

Parenting Your Prodigal

Luke 15:11-32

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(Extra Sermon for COZI)

Recently I read about a married couple who couldn't have children. They lived during a time of great upheaval in their country and it felt like their nation had fractured. Weeks turned into months, which turned into years. The barrenness in the wife's womb made them both feel broken.

One day God made it clear to the wife she would conceive and give birth to a son. She was thrilled and went into prenatal care mode, being careful to not drink alcohol or eat any food that would be bad for their baby.

It's likely you don't know the names of these parents, but you've probably heard about their son. His strength was well-known, but his sins led to his downfall. His name was Samson.

These parents sensed their son was going to be special so they did everything they could to set him apart for God's purposes. The wife had been told by an angel that their boy would be a Nazirite, which was someone who took a vow "*to be separated for God's use.*" The idea was he would be totally and unreservedly committed to the Lord's work. He was to never cut his hair, drink no alcohol, not touch dead bodies and avoid unclean foods. These outward actions were to reflect his inner dedication. The mother was told their son would save the Israelites from the hand of their enemies.

The husband felt overwhelmed and inadequate to the task, so he turned to the Lord, drawing closer to Him than he ever had before. In Judges 13:8, 12, this dad-to-be prayed, "***O Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we are to do with the child who will be born...what is to be the child's manner of life, and what is his mission?***"

I see three elements in this prayer that parents can learn from.

1. Reverence for God. Listen to how he begins: "***O Lord...***" This is an emphatic form of the name *Adonai* and focuses on God as ruler. He recognizes that God is in charge and he is subject to Him. This is pretty amazing because Judges 13:1

tells us the spiritual climate among the Israelites was not good because they had been subject to the Philistines for 40 years.

2. Request for help. Observe the passion behind his plea for help: *“Please let...”* It could be translated, *“Please, now!”* He knows he’s in desperate need and without some help they won’t have a clue how to bring up their boy. Fellow parents, God loves to hear us ask for help in the task of raising young disciples.

The word for *“teach”* refers to launching life words, like shooting out arrows from a bow. It also has the idea of enlightening or *“pointing out”* as with a finger. His request is specific and reveals his desire to parent as a partner with his wife: *“teach us what we are to do with the child.”* Another translation renders it this way: *“...how to bring up the boy who is to be born.”*

3. Realignment for focus. Sensing the heavy responsibility for raising their son to be a difference-maker, the dad adds this request in verse 12: *“What is to be the child’s manner of life, and what is his mission?”* The word *“manner”* is the idea of personality and *“mission”* relates to his purpose. One of the joys of parenting is helping our children discover how God wants to use the manner of who they are to accomplish God’s mission in this world. This dad wants his son to be *who* God wants him to be and to *do* what God wants him to do.

Parents, this is a great way to pray. Start with reverence for God, request His help and realign your focus. Ask God to reveal your child’s unique personality and then guide him or her to find and fulfill his or her purpose in life. You could pray something like this: *“God you are my Lord and Master. I submit and surrender to your right to rule and reign supreme in my life, and in the life of my child. Help me to parent my child like you parent me. Give me wisdom to know what to do every day. Enable me to understand the manner and mission of my child as you use his or her personality to fulfill your purposes, all for your glory. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.”*

The husband’s request reveals something about the home Samson grew up in. But as we will see, a godly home is no guarantee of a godly life.

Samson’s Downward Cycle

Samson’s feats were legendary, but his flaws proved to be fatal. His two greatest weaknesses were *romance* and *revenge*. He was extremely gifted, but certainly not

godly. He was strong on the outside but had no control on the inside. He's a sad example that *godly parents don't always produce godly children*.

Judges 14 shows some reckless steps that Samson took.

1. He went to the wrong place. Look at verse 1: "**Samson went down to Timnah.**" This refers to *geography* because this town was in Philistine territory, about four miles down a ridge from Samson's village. But it also tells us about the decline in Samson's *spiritual life*. Samson left God's people and headed south spiritually.

2. He looked for the wrong thing. Notice the rest of verse 1: "**...and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.**" When he returned home, he told his parents in verse 2, "**I have seen a Philistine woman.**" This is not how his parents raised him.

3. He rejected godly counsel. In verse 3, his mom and dad urge him to marry a believer, not someone who is a pagan. Samson persists in his disrespect for his parents and his disregard for God: "**Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.**" By blowing off his parents, Samson is also rejecting what God said in Exodus 34:16 and Deuteronomy 7 about not marrying someone from the surrounding pagan nations. As we learned earlier in our Family Matters series from 2 Corinthians 6, a believer is not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever.

