



:: summary

In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus uses the story of a father and his two sons to show what God is like. Just like the father in this parable, God offers unconditional and undeserved love, grace and forgiveness, regardless of the extent of the rebellious behavior or religious diligence of his children. With this, Jesus offers both a rebuke and an invitation – we all need to repent of our self-righteousness as much as we need to repent for our rebellious behavior so we can humbly receive the good gifts God, our Father, wants to lavish on us.

:: explore and discuss

Whether you are super organized or lucky your head is attached to your body, we have all lost something important or even *someone* at one time or another.

Can you describe a time in your life like that and the experience of finding what or whom you lost?

Read Luke 15:1-2,11-24

Jesus uses the story of two sons to address and teach an audience made up of the religious elite who think they have it all together and look down upon others, as well as those who know they don't have it all together and are looked down upon as "sinners." Romans 3:23 affirms the truth that "all have sinned," so we can all identify in some capacity with the younger son who pursued pleasure and freedom at a loss to himself.

What do the details of the younger son's mistakes reveal about what he loves more than his father?

What does the father's response when he returns home reveal about what God is like?

Read Luke 15:25-30

In contrast with the younger son, who insulted and separated himself from their father before wasting his inheritance, the older son remained diligent in attending his responsibilities and doing what was expected of him at home. However, even though he is doing "the right thing," there is still a problem.

What does the older son's angry response reveal about what he loves more than his father?

Does the father's reply and justification seem right? What does it suggest about the older son's labor?

:: make it personal

As Jesus' parable demonstrates, it's possible to live a disordered life while actively pursuing pleasure or piety. The problem is making something other than God the object of our affection and our priority, and Jesus' point is that when we turn away from that kind of behavior and ask God's forgiveness, He is ready to receive us.

As you consider what you love by the way you set your priorities in life, are there things like money, sex, power, possessions, control, relationships, etc. that take God's proper place in your mind and heart?

Is there any pride in your religious works or a sense of entitlement to rewards from God that compete with Him as the object of your greatest affection?

How does the prioritization of your life affect your relationship with God? What do you need from Him to fix it?

:: pray

Invite God to reveal areas of disordered affection in your life. Ask His forgiveness and help in prioritizing your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you lay down any rebellious behavior or pride that would get in the way of your ability to receive the love, grace and forgiveness He wants to lavish on you as His beloved son or daughter.

For more details and messages in this series, visit: [Messages](#).

To see notes from Sunday's message, please click: [Message Notes](#).