went and joined himself to a citizen of a foreign country. Children throughout the world have been leaving the unconditional love of their parents (or as close to that as you can get on the earth b/c no parent is perfect - Hebrews 12 makes it clear that fathers do the best they can). Children are leaving the unconditional love of their parents to join themselves to their peer group.

The trouble is, now their peer group is going to determine everything about them. When they make their peer group their judge, now the children go in all these whims of fashion, and style, and music, and activities. How many kids in my generation bought Pogs. Do you remember that game? That’s the dumbest game on the face of the earth! You’re paying money for cardboard circles! But if your friends are doing it ... Why would I go do that? I was not actually interested in that game, but my friends were.

Many children have joined themselves to citizens of a foreign country, so-to-speak.

Look at the older prodigal son in this story. *“Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.”* Do you see the reference frame that both children were operating within? Not the reference frame of their father’s unconditional love, but instead the reference frame of their peers.

Your Peer Group Cannot Validate You

Your peer group cannot validate you.

It’s a hard truth, but you cannot bark up the wrong tree for a long time and never get walnuts from it because it isn’t a walnut tree!

“I’ve got all my hope in this tree ... we’re going to get walnuts, praise God!”

It’s an OAK tree.

You’re going to eat acorns the rest of your life ... braking up that tree.

Waiting for walnuts.

I’m here to tell you that your peer group cannot validate you.

I’m talking to adults too. Your peer group, my peer group, cannot validate you.

When they tested Jesus about paying taxes to Caesar in Luke 19 and 20, Jesus said “render to Caesar what’s Caesar’s and to God what’s God’s.” He so deftly navigated both the political and religious spirit that were trying to cease Him upon His words. One of the keys Jesus demonstrated for us there was that He guarded what questions He answered. The questions we answer tell us who we think we answer to.

If I’m a little kid and my peers say “why don’t you play Pogs?” If the first thing that comes up in my heart is “because ... I ... uh ... I ... uh ...” my peer group has become my judge.

You don’t have to answer every question.

Justification breaks Intimidation

Romans 8:28-30 says *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”*

I want to look at that word “justified.” When I am saying “your peer group cannot validate you” what I am saying is your peer group cannot justify you. Justify means to judge. If someone goes to a court case and comes out “not guilty” it could be said “they were justified.” The news reporter may interview them after the verdict of not-guilty is handed down and ask them “do you feel justified?” They may respond “yes, I feel justified!”

Let’s keep reading from Romans 8. There’s a storyline here that’s the same storyline I am talking about with parents and children that says “who’s your judge? What’s your reference frame? Is it your Father? Is it your parents who can actually unconditionally love you? Or is it your peer group - who at no time can unconditionally love you?”

Romans 8:31-33 continues *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? **It is God who justifies.**”*

The spirit of intimidation is fearing condemnation from your judge.

BUT *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who^[a] do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”* If you make God your judge there is NO fear of condemnation for you! So you never need to be intimidated and that’s why the Bible says the righteous are as bold as a lion!

But if you make people your judge, you will be a people pleaser. You will always be open to ... not necessarily experiencing it actively ... but open to the spirit of intimidation, which ceases upon the stumbling block of the fear of man. The fear of man lays a snare and you fall flat on your face. How does the fear of man lay a snare? Because it makes you subject to the whims of people.

I’m not advocating in making God your judge to be careless with the hearts of people - or to be unconcerned with your friends or peer group. I am advocating, however, that your peer group can never validate you.

I tried for years.

“Why am I not finding validation here?”

When I was 10 years old (I’ve maybe shared this before) I stood in front of a mirror and I said “why don’t people like me?” It was a real vulnerable spot for a little 10 year old kid’s heart. “Why don’t people like me?” I remembered that 30 seconds for more than 2 decades after that. Why? Holy Spirit was bringing it up. First I said “why don’t people like me?” But next I said “I’ll show them.”

A vow (which is what I made there) is the flesh’s response to judgment. It says “let me pull up my bootstraps ... I’m going to show them ... I’m going to avoid judgment myself!”

So many people are walking around with a nebulous sense of “what are people going to think of me?”

I would venture say that I used to spend 30, 40, 50, 60, 70% of my brain’s energy caring about what people would think of me. I know that I have often “wound myself up” before spending time with other people to make sure that I looked good. I didn’t want to be rejected anymore.

But you cannot find validation in your peer group.

You can only find validation in your Father.

You don’t want to be searching for walnuts up an acorn tree. You can spend your whole life spinning your wheels wondering “why am I not finding validation here?” IT’S A TRAP.

Sons stop performing and instead enter the rest of the acceptance of their Father. Orphans are competing with one another to find a father-figure.