4. He compromised his commitment. Next, Samson goes into a vineyard (which was forbidden by his vows) and encounters a young lion, which he tears apart with his bare hands. Verse 6 notes, "**But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.**" He doesn't tell them because killing the lion meant touching its corpse after it was dead. That is a violation of the spirit of the Nazirite vow. According to verse 10 Samson made a feast "**for so the young men used to do.**" This was like a wild bachelor bash. He breaks another vow and, in the process, breaks his parent's hearts.

These good and godly parents, who prayed passionately and tried to do everything right, could only watch and worry as their son stumbled even further south spiritually.

Why Kids Head South

Some of you parents have persistent pain and hurting hearts as you wonder where your child's wandering heart is right now. While you know you've not been a

perfect parent (who is?), you don't understand why your child is doing what he or she is doing.

When I tried to imagine what you might be feeling, I wrote down these words: *Crushed, wounded, failure, rejected, embarrassed, humiliated, angry, sad, isolated, lonely, frustrated, grief, guilt, and shame.*

Dads and moms, while it is imperative to pass along the faith we possess to our children; we are *not* ultimately responsible for how they turn out because *godly parents do not always produce godly children.*

Samson's parents prayed for him, taught him the Torah, impressed the truth on him, lived a godly life before him, and tried to pass along the faith they possessed. And yet, Samson went his own way, like so many do today. I thought it would be helpful to list some biblical reasons why this happens. What is it that parents are up against?

1. Our children are sinners. While babies are beautiful when they're born, they also come with a sin nature according to Psalm 51:5: ***“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”***

2. Parents are sinners. Romans 3:23 reminds us there are no perfect parents: ***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*** I pray my mistakes, dysfunctions, and sins will not be passed along to the next generation, but I'm afraid some will be.

3. The increasing disobedience of children is a sign of the end times. Listen to 2 Timothy 3:1-2: ***“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy.”***

4. Satan's aim is to attack families. Satan is working overtime to wreak families today. He began in the Garden with Adam and Eve and then fomented friction in the family when Cain attacked and murdered Abel. In John 8:44, Jesus says this about Satan: ***“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*** 1 Peter 5:8: ***“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”***

5. Our world system is anti-family. Satan is at work in our world to cause chaos and blindness according to 2 Corinthians 4:4: ***“The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”***

6. Children have their own will. Some of you are beating yourself up for choices your children are making. Joshua 24:15 reminds us it’s a choice to serve the Lord. Ezekiel 18:20 adds parents don’t bear the guilt of the child’s sin: ***“The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”***

This is so hard to remember but your child’s failures are not your failures. Every child is made in the image of God and each child is responsible before God.

Think about this: Even if you were a completely perfect parent and you provided a totally perfect environment in which your children could grow and develop, they might still choose to go a different direction than you desire. Do you need some evidence for this? Let’s go back to the beginning and think about the first two children, Adam and Eve. God was a perfect parent and placed them in a perfect environment and gave them perfect guidance and they still went south spiritually.

In his book called, *“The Pressure’s Off,”* Larry Crabb argues that God is not a vending machine dispensing blessings as rewards for our good behavior. We need to reject a formulaic faith which says, *“If I do ‘A,’ then God will do ‘B’ for me.”*

Dave Harvey helped me understand that one of the less detected strains of legalism in the church today is the false hope of “deterministic parenting,” which assumes parents’ faithfulness determines the spiritual health of their kids:

“Such legalism smuggles in a confidence that God rewards faithful parents with obedient, converted kids and does so proportionately to what we deserve...If the gospel of determinism is true, a wayward child reveals parental failure. If a kid is spinning out of control, parents are just reaping what they’ve sowed...when parents of prodigals appear at a church event, shame tags along. This invisible companion whispers within them about how substandard they are as parents compared to the other gold-circle standard parents that have gathered.”

Parents, please don't take that guilt and shame upon yourselves because *godly parents don't always produce godly children*. Instead, give it all to Jesus. Let Him gut your guilt and suffocate your shame. Claim the truth of Romans 8:1: ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”***

Meditate on Hebrews 12:2 and know that Jesus despised shame so much that He endured the cross for us: ***“Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*** When God looks at you, He doesn't see an unfiltered feed of ugly accusations and regrets. Instead, He sees His Son and His righteousness imputed to you.

And, fellow Christ-followers, let's remember parents of prodigals come with open wounds. Let's make sure Edgewood is a safe place filled with grace, so no one feels out of place.

When a Prodigal Leaves

The meaning of the word “*prodigal*” is “*a person who has spent his resources wastefully*.” Samson is an example of a prodigal son in the Old Testament. Let's turn now to a well-known parable of Jesus about two other prodigal sons found in Luke 15.

