

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

SEPTEMBER 27

"FOR THE ONE"
THE LOST SON

Scripture References

- Luke 15:11-32
- Romans 5:8
- Mark 10:45
- Colossians 2:14-15
- Matthew 28:19-20

Quick Re-Cap

Jesus told a story about a dad with two sons. The younger son asked for his share of the family money early, which was like saying, "Dad, I want your stuff now." His father said yes, and the son traveled far away and wasted everything. Soon he was hungry and feeding pigs, and he even wished he could eat the pigs' food. When he finally came to his senses, he made a plan: "I'll go home and ask to be a servant. At least I won't starve." Lots of us think about God the same way. We feel like we have to earn our way back by being really good, but God doesn't want us back as a servant. **He wants us back as a son or daughter!** He doesn't need anything from us, but he loves us so much that he sent Jesus to bring us home. While the son was still far away, his father saw him, ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him. Running was a surprising thing for an important man to do, but he didn't care what anyone thought. Before the son could even finish his speech, the father called for a robe, a ring, and shoes to show that he was fully part of the family again, and then he threw a big party. But the older brother stood outside, angry. He'd stayed home and followed the rules, and he didn't think his brother deserved a party. The father came out and begged him to come in, because he loved both of his sons. The story ends without telling us what the older son decided. Why? **Because Jesus is asking all of us the question: will we come in and celebrate when lost people come home?**

Illustration

Have you ever practiced exactly what you were going to say to someone, like asking a friend to hang out or saying sorry, and then when you saw them, all the words disappeared? The younger son had a whole speech ready: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I'm not worthy to be your son. Make me one of your servants." Imagine him walking for days, saying those words over and over. But when he reached his dad, he only got part of the way through the speech. His father interrupted him with hugs and kisses, and then told the servants to bring the best robe, a ring, and shoes. Each gift gave something back to the son: the robe restored his dignity, the ring showed he belonged to the family, and the shoes showed he was a son and not a slave.

Application

So what do we do with this story? First, **we remember that we never have to earn our way back to God**, because "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). He took away the record of our sin by nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:14-15). Second, we become runners like the father. That means **watching for people who are far from God**, praying for them, and running toward them with open arms, even when it's not easy or convenient. A lot of people think church is full of people who judge others, so let's prove them wrong by being the friendliest, most welcoming people they've ever met. That includes the kid who's a little wild in class or the coworker who seems rough around the edges. Third, we choose to be like the servants and not like the older brother. When someone new comes home to God, we don't stand outside with our arms crossed. **We go inside, get the robe, and celebrate!** And last, we start with one. We can't reach everybody at once, but we can ask God, "Who is the one you want me to reach?" and then pray for that person, love them, and invite them to church or to a meal.

Convo Starters

- Why do you think the father ran to his son instead of waiting for him to arrive?
- Why was the older brother angry? Have you ever felt like someone got a treat or a break they didn't deserve?
- How can our family make people feel welcome when they visit church or our home? Who is "our one" that we can pray for this week?