

How to Love Prodigals 2020-05-10

Luke 15:20-23

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'^[a] ²² But the father said to his servants,^[b] 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

Happy Mother's Day!

Main point of Prodigal Son: God is rich in mercy toward all who repent.

- Also lessons for parents/friends of prodigals who rebel. Proverbs 22:6

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Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

- not guarantee but general truth about life.
 - Not necessarily sign of parental failure if child rebels because world, flesh, devil all working against.
 - Point: Be as gracious with prodigal/WAYWARD as God is with you.
1. Graciously release prodigal/WAYWARD so they repent. Luke 15:11-13

Luke 15:11-13 *And He said, "There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.*

- Sure gave wise counsel but ultimately had to let prodigal decide.
 - Father probably felt personally rejected, failure as parent.
 - Give me inheritance: Similar to wishing father dead.
 - Worst pain is prodigal's rejection of father's values.
 - Prodigals friends/parents: Give godly counsel/warnings then respect decisions, even poor ones, without rejecting person.
 - Parents: as child matures must release control.
 - Though hurting, graciously release w/love and forgiveness.
2. In faith, prepare for their return. Luke 15:20a

Luke 15:20a...*And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him*

- Never gave up on son: constantly looking for son's return.
 - In faith keep praying for prodigal's repentance and return.
 - Intercede ferociously for them during "safer-at-home".
 - Prep yourself by dealing with your heart issues toward prodigal.
 - Unforgiveness, anger, humiliation, lost reputation, guilt/blame.
3. Compassionately, joyfully receive repentant prodigal back. Luke 15:20

Luke 15:20...*And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*

- Although hurt deeply, father felt compassion: He hurt because son hurt! Father joyfully embraced/kissed son before knew prodigal had repented.
- Father ready/eager to forgive but son not experience father's forgiveness until he had repented.
 - Blockage to total forgiveness on prodigal's part, not father's.
 - Repent and God run toward you, embrace you, lavishly welcome you home, forgiving all your past!

Forgave son quickly and totally and completely put away. Hebrews 8:12, Ephesians 4:32

Hebrews 8:12...*For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."*

Ephesians 4:32...*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

- Parents/friends of prodigal/WAYWARD: Not keep score of guilt and blame for ammo for later disagreements.....
 - Father not hold our sins against us.
 - Bear cost (\$, emotional) of what prodigal did and let them go free.
 - That's what Jesus did for us....we prodigal sons!
4. Don't stop at forgiveness but seek to restore relationship. Luke 15:22-23

Luke 15:22-23...*But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.*

- "Best" robe (father's and acceptance), sandals (free man), ring (sonship/authority), feast
 - symbols of forgiveness and relational restoration.
- Prodigals gain idea of God's love/grace by way you treat them.
- Be as gracious with prodigal/WAYWARD as God is with you.

- Graciously release them, in faith prepare for their return and compassionately, joyfully receive the repentant prodigal back into fellowship/relationship.
- Show them God's abundant mercy and extravagant love so they will see God is.....Psalm 103:8-11

Psalm 103:8-11

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever.

He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him;

- That's how God's love is toward us and how our love must be toward prodigals.