Luke 15:1-2 sets the scene: ***“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’”*** In response, Jesus tells three parables – the first about a lost sheep, the second about a lost coin and the third about a lost son. In their legalism, the religious elite shunned sinners. In contrast, Jesus welcomes lost sinners and celebrates when they are found. While this third parable is not primarily about parenting, we can draw some parenting principles from it.

Listen now as I retell part of this narrative from the perspective of the parent. I encourage you to open your Bible to Luke 15:11-12 so you can follow along.

My younger son always seemed to be restless with a bent toward rebellion. One day when he was in his late teens, he came up to me and demanded his inheritance. This was difficult for me because it involved dividing up the land I was planning to leave to my children as my legacy after I died. I'll never forget how disrespectful and demanding he was – it was if he was saying to me, ‘I wish you were dead.’ In my culture, normally if a son would dare make a request like this, the son would be

kicked out of the house. I decided to do what he asked. According to Deuteronomy 21:17, as the younger son, he was entitled to 1/3 of everything I had.

After liquidating his portion of the land, my son stormed off, heading to a far away place. I thought about stopping him or chasing after him, but decided to let him go, even though every thought in my head screamed, 'No, don't go!'

Every day I prayed he would come to himself and return home because I believed God had plans to ultimately use his personality to fulfill His purposes. I even prayed that God would make him miserable so he would seek God's mercy.

I watched for any sign of his return, waiting expectantly, trying to not lose hope. Every day I looked out the window where I could see the road leading to our home, hoping against hope that he would come back.

Let's pause here and draw some principles related to parenting a prodigal.

1. Let them leave. Against every instinct, the father in this parable does not stop his son from leaving. Maybe it's because he knows his boy had already left in his heart. Perhaps the father knew his son needed to experience the law of cause and consequence so he would reap what he had sown. Galatians 6:7 says, ***"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."*** This was the only way his son would realize the foolishness of his ways.

2. Remain in relationship. Even though the dad let his son depart, he didn't let bitterness toward his boy build up in his heart. I can't even imagine his personal rejection and public humiliation, but he chose to build a bridge, not erect a wall. He relinquished but didn't reject him. By retaining relational capital, he left the door open for future grace. This dad was demonstrating the kindness of God depicted in Psalms 103:8: ***"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."***

3. Don't chase after. The father somehow knew that his son needed to hit rock bottom, so he resisted the urge to rescue him prematurely. As Proverbs 3:5 says, he was choosing to ***"trust in the Lord with all his heart."*** Instead of bailing him out, the father was determined to let his son do some failing. I'm sure this was extremely difficult, but this dad didn't want to enable his son. Ray Pritchard writes, *"They won't come back until they are ready...if we force them back too early, they will still be in the 'far country' on the inside."*

4. Watch in prayer. This is hard to do but pray for a heart of brokenness for your prodigal like we see in Psalm 51:17: ***“a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”*** Since the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart, you could pray a prayer like this: *“Open the eyes of her heart so she can see her sin.”* Ray adds, *“As we pray for our prodigals, remember that the change we seek must start with us. Until we are changed, and our anger is turned to love, we will become bitter and hardened ourselves...at that point we have become prodigals on the inside even though we look just fine on the outside.”*

I’ve been told by some parents of prodigals that they find great comfort in praying passages of Scripture for their child. Here’s one from Psalm 18:16-19: ***“He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me.”***

5. Wait with hope. Waiting, wondering and worrying about a child is hard but don’t give up hope for your prodigal. Psalm 62:1 says, ***“For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.”*** Keep praying and keep believing. Your son or daughter may be running from God, but according to Psalm 23:4, God’s ***“mercy and goodness”*** are chasing after him or her.

God knows exactly where they are and what they are doing at this very moment. Remember nothing is too hard for Him. Don’t lose hope. Even though your children aren’t serving the Lord right now, that doesn’t mean they can’t change later. Samson came back to the Lord right before he died. When he reached the bottom, he turned around and discovered that God was waiting for him all the time.

Let’s switch now and consider what the younger son may have been thinking...

I couldn’t stand my dad’s rules and was eager to get out on my own. When I demanded my inheritance, my dad gave it to me with tears in his eyes. I could see I was hurting him, but I didn’t care because he was dead to me. I wanted to get as far away from him as I could.

