

LUKE 15:11-32

5 MAY 2024

ICE BREAKER: What is **something you have** that you think others wished they had?

LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read verses 13 & 28-30) This famous parable Jesus tells is commonly titled, “The Prodigal Son,” referring to the rebellious younger brother. However, Jesus describes not just one, but **two lost sons**. The younger brother is lost because he openly disrespected his father and family by demanding his inheritance before his father passes away. He broke the moral laws and customs of his day as he “set off for a distant country and there **squandered his wealth in wild living.**”

The older brother was no less lost, despite outwardly obeying his father and keeping the moral laws and customs of a dutiful older son. The older brother was furious, declaring to his father, “Look! All these years **I’ve been slaving** for you and **never disobeyed** your orders.”

This is a parable of two lost sons, one a **law-breaker** and the other a **law-keeper**.

1. Describe the **dangers** to faith in God for being a **moral law-breaker** or a **moral law-keeper**.

(Read verses 25-30) Upon his younger brother’s return, the older brother is **outraged**. He could not celebrate his brother’s return or repentance. He was both angry at his brother and at his father. He refused to celebrate with the family or with the servants of the family.

He was caught in the **grip of comparison**. Compared to the rebellious and immoral brother, he was a saint. When we compare, we can fall into the **traps of pride** or **defeat**. When we win the comparison, we feed our sense of self-importance. When we lose the comparison, we can slip into defeat or negativity. In either case, we lose all joy. Indeed, **comparison** is the **thief of joy**.

2. How have you seen **comparison rob** you, or others you know, of **joy**?

(Read verses 28-30) Discovering the attention and celebration his younger brother was receiving, the older brother became engulfed in **jealousy**. He became **bitter** and wallowed in **self-pity**. He could **only see** the **things he did not receive**, but was blind to the many blessings and wealth he already possessed.

Jealousy causes blindness. When jealousy strikes us, what we could see clearly seconds before slips into our ever-enlarging blind spot.

3. How have you witnessed **jealousy blind yourself** or **others** from seeing God’s blessings in their lives?

(Read verse 31) To **rescue** his oldest son **from** his **free fall** to jealousy and bitterness, notice what his father did. He **reminded** his jealous son not of the things he was not receiving, but of **all that he already had**. “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are **always with me**, and **everything I have is yours.**’”

Often we will be passed over. Others will receive attention, positions, or things we hoped, or rightfully expected to receive, or even prayed for. Yet, Scripture calls God’s people **to be happy for others** when they, and not us, receive such blessings.

As apostle Paul commanded, “**Rejoice with those who rejoice** (Romans 12:15).”

4. How could the Lord be **reminding you to be more thankful**?

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE & USE PRAYER LIST AS BIBLE BOOK MARKER FOR THIS WEEK

PRAYER GROUP TIME

(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to share Jesus with this week or invite to Celebration.)
