

onechurch

bigIdea

It's one of the most famous stories Jesus ever told, the story of the lost son. And while many of us read this story and think about how much God loves us, and about His grace and mercy, the reality is that Jesus told this story to illustrate something very specific. Something most of us completely ignore. Because at the heart of the story of the prodigal is a story about how we show God's love to one another.

BIG IDEA: Elder brothers equate religious activity with spiritual transformation.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Luke 15:25-32. How do you typically respond when you feel like someone has received something that you deserved?
2. In this parable the father held nothing back in the celebration of the return of his lost son. Why was the older brother angry with his father? How did the older brother reflect the heart of the Pharisees (v. 2)?
3. Do you feel like the older brother was justified in his response to his father? Why or why not?
4. What part of your relationship with God do you tend to do out of obligation (read the Bible, pray, go to church, etc.)?
5. Chris' characteristics of the older brother were:
 - a. Too busy to intervene and get messy
 - b. Doing things out of obligation
 - c. An attitude of Entitlement
 - d. Judgmental
 - e. Resentment and not willing to forgive
6. What circumstances/people in your past or present life might prompt secret pockets of resentment in you? What do you think would help you release that resentment?
7. What might tempt you to secretly want to "run off to a far country" and use up your assets on yourself?
8. Which personality do you tend to struggle with: rebel (younger son) or rule-keeper (older son)? In what ways are they alike?
9. We don't know if the older brother ever goes into the party. Why do you think the story Jesus tells ends abruptly?
10. What do you feel it means to be broken before God?
11. Have you ever had to experience brokenness in order to receive God's grace in your life? How did God work in that situation?
12. How does it feel to receive God's grace when you don't deserve it?

FURTHER STUDY

1. Read Luke 15:1-32. Describe the context for the parable about the prodigal son. (vs. 1-2) What is the connection between the other two parables; the lost sheep and the lost coin, and this third one the lost son? Describe 2 or 3 qualities of each character in the prodigal parable.
2. Why do you think Jesus might have chosen this story in the context of vs. 1-2 which describes the Pharisees and Scribes?
3. What was it that attracted the tax collectors and sinners to Jesus?
4. What problem did the Pharisees and Scribes have with Jesus in his welcoming sinners?
5. What areas in your life do you feel Jesus searching for you? Do you feel like the older brother sitting on the porch and refusing to go in or the younger brother who has been received with open arms by his loving father?

MOVING FORWARD

Are you not experiencing joy in your life right now because your withholding grace to someone? Let the group pray for you to take the next step toward giving them a second chance.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

His father said to him, "Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!" Luke 15:31-32