

**Reel Dads...Rolling Out
the Red Carpet****Core Competency
Love**

Luke 15:11-32

Core Competencies**Core Beliefs**

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Dear Friends,

We've traveled now through our *Reel Families Series* through a number of topics and issues, and I pray that you've been helped. I pray also that you've encountered God in meaningful ways in His Word. This week we're looking at the heart of a Father. The parable of the prodigal son is usually viewed through the lens of the son—how he rebelled and was humbled and eventually was welcomed back home. But the story is just as much a story of a Father, a father who loved deeply and well. This father loved wisely and relentlessly, never giving up on his son, though all evidence in his son's life pointed to the contrary. We learn much as fathers from this important parable, but we also learn a great deal about the heart of God—our Heavenly Father. I pray that you'll be drawn close to His heart this week, and that you find yourself sensing the love in His embrace.

In His Grip,

*Richard Gotthardt***Engaging Our Minds & Hearts****Day 1****Today's Passages:** Luke 15

Begin your time in study today by reading **Luke 15:11-32**, the passage often referred to as the "Parable of the Lost Son" or "Prodigal Son." Read it through several times, in several different versions. If you have internet capabilities, you may go to www.biblegateway.com to access a variety of translations. Try to read it as though it is your first time hearing this story—as though these are real people with real lives and real feelings. Allow God to reveal Himself to you through this parable that Jesus told.

1. Record the 3 main characters of this parable. Tomorrow we will take a closer look.

Now go back to the beginning of **Luke 15** and read **verses 1-10**. In these verses Jesus tells us two other parables. Before we proceed to study the third parable, let's discover the circumstances and the setting.

2. To whom is Jesus speaking in this chapter?
3. Why is He speaking to them? What has transpired that requires an explanation?
4. What is the main truth He is trying to tell them through all three of these parables? (See verse 10)
5. What does this tell you about God's responsiveness to you as a sinner? Allow that truth to penetrate from your mind to your heart throughout this day.

Day 2

Today's Passage: Luke 15:11-32

Pray first!

Once again read through **Luke 15:11-32**.

1. Record on a separate sheet of paper everything you can observe about the elder brother in these verses. Look for characteristics, values, virtues, and lifestyle information, anything that helps you to better understand this man.
2. How would you describe the relationship of this son with his father?
3. What qualities do you find as admirable about this man?
4. What traits do you find that are not so admirable?
5. Are any of these qualities evident in your life? Which do you think God finds pleasing? Which bring Him no joy? Do you see a correlation between this elder son and the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus was speaking to?

Day 3

Today's Passage: Luke 15:11-32

Pray first!

1. Reread the parable again today, this time recording on a separate sheet of paper everything you observe about the younger brother.
2. How would you describe the relationship of this son with his father?
3. What qualities do you see as not admirable or worthy of imitation?
4. What traits do you see as admirable or worthy of imitation?
5. Are any of these qualities or traits evident in your life? Which do you think God finds pleasing? Which bring Him no joy? Do you see a correlation between this younger son and the tax-gatherers and sinners mentioned in Luke 15:1?

Day 4

Today's Passage: Luke 15:11-32

Pray first!

1. Once again read through **Luke 15:11-32** and once again on a separate sheet of paper, record everything you can observe about the father in these verses. Look for characteristics, values, virtues, and lifestyle information, anything that helps you to better understand this man.
2. What qualities do you find as admirable about this man?
3. Go back over your list and meditate on how this reflects the character of our Heavenly Father.
4. Have you experienced the scene of Him running to you, embracing, kissing, providing everything you need, and rejoicing over your return to Him?
5. If not, is it because you are still in that far off country, or perhaps you more closely identify with the older son who has been obedient but not really experiencing the presence and provision of your Father each and every day. Do you understand that just as in this parable, God the Father sees you standing outside the party—angry, feeling overlooked and unwilling to be a part of the celebration. He comes to you, and He is pleading to come in. How will you respond to Him today? **Hebrews 3:8, 15, and 4:7** all implore us, **“Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your heart.”**

Day 5

Pray first!

This week's creed for our core competency of love states, ***“I show sacrificial and unconditional love for others.”*** Our key verse, **1 John 4:10-12**, clearly demonstrates this type of love through the example of our Heavenly Father. **“This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.”**

The assessment statements that correspond with this virtue and that allow us to evaluate how we are doing at becoming more like Christ are listed below.

- *God's grace enables me to forgive people who have hurt me.*
- *I rejoice when good things happen to other people.*
- *I demonstrate love equally toward people of all races.*
- *I frequently give up what I want for the sake of others.*

As you read over these statements, allow God's Holy Spirit to speak to your mind, your heart and your life. Whether you see yourself in the role of a godly father, a prodigal son, or a loyal but distant elder son—how have the words of truth He has spoken to you this week taught you, encouraged you, corrected you, or trained you in His righteousness so that you can go forward from this point on being more fully adequate and equipped for every good work?

Close out your meditation time with a prayer to your Heavenly Father that reflects your heart and your desires.

Engage the Context

Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹**Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons."**

- ◆ This parable is distinctly Lukan. It does not occur in the other synoptics.
- ◆ This section is the final section of a three part response to the Pharisees by Jesus. They had questioned Jesus about why He eats with sinners. Jesus responds with three parables that illustrate the unbelievable love of God: the sheep, coin and son.
- ◆ Notice who the first person Jesus mentions in the parable is. It is the father. He is the main character—not the son. A better title for this parable might be the "Waiting Father."

¹²**"The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them."**

- ◆ In Jewish culture, the younger son would get a portion of the inheritance when the father passed away. In effect, the younger son was saying, "Father, you are better off to have me dead."

¹³**"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything."**

- ◆ Notice how Jesus paints the picture. The son has gone as low as a Jew could go. First, he is working for a citizen of another country—in effect, he was a slave to a Gentile. Second, he was working among swine—the most unclean of animals for Jews. Finally, he is longing to eat with the pigs. As Jesus' Jewish hearers listen, their stomachs would have turned with the terrible circumstances of the son.

¹⁷**"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!'"**

- ◆ Literally, "When he came to himself."
- ◆ Perhaps many in Jesus' audience would have been "hired men."

Feedback

What is helpful?
What could be better?
What is missing?
Is it helping you be more
prepared for Sunday?

Send your feedback to
engage@gccaz.org

¹⁸“I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ ”

- ◆ The son practices his repentance speech. The son understood, rightfully, that his sin was against both God and against his father.

²⁰“So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

- ◆ While it is the son who returns, it is the father who initiates the restoration of the family relationship.
- ◆ The word for compassion is *splagchnizomai*. This is a great Greek word that captures the gut-wrenching feeling you get when your emotions are torn. The Good Samaritan feels compassion on the beaten man in that parable.

²¹“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. ²²“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

- ◆ The father is so gracious and willing to forgive that his son is not even able to get out his planned speech.

²⁵“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ ”

- ◆ The older son had not yet taken ownership of the land. He, unlike his brother, had allowed his father to keep the land. The older son was still working in the land or at least overseeing the manual labor.
- ◆ The servant’s tone is that the events which transpired were completely natural. However, the brother’s response is not so accepting.

²⁸“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.

²⁹But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.’ ”

- ◆ The father’s response is gentle but insistent. Remember to whom Jesus was talking—the Pharisees who did not want sinners invited into God’s family. Jesus is gentle in responding in parables yet insistent that the Father accepts such people graciously.

³² “ ‘But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”

- ◆ The word for “glad” is rejoice. It is the same word used in verses 7 and 10 in the earlier parables. This brings the parables together and reminds us that Jesus is making a single point.