

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – June 20, 2021

Theme: Lessons from the Life of Jesus Topic: Jesus- His Teaching on the Father's love

Main Text: Luke 15:11-32

Key verse: Luke:15: 20 *“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: In most cultures, then and now, the eldest son usually is the first to receive a share of the estate, as well as the lion share of a father's estate. Also, the sharing of a father's estate is usually upon the death of the father; unless the father chooses to do so ahead of time, like Abraham did with the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac (Genesis 25:6). In our passage today, this son reversed all the known and accepted tradition – he demanded for it rather ask for it; he would not wait for his father's death. And surprisingly, without a word, it would seem, the father let him have his portion and watched as *“A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land...”* (Luke 15:13).

1. **(a) How do you think a typical father in our society today would respond to such a son? (b) What does the father's response to his younger son's bizarre request, and subsequent action teach us about the role of a father? (c) Read Genesis 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 30:19-20; Joshua 24:15; John 7:17. What can we learn from these passages about the heart of the father in letting the son have his way?**

God loves us enough to allow us to exercise our God-given freewill. So, this father watches his younger son pack up and leave. You wonder, did he not try to persuade the son to rethink his plans? Did the father try to do something to show the son the errors of his chosen path? Was he angry at the son's sheer disrespect and self-centeredness? Is trying to stop the son or even outrightly showing his authority the ultimate show of love? But this father shows us, as our heavenly Father does, that love means leaving the door open, not locking it into a prison. Not only does this father allow his son to make his choices, but when the son finally comes to his senses to retrace his steps, we also read that, *“... while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming...”* (Luke 15:20b).

2. **Read Luke 15:4, 8-9, 20, 32; (a) What does the statement ‘while he was still a long way off, his father saw him...’ suggest to us about what the father was doing while the son was gone? (b) How does Proverbs 21:16, Ephesians 2:1 help us understand the father's description of his wayward son in Luke 15:32? (c) Compare the statement in Luke 15:20b with Luke 15:32. What can we learn about the heart of the father for his wayward son?**

Life away from a loving home can be brutish, especially when lived outside the loving values and boundaries of a loving father. And that was what the younger son soon realized. But *“Finally, he came to his senses. He said, ‘How many of my father's hired men have more food than they can eat, while I'm starving to death here? I'll go at once to my father, and I'll say to him, ‘Father, I've sinned against heaven and you. I don't deserve to be called your son anymore. Make me one of your hired men.’”* And he immediately acted on his newfound senses and *‘went at once to his father’* (Luke 15:17-19, 20). The repentant son must have been surprised, I think, when instead of his application to be taken as a hired hand, his father ran to him, put his arms around him, kissed him, and commanded that the best robe be brought for him, sandals on his feet and ring on his finger. Thereafter, threw a party never seen in that house (Luke 15:20-23) The son got more than he bargained for - slaves do not wear robes nor rings nor sandals.

3. **(a) Compare what the son asked for and what he got from his father. What does that teach us of a father's love? (b) How does our typical response to our erring children compare with this father's restoration of his wayward son? (c) Read Luke 15:20-23; John 1:12, Romans 6:23. How does the father's response to his prodigal son teach us about what any repentant person can expect when they returned to God?**

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for showing us Your love for us from this study today. Help us to always immediately return to You in repentance any time we stray. And help those who have not yet returned to know that all they will get from You is full restoration not accusation. In Jesus's name Amen.