

Welcome Home

WEEK 3- OLDER BROTHER SYNDROME

BIG IDEA:

The longer we have been with Jesus, the longer we attend church, the more religious we become, the more likely we are of contracting Older Brother Syndrome. Older Brother Syndrome often equates religious activity with spiritual transformation. We tend to think, the more I do for God/church, then the more spiritual I am. In fact, the more I do in the house makes me better than those outside of the house.

KEY VERSE:

Luke 15:25-32, “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways are you living with older brother syndrome?
2. Is your relationship with God marked by joy? Why or why not?

Key Point #1: Older Brother Syndrome Symptom #1 = Living with a sense of obligation.

3. Do you see yourself as a slave or a son?
4. Do you think God expects something from you? How does this affect your relationship with Him?

Key Point #2: Older Brother Syndrome Symptom #2 = Having an attitude of entitlement.

6. Do you struggle with comparison or jealousy? In what ways could that be connected to an attitude of entitlement?

Key Point #3: Older Brother Syndrome Symptom #3 = Feeling superior by being judgmental.

7. Do you feel the need to hide your failures? Why?
8. How do you speak about other people when they aren’t around? What does this say about the state of your heart?

Key Point #4: Older Brother Syndrome Symptom #4 = Harboring unresolved resentment.

9. Are there hurts in your past that you haven’t fully dealt with yet? Could that be affecting you today?

MOVING FORWARD:

The father comes to the older son just like he came to the younger. What about you? Many of us are the Older Brother type. Secretly we have felt better than others because of what we do for God. When in reality Jesus died for our pride just as much as he died for prostitution. He died for your soul just as much as he died for your neighbor’s sins. The distance is insignificant; the action of the father is what is important. No matter the distance, He still came and He still comes for those that are far from Him. As a group, discuss how you view your relationship with the Lord and how you think He sees you?