When I arrived at my destination, I partied like there was no tomorrow, buying rounds of drinks for all my new friends. But when the money ran out and the buzz wore off, my friends fled. On top of that, a severe famine hit, and I couldn’t find any food. The only job I could get was working for a pig farmer. My Jewish upbringing should have put the brakes on this, because pigs were unclean and

repugnant, but I didn't care because I was hungry. I had eaten prime rib just a few weeks earlier and now longed to dine with the swine. I wanted some of the carob pods the pigs were eating but my boss wouldn't let me have any. People treated me like I was a nobody. I remembered my dad telling me that whenever someone leaves their faith, there will be a famine.

As I surveyed my surroundings in the pigsty, I realized my soul was emptier than my stomach. With the stench of pig manure filling my nostrils, I came to myself and remembered the goodness of my father. He always treated his servants well and suddenly I wanted to go home and be his employee. I knew I had blown any chance of being called his son, so I was fine to be a hired hand. I was ready to repent and confess my sin before both my heavenly father and my earthly father.

I rehearsed what I would say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."

I got up, wiped off most of the manure and headed home.

Listen now as I read about this reunion between prodigal and parent as described in Luke 15:20-24: ***"And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate."***

When a Prodigal Returns

Fellow parents, it's not healthy to dwell on mistakes or to continually wonder, "Why did this happen to us?" It's better to ask, "Where do we go from here? What can be done now?" This father is a good model for how we should respond when our child returns.

1. Love them faithfully. Verse 20 tells us how the father responded: ***"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him..."***

The dad was watching and waiting and as the motel commercial says, "He left the light on for him." When he saw his boy in rags, his feet bloodied from the

journey, smelling like a pigsty, he was moved not with contempt, but with compassion. The word “*compassion*” refers to a deep guttural sensation that moves one inwardly to the point of expressing it outwardly.

2. Accept them unconditionally. The second part of verse 20 says, “...*and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*” What a moving picture of acceptance! I love that the father *runs* to his son, even before knowing he had repented. It was enough that he had returned. He doesn’t make the prodigal do penance but runs to restore the relationship.

In that culture, men who wore robes never ran in public because it would have been considered immodest. Then he *embraced* him, which is the idea of hugging him around the neck. Finally, he *kissed* him, which means he smothered him with kisses. In that one moment all questions were answered. The son’s fear melted away in the tears and hugs. No words passed between them, but one broken heart spoke to another.

This leads to a couple questions, doesn’t it? How can we accept our son or daughter without lowering our standards? How can I accept my child when I don’t approve of what he or she is doing? Stay with me on this. There’s a big difference between acceptance and approval. Acceptance says, “*I love you, child, because you’re my child. God made you and I love you, but I do not approve of what you’re doing.*” You can accept a child without approving of their lifestyle.

In verse 21, the son confesses his sin: “*Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.*”

3. Forgive them completely. The dad doesn’t even give his son a chance to finish his prepared speech where he was going to say, “*Treat me as one of your hired servants.*”

The Father was so thrilled to have his son home that he reinstated the privileges of that sonship in verses 22-23: “*But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate.’*” The word “*quickly*” has the idea of swiftly or speedily. This dad doesn’t rub it in, he rubs it out. The son didn’t need a sermon; he needed a second chance. He was given six signs that all was forgiven:

- **The kiss.** This represented restoration of the relationship.

- **The best robe.** In Jewish culture the robe was a status symbol and sign of sonship. It showed that he was welcomed back as a full member of the family.
- **The ring.** This was a signet ring, which was a sign of authority. It's what you signed your name with to pay bills. In our culture it would be like a credit card.
- **The shoes.** This was a sign of freedom and privilege because only servants went barefoot.
- **The fattened calf.** These were reserved only for special occasions.
- **The celebration.** This represented rejoicing and giving thanks to God.

I love that the son didn't meet the folded arms of the father but rather ran into his extended arms of grace and forgiveness. The father's generosity was undeserved because the son had already wasted his inheritance. That's what grace is all about. Notice this forgiveness was immediate, total, costly and restorative. The reason the father wanted to celebrate is found in verse 24: ***“For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found...”***

This story has a happy ending but many of you are still watching and waiting. While your child is far away, hold on to the truth of Luke 19:10: ***“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”***

Listen. You can do everything right and your child could still walk away from the faith. *Godly parents don't always produce godly children.* You can also do everything wrong, and your child could walk with Jesus for a lifetime.

Hope for the Prodigal

I'd like to speak to the prodigal right now.

Maybe you look around and realize it's not as good as you thought it was. You're living in filth. Your resources are running out. You've been living it up, but it has just made you feel down.

The Bible talks about that. Hebrews 11:25 describes the ***“fleeting pleasures of sin”*** that last only for a season.

I see some stages the prodigal went through...

