

Lesson Notes:

The Prodigal Son

In **Luke 15** Jesus delivers 3 parables to the Pharisees. The first deals with a lost sheep, the second with a lost coin, and the third is the parable of the prodigal son. The Pharisees could not understand why God would accept those that had failed to serve him when they believed they were in service to him on a daily basis. Jesus uses the analogy of the prodigal son in an effort to open their minds and hearts to the concepts of sin, confession, repentance and the wonderful love that God has for each of us.

Scriptural Principles

1) Luke 15:12 – The father divides his estate

In **Luke 15:12** the father divides his estate as requested by the son. It was common in the middle east at that time to help sons get established. A lesson that we can learn from this is that it is not always the best policy to leave all of your worldly wealth to an unsaved son or daughter. Rather than see the money squandered you establish your love for God when you leave a portion of your estate for the spread of the gospel. It shows your children that you want to share a portion of your life's earnings with God. This will impress upon them your love and commitment to Jesus Christ and may have a lasting effect upon their lives.

2) Luke 15:13 – take the money and run

In **Luke 15:13** the son takes his share and leaves. This shows the father that the son valued goods over his relationship with his father. Tragically, many people take this same approach after receiving God's offer of salvation.

3) Luke 15:14 – Haste makes waste

In **Luke 15:14** the son wastes all he was given. Solomon warns us about extravagant lifestyles in **Proverbs 21:17** and **Proverbs 23:19**.

4) Luke 15:17 – Servants of God have bread to spare

In **Luke 15:17** the son realizes that his father's servants are adequately provided for and if he returns to his father he will meet his needs. In **Mark 6:36-44** we see that Jesus feed the multitude. In **Numbers 11:31** God provided the children of Israel quail up to 3 feet in depth. God provides for his servants.

5) Luke 15:18-19, 21 – The son repents

In **Luke 15:18-19, 21** the son sees the errors of his ways and repents. In **Hosea 14:1-2** Hosea calls Israel to repentance much like the prodigal son. Confession and repentance are the first steps back to our Lord and Savior when we have strayed.

6) Luke 20 – The father is watching and waiting from a long way off

We see in **Luke 15:20** that the son's father was waiting for him from a long way off. This is true of our heavenly father as he waits and watches from a long way off for our confession, repentance and acceptance of him to enter or return in our lives. James tells us in **James 4:8** that if we draw near to God he will draw near to us.

7) Luke 15:22 -23 – The father's response

Even after all that his son has done the father welcomes him with open arms. He puts a ring on his finger and gives him his best robe. This represents how our heavenly father welcomes us back into his arms when we have strayed.

8) Luke 15:28 – 32 – The older son's reaction

When the older son heard of the celebration he was distraught in that his father was celebrating the return of his lost brother. This was a subtle message to the Pharisees telling them that they should be concerned with the welfare of their lost brothers and sisters and not with their own heavenly rewards. In fact they should join in the celebration when the lost has been found and the spiritually blind are made to see.