

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Empty Handed” Luke 15:11-19 Oct. 6, 2018

Getting Started

The prodigal spirit within us challenges daily the idea of whether or not the heavenly Father is able to fully satisfy your greatest longings. Today’s message exposes the lie that happiness is found away from the Father and will give hope to the fact it is never too late to come home.

Why do you think so many Christians struggle to believe that the Father is good and completely satisfies our greatest longings?

What is our responsibility when it comes to replacing former longings with the things of God?

How do we lose our former appetite and hunger for something holy?

Going Deeper

I. A Shocking Request: (Luke 15:11-12)

- a. **Dishonored him:** “*give me*” (Vs. 12)
- b. **Demanded from him:** “*the share of property*” (Vs. 12)
- c. **Disowned him:** “*that is coming to me*” (Vs. 12)

Children receive their inheritance only when a parent has passed away. So, this son is saying, “I wish you were dead. I only want your money, not a relationship with you. I reject your morals, your values, and everything you’ve taught me. I’m going to find my own way in life and make my own rules for living.”

What would drive a young adult to say such a thing to a parent?

What influences may have been in the young man’s life?

II. A **Surprising Response**: *“And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country”* (Luke 15:12-13)

- a. **Assigns Resources**: Divides amongst the two sons the inheritance.
- b. **Accepts Rejection**: Viewed by the younger son as irrelevant.
- c. **Applies NO Resistance**: No action by the father to intervene.
- d. **Appears Reckless**: Original audience would have become indignant.

Key Concept: The heart of the father is revealed not only in what he affords the younger son while in his presence, but what he is willing to endure for the son in his absence.

One approach to parenting teens and young adults is to let them experience natural consequences for their actions and decisions. When they express that they want to do something you think is unwise, you ask them, ‘What will be the likely outcome and consequence if you do this?’ In this story, the Father doesn’t ask this question. Instead, he gives him everything he asks for and absorbs the pain, insult, and scorn from his son. The Father knows the natural consequences will teach his son very painful lessons, and that through his coming brokenness, he will learn to value what he currently despises.

Share with us about a time when you insisted on a course of action or made a decision that ended up being a very bad idea and brought you a lot of pain. What did you learn from that experience?

III. A Sobering Realization: (Luke 15:13-16)

- a. **Lives Senselessly**: *“took a journey into a far country”* (Vs. 13)
- b. **Spends Wastefully**: *“squandered his property”* (Vs. 13)
- c. **Acts Recklessly**: *“in reckless living... And when he had spent everything”*(Vs. 13-14)
- d. **Reaps Misery**: *“And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.”* (Vs. 16)

Make a list of the things that ‘the far country’ offers you to find fulfillment and meaning in your life. Compare that with a list of what living in the Father’s house is like. Which worldview and value system actually works for your entire life?

IV.A Sensible Return: *“But when he came to himself...”* (Vs. 17)

- a. **His Discovery**: *“he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread but I perish here with hunger!’* (Vs. 17)
 - I’m Empty...
 - I’m Exhausted...
 - I’m Enslaved...
- b. **His Determination**: *“I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you”* (Vs. 18)
 - I will arise...
 - I will go...
 - I will say...
- b. **His Disbelief**: *“I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”* (Vs. 19)

“But when he came to his senses” is a great description of repentance. Repentance means that you change your thinking. The younger son thought that rejection of everything the Father stood for was the path to life and happiness, but he learned the exact opposite. What is something God has brought you to repentance over?

Take Away: Though you may have squandered it all, sitting in the pigpen of pain and shame; He calls you by name with these words that forever remain the same...son, daughter...I accept you, for I never rejected you, for I willing died for you, to save you, and now I forgive you. Come Home!

Prayer Requests