When many of us read Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, our focus is usually on the younger son—the one who wasted his inheritance in reckless living. While this part of the story is powerful, it is only half the lesson. There is another deep truth found in the older brother's reaction that speaks directly to our attitudes, expectations, and understanding of grace.

The story, found in Luke 15:11–32, is not just about rebellion and return; it's also about the Father's heart, the dangers of self-righteousness, and the depth of divine grace

Reading the Parable

(Luke 15:11–32 NKJV, summarized)

A man had two sons. The younger son asked for his share of the inheritance early, then traveled far away and squandered his wealth in sinful living. When a famine struck, he found himself in deep need, feeding pigs—a job detestable for Jews (Leviticus 11:7). He eventually "came to himself," repented, and returned home with a humble heart. His father ran to meet him, forgave him, and restored him as a son.

Meanwhile, the older brother, who had remained faithful at home, became angry when he saw the celebration. He refused to join the feast and accused his father of favoritism. The father gently reminded him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours” (Luke 15:31).

Lessons from the Younger Son (The Prodigal)

1. Sin separates us from the Father, but repentance restores fellowship.

The prodigal son’s journey into a distant country symbolizes a life separated from God through sin. Sin always leads to spiritual famine (Isaiah 59:2), but repentance brings restoration.

> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
>
> 1 John 1:9

Like the prodigal, many Christians today abandon their spiritual

inheritance for the fleeting pleasures of the world (Hebrews 11:25). But no matter how far we've strayed, God's mercy is available. The Father's response—running to meet his son—shows us the urgency and joy with which God receives the truly repentant (James 4:8, Luke 15:20).

2. Salvation is not earned but received by grace.

The prodigal did nothing to earn his father's love. He only came back in humility—and was welcomed. This reflects the truth that salvation is by grace through faith, not by works (Ephesians 2:8–9).

His statement, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Luke 15:21), reflects godly sorrow that leads to true repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Lessons from the Older Brother

The older brother represents a different danger: self-righteousness. He had stayed, worked, and obeyed—but his heart was bitter.

1. You can be near the Father, yet far from His heart.

Although physically present, the older brother didn’t understand his father’s joy or mercy. Like the Pharisees Jesus was addressing in Luke 15:1–2, he believed obedience should be rewarded and that mercy was unfair.

> These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.
>
> Matthew 15:8

We must guard against a performance-based view of God that believes our works earn His love. Our obedience is the fruit of our love, not the price for it (John 14:15).

2. The faithful share in all the Father’s blessings—now and forever.

The father told the older son, “All that I have is yours” (Luke 15:31). This mirrors the promise in Romans 8:17:

> ..if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...

The faithful may not always experience earthly rewards, but they are promised a heavenly inheritance that will never fade (1 Peter 1:4).

The Father’s Heart: A Picture of God’s Grace

The central figure in this parable is not the younger son or the older son—it is the Father, who represents God the Father Himself.

His actions embody the Gospel:

- He runs to meet the sinner (Luke 15:20) – showing God’s initiative in our salvation.
- He clothes him with the best robe – a picture of being clothed in the righteousness of Christ (Isaiah 61:10).
- He gives him a ring – restoring his authority and sonship (Romans 8:15).
- He prepares a feast – symbolizing the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7).

A Call to Respond

If you relate to the prodigal son, lost in sin, today is the day to return. Whether you've fallen into sexual immorality, witchcraft, addiction, abortion, corruption, or other sins, God still calls you.

> "Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.
>
> Isaiah 1:18

If you've lived like the older brother, feeling overlooked despite your obedience, let your heart be comforted by this: "You are always with Me, and all that I have is yours." You are not forgotten.

A Prayer of Repentance

If you are ready to come back to God, pray this sincerely:

> *Heavenly Father, I come before You, acknowledging that I am a sinner. I have fallen short of Your glory and deserve judgment. But I thank You that You are merciful and loving. I repent of all my sins and ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that He died and rose again for me. Wash me in the precious blood of Jesus. Make me a new creation. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and help me to walk in obedience from this day forward. Thank You for receiving me as Your child. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Next Steps in Your New Life with Christ.

1.Get baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

2. Join a Bible-believing church where you can grow with others in worship and the Word.

3. Read the Bible daily (start with the Gospels), and pray continually

4. Leave behind all sin—your repentance is made real through your lifestyle (Matthew 3:8).

> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
>
> 2 Corinthians 5:17

You are welcome to join our WhatsApp group here for spiritual support and teaching → [Join on WhatsApp]

Share on:
WhatsApp