All the while, when you finally come to your senses, like the younger prodigal son, and say “I’m going to come back to my father” we come with all of our performance and all of the things that we think we’re going to do to win His love and the Father says

“SHHHH ... I’m going to kiss you.”

“You don’t understand yet, and that’s OK. I’m glad you’re home. Welcome home.”

Whoever you give the right to justify you, you also give the right to condemn you. Sometimes that looks like people pleasing. Sometimes that can also look like self-judgment. When you want to please people bad enough you will actually pre-judge yourself to make sure that you are in line with what you “need to be” before you’re with other people. Self-judgment will weaponize your conscience against you. If you have an overactive conscience, I would venture to say that you’ve engaged in self-judgment.

Many people who grew up in religious-type environments have this mindset because they’ve learned all the “good to do” and they are working on doing all of those good things and managing their heart to do all of those good things ... so that they could “be right.”

But I mentioned last time that authority doesn’t rest on right-ness, it rests on relationship. So instead of trying to “be right” in order to have relationship, we can have relationship that causes us walk rightly! *“**He** leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”* (Ps. 23:3b)

Returning sons and daughters to their Father

It's my heart to return sons and daughters to their Father. Jesus said He hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2-3). The Nicolaitans (as I understand it) put people between man and God. So Jesus says that if you overcome the deeds of the nicolaitans, one of the things that will happen is you will get a stone (a white stone) and on it is written a name that no one else knows except your Father. Why? Because it has nothing to do with what other people think about you or what other people call you. It has everything to do with the name your Father has given you.

We are in a moment in the church right now where the saints are going to be mobilized, but the saints are going to be mobilized into every sphere of society because every saint is going to know their Father personally.

Transitioning to the REAL Judge

It's an act of your will to place yourself under the judgment of another. That means you can also choose who will be your judge. Isn't that powerful?

You may recall from the book, The Final Quest, that the Lord told Rick Joyner that he had those encounters (which are detailed in the book) because he had asked God to judge him ruthlessly. In other words, Rick truly desired the judgments of God.

If people have been our judge, or if we've been our judge, you've almost have a persona built-up. When Peter stood beside the lake after Jesus' resurrection, he had a persona built up before Christ died. The persona was "I'm never going to leave You or forsake You, Jesus ... signed Peter, Your best apostle." Jesus said "yeah, you're going to deny me 3 times." So there was a transition Jesus was wanting to work in Peter's heart where instead of Peter boasting "I'm never going to leave You or forsake you" Jesus was saying "I want you to receive My words to you, Peter, which is 'I AM never going to leave you or forsake you.'"

So that moment where Peter is standing on the beach was actually quite a humbling moment where Jesus says "do you LOVE Me Peter?" and Peter says "at best I like you." That happens three times. It was actually in that humbling that Jesus was now able to commission Peter to feed His sheep and take care of His lambs.

So there's a moment of transitioning from having been our own judge and having our own perceptions of how we're doing ... and letting other people be our judge and their perceptions of how we are doing ... "they say I'm amazing and I feel like I'm amazing ..." It's a scary moment to come before the judgment seat of Christ because He's going to prune a lot of false beliefs about yourself. And yet, like we saw in the book with Rick Joyner, it's actually the most joyful thing in the

world because now you stop believing lies. You will only be met by love. It's only God's judgment that actually has mercy imbedded in it!

The Fear of the Lord

Recently, after having studied the fear of the Lord on the back burner here and there for multiple months, I felt the Lord speak to me "the fear of the Lord is desiring the judgments of God." When He spoke that to me, it registered in my heart as "that's it!" Then I saw Psalms 19:9 ...

Psalms 19:9 says "*The **fear of the Lord** is clean, enduring forever; **The judgments of the Lord** are true and righteous altogether.*" Do you see that scripture is connecting the fear of the Lord with the judgments of God?

Listen to some of these verses on the fear of the Lord:

Prov. 1:29 "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord,"

Prov. 2:4-5 'If you seek her as silver, and search for her as *for* hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

Prov. 9:10 "The fear of the Lord *is* the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding."

While "desiring the judgments of God" does not encapsulate what the fear of the Lord is (that's why God gave us many verses on the fear of the Lord), if it is an accurate approximation, then the verses above ought to work reasonably well with "the judgments of God" in place of "the fear of the Lord."

Prov. 1:29 "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the (judgments of God),"

Prov. 2:4-5 'If you seek her as silver, and search for her as *for* hidden treasures; then you will understand (the judgments of God), and find the knowledge of God."

Prov. 9:10 "(Desiring the judgments of God) *is* the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding."