1. Rebellion – ***“Father, give me what is coming to me...he squandered all his property in reckless living.”*** (11, 13)
2. Responsibility – ***“But when he came to himself.”*** (17)
3. Regret – ***“How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger.”*** (17)
4. Repentance – ***“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.”*** (18)
5. Rise – ***“And he arose...”*** (20) Don’t stay in the pigsty.
6. Return – ***“...and came to his father.”*** (20)
7. Restoration – ***“Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.”*** (22)
8. Rejoicing – ***“And they began to celebrate.”*** (24)

Are you at one of these stages right now? If you’re rebelling, are you ready to take responsibility for the sinful situation you are in? If you’re feeling some regret, will you take the next step and actually repent of your sins? If you’ve repented, it’s time to rise and return. You can do that right now. When you do, you will be restored and all of heaven will break out with rejoicing. Listen to Luke 15:10: ***“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”***

The Father is ready to run to you and restore your relationship with Him! Some people think they’ve been away so long that it will take years to get back. Actually, all it takes is to turn to Him in repentance and you’re back!

The late Joe Bayly was a gentle, godly Christian leader. He often told the story of one of his sons who had rebelled in the days of the hippie movement. He grew his hair long and moved into a communal flophouse. Late one night, Bayly received a call letting him know his son was being held at one of the Chicago police stations. He got out of bed, got dressed and went down to the station, but they had no record of his son being there. He made the rounds to several police stations before he realized the call had been a prank.

Even though it was about 2 a.m., before he went home, Bayly went to the flophouse where his son was staying. He went in (the door was always unlocked), stepped over several sleeping bodies strewn on the floor, and found his sleeping son. He gently bent over and kissed his son on the cheek before heading for home.

Bayly’s son is now a pastor. Years later, the young man told his father, *“Dad, do you know what turned me around?”* Bayly said, *“No, son.”* His son said, *“It was that night you came into my room and kissed me on my cheek. You thought that I*

was asleep, but I wasn't. I thought, 'If my dad loves me that much, I had better get my life right with God.'"

This parable is actually about two prodigal sons – both of whom were rebellious. The younger brother sinned outwardly and went to a faraway place. The older brother sinned inwardly, and his heart was in a faraway place. One sinned when he left, the other sinned while staying home.

Two Characteristics of the Father

I see two characteristics of the father.

1. The father comes out to meet both boys. Just as he went out to meet the returning rebel, so he seeks this sulking son. God the Father loves the self-righteous, the smug, and the self-centered legalist even as he loves the rebellious and defiant. When the father finds his oldest son, he does not scold, berate, or rebuke him harshly, but rather *pleads* with him. The tense of this word indicates the father invited his son again and again to come into the party.

The father tells the son that everything he had was available to him – all he had to do was ask. Self-righteous resentment frequently occurs in those who are trusting in their works.

2. The father offers grace to both boys. Listen to the father's heart, *"Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. Now don't be angry because I have shown love and grace to your brother."*

Jesus ends the parable with this son standing outside the house. We don't know whether he repents and goes in or stays outside.

Jesus does not tell us what became of these two sons. He just leaves the ending hanging. I think he does so because he wants us to see ourselves in the story. Which one of the brothers most closely describes you today?

When we lived in Pontiac, I went with a bunch of guys from our church to lead a service in the prison. I had two thoughts as I drove up and the guards began to search my car. First of all, I was afraid. When I asked one of the guys if I should take my tie off. He told me I should. I then asked him, *"You don't wear a tie because you don't want them to use it to hang themselves, right?"* My friend Paul smiled and said, *"No, it's so they don't hang you!"*

But, I had a second thought as well. One I'm not very proud to admit. As we were ushered into a room for the service, I started to feel self-righteous. I looked at the guys and inside I thought I was better than they were.

But then, something happened while we were singing, "Amazing Grace." As the 20 prisoners and our team of 4 stood to sing, I was convicted and saddened by my own spiritual smugness. After verse one, one of the inmates standing next to me shouted loudly while pointing to his chest, "*I'm a new man.*"

And then it hit me. I was the older brother who had come face-to-face with a group of prodigals who had returned to the Father. As they continued to sing from their hearts, I was invited to the party. God's grace touched me that day and I went in and joined the celebration.

Friend, where are you today? Which brother most represents you? Do you need to turn around and head back home? Are you already home and need to enter the celebration?

- To the perplexed parent God says, keep believing.
- To the presumptuous prodigal, He says, welcome home.
- To the proud prodigal, He says, come inside and join the party.

Let's pray.

If you have any questions, send us an email at info@edgewoodbaptist.net.