

The Prodigal Son

The Prodigal Son, possibly Jesus' most famous parable, is much like a prism. Jesus' packed it so full of God's truth and wisdom that every way we study it sheds new light and brings a fresh perspective. Study the Prodigal Son to learn about forgiveness, discover powerful lessons about God's grace, reveal surprising truths about the intrinsic attitudes and behaviors of true children of God, and be reminded about God's character and his deep love for us.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- How do you define grace? When have you received grace in your life?
- When you hear or read the story of the Prodigal Son, which character do you most identify with—the younger, prodigal son or the elder brother? Why?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [The Prodigal Son](#)

READ [Luke 15:11-32](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- Read and consider this excerpt written by Arthur A. Just Jr. in the Concordia Commentary series on [Luke 15](#): “The climax of this section of the parable is Jesus’ description of the father’s compassion...The grace of the father clearly precedes the repentance of the prodigal. The father runs to meet his wayward son; the father falls on his neck and showers him with kisses. The father expresses his complete reconciliation and acceptance of his son publicly—and *he does this before the prodigal has uttered a word of confession*” (p. 600-601). Reflect on how you think and talk about grace. What do you tend to think of coming first, grace or repentance? Does this reflect what you believe and know to be true about God’s grace?
- Recall hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee’s basic definition of “prodigal” from segment 1: “Prodigal actually is an older word, but it means kind of throwing stuff away. If you are very prodigal with your possessions you don’t take very good care of them. Or it can also mean lavish, but yes, you are really spreading it around...” Based on how you hear “prodigal” used today, does this definition surprise you at all? Why or why not? Does this impact your understanding of the story?
- Just also observes how the return of the prodigal son would have been received by the community, noting, “The process of disposing of the estate would have been difficult in a community that was completely opposed to the prodigal’s request and shocked at the father’s consent” (p. 598). Just goes on to quote Kenneth Bailey saying “the purpose of such a banquet includes a desire to reconcile the boy to the *whole* community” (p. 602). Why is understanding the Middle Eastern cultural context important? How does it affect your understanding of God’s grace and God’s desires for our Christian communities?

- In segment 3, Dave notes “Lost and Found” could be the title of [Luke 15](#), Jesus’ ministry, and even a description of our lives. Journal about or share a story with someone else about a time in your life when you were “Lost and Found” and God’s extravagant grace touched your life in a way you never could have imagined possible.

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Luke 15:1-10](#), [Jonah 3:10-4:11](#), [Ephesians 1:3-10](#)

CONCLUSION

To close the episode, Scott offers this reflection: “the joy over the prodigal son is our joy. We are all saved by the same grace.” Spend some time honestly evaluating your beliefs and how your actions reflect those beliefs. Are you ready to share in God’s joy for the lost who are now found? Or are you still keeping a fairness score?

Close your time of reflection in prayer using these touch points drawn from the parable of the Prodigal Son:

- God is an expectant, waiting Father.
- God extends his grace to us, even before receiving our confessions and repentance.
- Through his gracious welcoming of us home, God also desires his people be reconciled in community.
- God experiences great joy when the lost are found and desires that the community of believers share in that joy with him.

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