

# Community Group Discussion Questions

"Missing Out" Luke 15:25-32 Oct. 20, 2018

## Getting Started

Today's message on the "elder brother" gives insight that we may be externally compliant in obedience, but internally defiant in disobedience. Thus, causing us to realize that we don't work FOR acceptance from the Father, but we work FROM acceptance with the father.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10. At what point in your Christian life did you understand this truth, that we don't have to work to please the Father, but we work because we are already pleasing to the Father?

## Going Deeper

### I. Painful Observation: Luke 15:25-28

- a. **Not Included:** *"was in the field"* (Vs. 25)
- b. **Not Involved:** *"called one of the servants and asked what these things meant"* (Vs. 26)
- c. **Not Inquired:** *"he has received him back safe and sound"* (Vs. 27)
- d. **Not Interested:** *"But he was angry"* (Vs. 28)
  - i. **Refuses Relationship:** *"and refused to go in"* (Vs. 28)
  - ii. **Reveals Righteousness:** *'Look, these many years I have served you"* (Vs. 29a)
  - iii. **Rejects Repentance:** *"I never disobeyed your command"* (Vs.29b)

- iv. **Requires Recognition:** *“yet you never gave me a young goat”* (Vs. 29c)
- v. **Ridicules Results:** *“But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!”* (Vs. 30)

It should shock you to read that the elder brother, who had already received his 2/3 of the inheritance, is working in the field like a servant, instead of fellowshiping in the house with the father like a treasured son. He is not working in the field because his Father sent him there, but because he wants to be there. He completely misunderstands the heart of his father. The elder brother's words reveal that he sees himself as a servant. He is also prideful and arrogant, believing he has lived a perfectly righteous life. He holds a grudge against his father, and refuses to even claim his own brother.

How would you describe what is wrong with the elder brother?

What beliefs does he have about the father?

What beliefs does he have about his brother?

Have you ever found yourself looking around at others in a church and judging them in this same way?

## II. Plea for Reconciliation: Luke 15:28-31

- a. **The Father Initiates:** *“His father came out”* (Vs. 28b)
- b. **The Father Intercedes:** *“and entreated him”* (Vs. 28b)
- c. **The Father Interrupts:** *“And he said to him, Son”* (Vs. 31a)
- d. **The Father Imparts:** *“you are always with me”* (Vs. 31b)
- e. **The Father Invests:** *“all that is mine is yours”* (Vs. 31c)

When the eldest son won't go in, the father comes out to him.

When the eldest son won't listen, the father pleads with him.

When the eldest son acts like a servant, the father reminds him he is a favored son, who always has the father's heart and blessings.

With all this effort from the Father, how should the eldest son respond?

It's interesting that in this parable, we never find out...

If you see yourself with an attitude like the elder brother, what do you think God (the father) wants you to do?

### III. Practical Application:

#### a. Clarification of Characters: Luke 15:1-2

- **Prodigal Son**: *“tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him”* (Vs. 1)
- **Elder Brother**: *“Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them”* (Vs. 2)

#### b. Comparison of Concepts: Luke 15:32: *“It was fitting to celebrate and be glad for this your brother...”*

- **Prodigal Son**: *“dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found”*
- **Elder Brother**: {alive, but dead, found, but lost}

#### c. Conclusion of Concern: Luke 16:1, 14: *“He also said to the disciples...The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him”*

- **Unexpected Ending**: Causes Question...
- **Unforeseen Explanation**: Causes Evaluation...

**Take Away**: There is a tension between two evils we must fight against daily; that is the propensity to be both the prodigal and the elder son interchangeably at any given point in our lives. Stay close to the father!

Most people know this parable as the story of the Prodigal Son. We often assume that 'Prodigal' means foolish and wasteful, but it actually means overflowing to excess. Perhaps it is not the youngest son who is the Prodigal, but the Father who is the Prodigal. The Father is the one who gives both sons their inheritance, goes out to both sons when they are lost, embraces both sons in their disobedience, and invites both sons into the house to celebrate. The Father overflows to excess with patience, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and love.

Instead of identifying yourself as the younger or elder brother, what if you could see yourself like the Father?

What would your life and impact be like if you could be known as one who overflows to excess with patience, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and love?

One final thought: What are sons and daughters supposed to do? Grow up and take their place as fathers and mothers. What are you as a Christian supposed to do? Grow up and reflect the patience, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and love of God 😊

## **Prayer Requests**