I also love this one: Prov. 14:26 "In the fear of the Lord (the judgments of the Lord) *there is strong confidence*, and His children will have a place of refuge."

The fear of the Lord is this issue about the parent and the kid thing. It's about the peer-group reference frame, or the Father reference-frame. It's about the words of my peers, or His Word.

You can choose it. It says "because did not choose the fear of the Lord." In the fear of the Lord there is STRONG CONFIDENCE.

Receiving Honor from One Another

Starting in verse 30-31 of John 5 we read *“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.”*

Many bibles refer to this section of scripture as “The Four Witnesses.” Jesus here says “I’m not bearing witness of Myself, but instead, four things bear witness of me: (1) John’s testimony, (2) the works that I do, (3) the words of My Father, and (4) the words of Moses. Those are the four witnesses.

See, Jesus right here is addressing “how am I validated as a minister.” In all four things are the words of His Father because even the words of John were the words of His Father because Jesus said this about John’s testimony “Yet I do not receive testimony from man.” He is not saying “it’s because John said it.” He’s saying “it’s because John said God’s words” ... that’s why it testified.

Continuing within that context we pick up in verse 39 *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. I do not receive honor from men.”*

You could say “I do not receive validation from man.” Or, “I don’t receive my value from what my peer group says.”

But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?”

Jesus has a scripture that says your faith will not be possible if you do this one thing ... **“How can you believe, who receive honor from one another** (from your peer group), *and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?”* That’s a scripture I’m going to pay attention to! I don’t even have to understand why that’s so significant ... He said it was!

Let’s look again at verse 43 *“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.”* What Jesus is talking about here is what I would call the “mutual admiration society.”

By parallel, there is something of a “gossip society.” (And God forbid that would be us ... by the grace of God go I. It’s only by being in the Word and being in prayer that the Lord will keep us. He leads us in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.)

So there are gossips and gossips kind of know their kind. Like I don’t hear gossip. Other people hear gossip. There’s been an insightful post on Facebook recently that says “don’t tell me what they said

about me ... tell me why they were so comfortable saying it to *you*.” There’s the gossip society. They kind of know their kind. They test you by giving you a tasty morsel and when they find that you vomit it out instead of letting it go down deep into your soul like Proverbs says about gossip, they realize “oh that’s not a welcome ear ... let me find someone else who receives gossip and gives it back to me.”

The “mutual admiration society” is the same way. Jesus recognized it. He said “if anyone comes in their own name, for their own fame, and for their own gain ... you’ll receive them ... because you’re part of that group.” The arrangement in that group is “you praise me with flattery and then when you do something, then I’ll praise you with flattery and we’ll be part of the mutual admiration, peer-based validation society.”

I am NOT saying that praising people is bad. It’s a heart issue. There’s something about comparison. It’s about comparing ourselves amongst ourselves ... it’s not wise because it’s not rooted in the fear of the Lord!

There’s even been a psychology study by Carol Zweck, in a book called Mindset, that gets at this. She describes how a certain type of praise actually tends to cause people to be bound in pride - which she calls a “fixed mindset.” They are not able to grow in their life because there’s always been “good, better, best” spoken to them. “Boy that was really good what you did ...”

I actually don’t like receiving comments like that. Do you know why? It’s comparative. I love to receive a comment that says “what you said ministered to me and set something free in me.” Do you see the difference? “That was amazing what you did!” That’s great, but ...

It’s a heart. I’m not trying to create a law. Don’t let your conscience be negatively affected.

Jesus said “*I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me ...*” But if someone comes in his own name, those are the type that you receive. What did Jesus know that meant? Look at the verse right before (v.42) “But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.” That’s all that causes that. And Jesus is saying “I recognize it. You guys are playing for each other’s audience. You’re orphans that the Father wants to gather up. You’re running around trying to please and impress one another and if you’re part of that society, you don’t yet know the love of My Father because the love of My Father will drive all of that out!”

Living out Sonship (Bryan)

Peter’s really onto something here, but my fear is only a small percentage of us are going to take this and do something with it. The reason I’m afraid of that is we all have some orphan tendencies where we don’t yet know how to be sons. But praise God He’s teaching us how to be sons and we have a perfect example of sonship - Jesus!

Jesus' ministry was to show us what sonship looks like. So if that's the case and being a Christian means to be like Christ, how are we doing?

Praise God, we have some room to grow! He loves us all the same. It doesn't change our standing with Him or our place in eternity. But our ability to be able to bring the Kingdom into this world is totally dependent upon how we live out sonship.

Who brought Kingdom into the world perfectly? Jesus Christ! So who's our example? Jesus Christ!

