

The Extravagant Love of God

Set the Stage

-There are three characters in the Parable.

1. The younger Son
2. The older Son
3. The Father

-The two brothers reveal:

-Two different ways to be separated from God and to seek acceptance/favor with God into heaven.

-Two different ways of life that people pursue personal significance, worth, meaning, happiness, and purpose.

1. Self-discovery
2. Moral Duty

-Both are ways people attempt to fix the broken world.

1. Self-discovery

-“I’m going to go out explore my options and give everything a try.”

-Like to push the boundaries, break social norms, live the college life.

-*What would be some positive or negative aspects?*

-Negative:

-Can tend to be self-centered, all about me, my goals.

-I’m the only one who can decide what is right and wrong for me. Live life my way. Can push God right out.

-Positive:

-Discover why you believe what you believe. Not because someone just told you or it’s what others are doing.

2. Moral Duty

-I’m not going to do what I want but what tradition and community wants me to do.

-Feel that strict obedience to the rules, laws, and traditions will produce happiness, fulfillment, and meaning.

-*What would be some positive or negative aspects?*

-Negative:

-Leads to legalism, a better-than-others attitude, prejudice,

-Pride in self, earn favor with God, truly unhappy inside.

-Positive:

-Put others before themselves, live good lives,

-Our society is so divided over both of these approaches.

*"The moral conformists say: 'The immoral people—the people who 'do their own thing'—are the problem with the world, and moral people are the solution.' The advocates of self-discovery say: 'The bigoted people—the people who say, 'We have the Truth'—are the problem with the world, and progressive people are the solution.' Each side says: 'Our way is the way the world will be put to rights, and **if you are not with us, you are against us.**'" Timothy Keller*

-Jesus reveals that both paths fail in their pursuit of happiness, purpose, and meaning. It cannot meet the true need of the human heart, soul, and spirit.

-The parable of the two sons, the two lost sons:

“Prodigal”- recklessly extravagant, having spent everything.

-Yes, the younger son spent everything, but it cost the father more. The Father spent more.

-Yes, the longer was reckless, but his father's love was **recklessly extravagant!**

Read Luke 15:11-24

Take it to the Next Level

The younger son took a big step into self-discovery by...

1. He Roamed Away from the Father.

A. He wandered away.

-He wandered away thinking that he knew better.

-Thought the world had more to offer him.

-Felt the Father was withholding something from Him. Living the Christian life was holding him back.

-By asking for his inheritance, he deeply disrespected His Father. (Arrogant disregard)

-It was the same as wishing he was dead.

-He was saying that he wants his **Father's things** but not the **Father**.

-How often do we want the benefits of God but not God himself? Safety, answered prayer, good health,

-All that He can give us

While he roamed away from the father and wasted everything...

2. He Realized His Personal Condition

A. He wasted his living pursuing life without the Father and hit rock bottom.

-He was living life all for himself. Trying to fill the void.

-The world and lifestyle could not fill the void.

-We will never stop longing for something until we meet the great longing of our soul.

B. He Hit Rock Bottom (12-15)

-He came to himself.

1. He realized who He was.

-A sinner, and that confession was needed.

2. He realized who the Father was.

- Who he really needed. Who he was really longing for.
- Who he received his identity, purpose, and meaning from.
- 3. He realized his need for the Father.
 - He devised a plan to be a hired servant.
 - He had to take the first step to go to God.**
 - The Father never left.

After he realized the condition he was in pursuing this path, he made the big step to...

3. He Returned to the Father

-What type of response did he anticipate?

-He was met with the extravagant love of the Father.

1. His father pounces on him with his love. He is waiting and runs to him:

- Before he has a chance to clean up his life.
- Before he can recite his repentance speech.
- Before there is evidence of a changed life.

2. He was given the best robe - The Father's robe

- Restored back into the family. Nothing but full restoration would do.
- There was no debt to be paid or worked off first.
- No probationary period.

3. He held a feast

-Each parable shows exaggeration in the celebration

-Why the big celebration and not immediate consequences, payment, or earning his place?

-This reveals the joy that the Father offers.

-The father's love was extravagant because:

- The son did not deserve it.
- He was overboard in how He showed it and proved it.

-All in spite of how he treated the Father.

-Nothing, not even bold-faced rejection to the Father, can keep his love away. His love and acceptance are absolutely free.

-You cannot do anything to remove yourself from it nor can you do anything to earn it!

Take Your Next Step

1. God is waiting for you to return to him.

-No matter how bad you may have messed up, how long you have been gone, or what you have done.

-Embrace, learn, and grow in the love that God has for you.

-Will you come back to him?

2. God's love is so extravagant that we must share it with the world.

-Will you tell others about Him?

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