

God and Man Through the Bible – Session 17

The Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32

Introduction

In the previous lesson we learned about parables. This lesson explores one of the most famous parables. It is known as “The Prodigal Son”. A prodigal, not to be confused with a prodigy, is a wasteful person. Jesus tells the story to help us understand the relationships between a father and his two sons. We will look at the story from the points of view of the two sons and the father. Think about who you are most like.

Focus on the Younger Son (verses 11-20)

1. How many sons did the father have?
2. What did the youngest one want? How did the father respond? Does that surprise you?
3. Why did the young man do next? Why do you think he wanted to leave home?
4. What do his choices tell you about his attitude towards his father?
5. What happened after he ran out of money?
6. What struggles does the young man go through?
7. When does he finally come to his senses? What does he do next?
8. What was his attitude like when he returns to his father?

Focus on the Father (verses 21-25)

9. Do you think the father knew what was going to happen when he gave the younger son his inheritance?
10. Why do you think he did it anyway? Did he make a wise decision?
11. If you were the father, how would you feel about your son?
12. How did the father treat the son when he came home? Does that surprise you? Why?
13. How would you describe the father’s attitude towards the son?

Focus on the Older Son (verses 25-32)

14. Is the older son happy when his younger brother returns? How does he react?
15. Do you think the father loves one son more than the other? Why or why not?
16. Was the older brother right to act the way he did? Why or why not?
17. What does the father want the older son to understand?
18. Why do you think that the older son does not celebrate? What feelings might he have?
19. How could the older son have reacted?

Thought Questions:

20. Which person in the story do you most identify with? Why?
21. This is a parable. Who do you think the father represents in the story?
22. Whom do the sons represent?
23. What do you think is the main point that Jesus is trying to make in this story?
24. From this story, what types of behavior do you think pleases God the most and the least?

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25. What lessons did you learn from the story that can help change the way think and act?

True or False

- a. The younger son was inconsiderate and wasteful.
- b. The older son was jealous and unforgiving.
- c. The father was loving and forgiving.
- d. The family all celebrated together.

For Further Discussion:

Do you think that parables are a good way to help us understand the problems we face in life? Have you experienced anything like this in your life? How did you react? What would you do differently?

For Further Reading:

[What is the Meaning of the Parable of the Prodigal Son?](#)