

onechurch

bigIdea

Throughout the story of the Prodigal Son we tend to focus more on the sons than the father. This week we are going to take a long look at how the father in this story is a revolutionary representation of God not just to the culture Jesus was speaking directly to but also our culture.



BIG IDEA: Your relationship with God is never broken beyond repair.
All you have to do is come home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe your relationship with your father.
2. How would you compare your relationship with your father to your relationship to God?
3. Have you ever experienced unconditional love? Please describe.
4. *Read Luke 15:25-32.* Read the entire story and focus on the father's thoughts and actions to get a picture of God's character.
5. The father gives away his inheritance, giving his son the option to make his own mistakes. How do you see similar attributes in God, especially focusing on the way he created us?
6. Is it hard for you to understand that no matter your mistakes in life God will not change His opinion of you? Why is this difficult?
7. Chris said that in traditional Middle Eastern countries men typically did not run, EVER! Has God ever "run" to you before? Maybe you have thought, "God, I cannot believe you are extending this grace to me?" or maybe, "Why would you do such a mighty act with such an insignificant person?"
8. Talk about a time when God came running toward you as the father did.
9. Have you ever watched or experienced the type of party that this dad threw for his son?

FURTHER STUDY

1. What does the Father do before he sees his son returning? What do we learn about our Heavenly Father from this?
2. What does the Father do first when he sees his son? Why is this so wonderful?
3. Based on these verses, how is the Heavenly Father's love different from what we would expect from our earthly fathers?
4. How does the father deal with the sins of each of his sons differently? How is it the same?
5. What do we learn about God's grace from the father in this story?
6. How does God's grace deal with sin?
7. In what ways is God's grace a "free" gift? In what ways is it not "free"?
8. *Read John 14:23 and Revelation 3:20.* In these passages how does Jesus communicate his invitation to a relationship with Jesus and the Father? What would it look like to have Jesus make his home in your heart? (John 14:23 and Revelation 3:20).
9. Tell about a time when you have experienced forgiveness. Was it given freely?
10. How can you "come home" to God?
11. Is there something in your life right now for which you need to ask forgiveness? If so, pray to your Heavenly Father.

MOVING FORWARD

Consider this as you go this week: In Luke 15 the Pharisees commented about Jesus, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." and his response is, "Indeed, I do eat with sinners. But it is much worse than you imagine! I not only eat with them, I run down the road, shower them with kisses, and drag them in that I might eat with them." **This is the God you serve, and this God is unlike any other god.**

CHANGING YOUR MIND

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. Luke 15:20