A mistake many of us have probably made is to look at Jesus as some target we are supposed to hit and think we are not worthy or able to hit that target. It doesn't need to look like Jesus' specific life. We are all different. We all have different gifts and we are all called to different things. But, is it possible that we have unmet destiny to fulfill?

We all do.

So, how do we do this? Let's look at 1 John 4:18 (TPT) *"Love never brings fear, for fear is always related to punishment. But love's perfection drives the fear of punishment far from our hearts. Whoever walks constantly afraid of punishment has not reached love's perfection."*

So how do we walk in perfection?

Could it be that we receive love?

Receiving love displaces fear. Receiving love displaces sin in our life.

How do we walk free of sin?

We receive the Father's love, that love fills our hearts, and we walk according to His purpose because we can hear Him clearly. That's what a son does. That was Jesus' example. He received the Father's love and then we see how He interacted with people and how He dealt with serious political and relational and physical pressure ... and He walked it perfectly! How did He do it?

He received the Father's love.

Did He sit around and strategize on "how am I going to do it when the Pharisees confront me? How am I going to do it when I am asked what to do about Caesar's rule?" They were under the rule of a foreign government and most of the Jews thought He was there to set them free of that.

So what does that mean for our current situation? What's the Father interested in? What does the Father want?

He wants hearts and He wants more children to come into His family and He wants us to grow up into mature sons and daughters so that we can partake in what He has for us (a really beautiful

relationship where we take on His identity and we actually express Him in an environment which He has given us the ability to do that).

How does orphanhood start? (Bryan)

Kids, do you realize your peer group is your friends? Even adults are afraid of what our friends think of us too sometimes. Sometimes adults need to realize we are still children of God. There is something about innocence that is very special to the Father.

Kids are innocent and the Father is very very pleased with you guys (the kiddos). Kiddos, who else can tell you who you are? Parents!

Orphanhood starts when we start to look at what our parents do and we think about whether it's how we like it or not.

When we start to analyze what our parents are doing, we are staring the road toward orphanhood in our hearts. There are other steps to get to full orphanhood - rebellion, etc. but when we focus on the faults on the authority in our lives, we start to step out of that authority that God has put into our lives and commanded us to submit to.

Kids, whether you like it or not, or whether you understand it or not, submit yourselves to your parents ... and try to find joy in their covering because that covering protects you. Inside that covering, the Lord's grace will flow and mercy will flow and favor will flow into your life automatically. It's not based on whether you like what's being asked of you, whether you understand what's being asked of you ... that's irrelevant.

Adults, who are we submitting to?

A boss?

A governor?

A president?

What if that president isn't the president I agree with - this time or last time?

When we begin to focus on the faults of the authority in our lives we start to step out of sonship and into orphanhood.

This is what Jesus taught: don't worry about the reign of Caesar. But what did the Israelites want? FREEDOM! Free us from this! He didn't even address it. All they could hear was "how is He going to free us from this ... He's doing all this great stuff, how's it going to happen?"

"Wait! He died!?"

Did Jesus fulfill His destiny?

Yes! He freed us and showed us how to walk as sons!

How much of believing is accepting that which you don't understand? What does believing have to do with understanding?

Jesus said it *"I have come to represent my Father, yet you refuse to embrace me in faith. But when someone comes in their own name and with their own agenda, you readily accept him. Of course you're unable to believe in me. For you live for the praises of others and not for the praise that comes from the only true God."* (John 5:43-44, TPT)

Kids, you need to return home to your parents.

Big kids, you need to return home to our Father.

His judgments, not our own. How do we know what His judgments are? He's got a book full of them for us? Where do we go when we're confused? Do we go to our peers for judgment on those matters? Do we go to the Word and our Father for those judgments?

This is the battle that's being waged in our society and in the world. This is the Kingdom either coming or not coming based on how we interact with the Father and how we receive His love. He didn't create another mechanism to bring His Kingdom to earth. He does it through His kids - His children.

Praise God this is all being revealed to us in a fresh way. Our ability to walk in this is going to be determined based on how well our hearts are prepared to receive this word and facilitate it into our life. Jesus received the love of the Father and then He went and did what the Father thought He should do. He didn't do what man thought He should do nor did He do what He thought He should do.

Those are the 3 fears:

- the fear of peers / man
- the fear of the Lord
- the fear of yourself if you judge yourself (and that's actually rebellion too).

How much is my believing based on accepting that which I don't understand? Father forgive us for needing to understand before we would choose to believe. Show us how to me more child-like. Help us find clearly see your judgments in your word that apply to our current situations. Help us see when we are stepping out of your fear and help to quickly adjust. ***(more ministry time at 50:00)***