

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Does your relationship with God echo that of the younger son in any way? What steps can you take this week to return to your heavenly Father?
- Does your relationship with God echo that of the older son in any way? What steps can you take this week to reflect the heart of the father rather than the elder son?
- Do you know anyone who is either running from God like the younger son or whose heart seems a bit cold and judgmental like the elder son? What can you do this week that might help to turn their hearts back toward God?

PRAYER

- Take time to list all the desires, wants and appetites in your life that you are trying to satisfy. Ask God to meet those needs, desires and wants. Ask Him to help you to trust how He goes about fulfilling your needs, wants and appetites.
- Is there anyone you resent because of God's grace towards his or her sin? Ask God to rid you of the bitterness and to help you to see His goodness towards you.
- Ask God to give you a heart of concern for those who do not have a personal relationship with Him and pray that God restores a relationship with them.

NOTES



Week 2: The Prodigal Son

CONNECT

- Did you or one of your siblings ever run away from home? Where did you go? What happened?
- Who was the “obedient type” in your family? The “wild one”? How did these types get along?

WORD

Luke 15:11-32(NIV)

11 Jesus continued: there was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. 13 The younger son got together all he had and set off to a distant country and squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After the younger son had spent everything, there was severe famine in the whole country and he began to be in need." 17-18 When he came to his senses, he said 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare and here I am starving to death. I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." 19 "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men."

20 So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. 21 The son said to him 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants. "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf, and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this

son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate.

25 Meanwhile the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 28 The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered, "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. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" 31 "My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 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."

THOUGHT

Having a personal relationship with God through Christ is a lifetime journey. Sometimes people reach out to God early in their youth only to forget him in their older years. Other times, they find him in their old age in the midst of painful circumstances. Wherever one finds himself in relationship to God, the story of the Prodigal Son shows us that God is always seeking after us. In this Bible study, we will reflect on the lessons Jesus was trying to teach His disciples through this parable. Whether you have been the one to squander away the riches that were given to you or the one diligently saving, this truth remains for both: the grace of God's unconditional and unfailing love is available to all who seek after it.

1. Why do you think the younger son decided to leave home?

- ☐ to try to make it on his own
- ☐ to experience the "fast lane"
- ☐ to be free of his father's values
- ☐ to get away from his older brother

2. If you were the father, what would have been your attitude when your son returned?

- ☐ Good to see you – but you're grounded!
- ☐ You have disgraced the family.
- ☐ Where's the money?
- ☐ I don't approve of what you've done, but you're still my son.
- ☐ Welcome home, son – I love you!

3. What is the closest you have come to hitting bottom financially? What have you learned through financial hard times?

- ☐ that I can fail
- ☐ that forgiveness awaits when I admit my failures
- ☐ that I can't control everything that happens in life
- ☐ that it's never too late to make things right

4. Do you identify most closely with older or the younger son?

5. If you likened your spiritual journey to the younger son's, where are you right now?

- ☐ never left home
- ☐ still at home, but itching to leave
- ☐ in a distant country, having a blast
- ☐ starting to realize I'm in a pigpen
- ☐ nervously on my way home
- ☐ back home and enjoying the party

6. Which relationship in your family generates the most conflict? What would need to happen for your family to want to celebrate the way the father did with his son?

7. Which of the father's qualities do you most need?

- ☐ his willingness to let his son make mistakes
- ☐ his patience in waiting for change
- ☐ his capacity to forgive
- ☐ his understanding in dealing with both of his children
- ☐ his ability to celebrate life

8. What lesson do you take away from this story?