

THE PRODIGAL SON

PURPOSE AND SITUATION OF THE MEDITATION

This second meditation, following **KNOW YOURSELF** on the first evening, may enable the candidates to consider identifying with one or both of the sons in this parable. However, regardless of whether it is a men's or women's Weekend, it is important for the candidates to understand the absolute, unconditional love of the Father.

Time Objective: Should not exceed **7** minutes

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OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION (Luke 15:11-32)**
 - **Luke 15 is a chapter with three parables about being lost and being found.**
 - **Lost sheep, Lost coin, Lost son.**
- II. We get lost when we seek after our own way. The younger son.**
- III. We get lost when we are filled with self. The elder son.**
- IV. The Father's response.**
- V. CONCLUSION**
 - **No matter where we might find ourselves, the Father is eagerly waiting for us to come to Him.**

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SAMPLE MEDITATION

(The sample may be used as the Meditation itself, or as a commentary on the outline.)

INTRODUCTION

In our first meditation, **KNOW YOURSELF**, we were asked to look inward. We want to continue that thought, but we also want to look toward God. He certainly wants us to honestly look at ourselves; but He also wants us to know who He is. What kind of a Father is He?

In Luke 15, Jesus teaches from three parables concerning the lost. The main point in all three parables is the joy of the Father in the lost being found.

- The first parable is about the lost sheep. The key verse (7) says: *“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”* (NIV)
- The next parable is about the lost coin. Listen what happens when the lost is found: *“In the same way, I tell you, there is more rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”* (Luke 15:10, NIV)
- Now we come to the parable of the lost son. Listen carefully as I read this story (Luke 15:11-32, NIV).

We get lost when we seek after our own way.

- The younger son wanted to be on his own. *“Father, give me my share of the estate.”* (Luke 15:12, NIV). What he was really saying was, I want to be on my own. I want to be in charge. I want to handle things my way. I want what I want. His attitude is exposed in the words *“give me...”*.
- Have we ever been there? When we thought we knew better and could do better on our own. We begin to look to that *“distant country”*. That place that is away from God. That place that looks so enticing and inviting. Self seeking is one of our great enemies. It always leads to a wasted life.
- However, when the younger son was given his inheritance, he squandered it. He wasted his life on loose living and became entangled in all kinds of sin. He was left with nothing and was living in deprivation, eating with swine.
- Have we ever wanted to go to that *“distant country”*? When we wandered into that place that was so empty, so unfulfilling, so distasteful? Well, if you’ve been there, I have good news for you. There is a way home into the arms of your loving heavenly Father.
- But this younger son *“came to his senses”*. All of a sudden, he began to realize how wonderful his father truly was and how much he enjoyed being where he was before. So he begins the journey home to his father. He is willing to be a servant, not even a son.

We get lost when we are filled with self.

- What about the older son? He is filled with anger and jealousy. Instead of being happy for his brother's return and rejoicing with his father, he is unhappy and bitter. He wants justice not mercy.
- The older son sits in judgment of his brother. He resents that his father never gave him a great banquet. For him, this had nothing to do with grace and favor, but was totally dependent upon works; deserving what he had earned.
- Have we ever experienced that jealousy? Have we ever been in that place where we thought someone didn't deserve what they were receiving? After all, we had been faithful all these years and worked hard. Why all this fuss over "one sinner who repents"?
- Once again, I have good news. There is a loving heavenly Father who wants each and everyone to know and experience His love.

IV. The Father's response.

- When the younger son returned to his father's home, the response of the father was extraordinary. The father is out there daily watching for his son. He is filled with compassion for his son. When the father sees his son in the distance, he runs out to meet him. The father smothers his son with hugs and kisses. He places the best robe on the son and puts new shoes on his feet. The father gives his son his ring. He is not a servant, but a restored son. Finally the father throws the biggest party to welcome his son back home.
- Wow! What a Father. What love. That's our heavenly Father and that's the love He has for each of us.
- But the father's love for the elder son is equal. He declares, in spite of his son's anger, bitterness, resentfulness and jealousy, his declaration of unbroken fellowship that has spared this son the suffering of his brother. *"My son, the father said, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours"* (Luke 15:31, NIV).
- How our heavenly Father longs to gather the prodigals to Himself. Our Savior gave His life to save and rescue them.
- If you identify with either of these sons, the heavenly Father says: "Come to Me!" We turn from going our own way or from being filled with self. We come running to our heavenly Father and ask Him to forgive us. He throws His loving arms around us and says, "Welcome home, my son (daughter)."

V. CONCLUSION

The love of the Father reveals the great value He places on each of us. And that is what we are when we believe; first and foremost - - sons (daughters) of God!