

# **LESSON 3**

## **PRODIGAL SON: GOD IS NOT ASHAMED OF US**

### **LUKE 15:11 – 32 (NIV)**

<sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> “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. <sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup> “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. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup> “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> But 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. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup> “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> 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.’”

### **GOAL OF LESSON**

- The goal of this lesson is to focus on the role of the father in the story
  - The Father fulfills the son request even though he did not have to
  - The Father allows the son to go his own way and experiences rejection
  - The Father waits in anticipation for his sons return
  - The Father bends over backward to welcome his son back and even restores him to his previous state
  - The Father praises his older obedient son and asks that he celebrate the return of the wayward son with him

# **1. TEACHER'S PREPARATION**

## **(a) Looking at Scripture - LUKE 15:11-32**

<b>Bible Passage</b>	<b>Comments</b>
11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. 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. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.	The younger son's share of the estate would have been one-third, with the older son receiving two thirds (Deuteronomy 21:17) In most cases he would have received this at his father's death, although fathers sometimes chose to divide up their inheritance early and retire from managing their estates. What is unusual here is that the younger one initiated the division of the estate. This showed arrogant disregard for his father's authority as head of the family.
15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.	According to Moses' law, pigs were unclean animals (Leviticus 11:2-8; Deuteronomy 14:8). This meant that pigs could not be eaten or used for sacrifices. To protect themselves from defilement, Jews would not even touch pigs. For a Jew to stoop to feeding pigs was a great humiliation, and for this young man to eat food that the pigs had touched was to be degraded beyond belief. The younger son had truly sunk to the depths.
17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.	The younger son, like many who are rebellious and immature, wanted to be free to live as he pleased, and he had to hit bottom before he came to his senses. It often takes great sorrow and tragedy to cause people to look to the only One who can help them. Are you trying to live life your own way, selfishly pushing aside any responsibility or commitment that gets in your way? Stop and look before you hit bottom. You will save yourself and your family much grief.
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. 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.	In the two preceding stories, the seeker actively looked for the coin and the sheep, which could not return by themselves. In this story, the father watched and waited. He was dealing with a human being with a will of his own, but he ready to greet his son if he returned. In the same way, God's love is constant and patient and welcoming. He will search for us and give us opportunities to respond, but he will not force us to come to him. Like the father in this story, God waits patiently for us to come to our senses.
23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.	The sheep was lost because it may have foolishly wandered away (15:4); the coin was lost through no fault of its own (15:8); and the son left out of selfishness (15:12). God's great love reaches out and finds sinners no matter why or how they got lost.

<p>25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So 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.’ 28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But 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.</p>	<p>It was hard for the older brother to accept his younger brother when he returned, and it is just as difficult to accept "younger brothers" today. People who repent after leading notoriously sinful lives are often held in suspicion; churches are sometimes unwilling to admit them to membership. Instead, we should rejoice like the angels in heaven when an unbeliever repents and turns to God. Like the father, accept repentant sinners wholeheartedly and give them the support and encouragement that they need to grow in Christ.</p>
<p>30 But 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.</p>	<p>In the story of the lost son, the father's response is contrasted with the older brother's. The father forgave because he was filled with love. The son refused to forgive because he was bitter about the injustice of it all. His resentment rendered him just as lost to the father's love as his younger brother had been. Don't let anything keep you from forgiving others. If you are refusing to forgive people, you are missing a wonderful opportunity to experience joy and share it with others. Make your joy grow: forgive somebody who has hurt you.</p>
<p>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.”</p>	<p>In Jesus' story, the older brother represented the Pharisees, who were angry and resentful that sinners were being welcomed into God's kingdom. After all, the Pharisees must have thought, we have sacrificed and done so much for God. How easy it is to resent God's gracious forgiveness of others whom we consider to be far worse sinners than ourselves. But when our self-righteousness gets in the way of rejoicing when others come to Jesus, we are no better than the Pharisees.</p>

**(b) Looking inwardly**

- 1. MAIN IDEA:** In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus was teaching that God wants to forgive both sinners and self-righteous people. The real focus of this story is the longsuffering father, who continues to love both sons as they dishonour him. It is a beautiful story of God’s love and determination to see the lost return to him. Emphasize the message that both “rule-keepers” and “good kids” need to be forgiven. It is important to make the connection that the pride of self-righteous people needs forgiven just as much as the wild living of prodigals.
- 2. KEY VERSES:** **Luke 11:31-32** v31 “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. v32 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.”

## **2. CONNECT**

Here are some suggestions to introduce the lesson. Choose one (or more) that is appropriate for your class.

### **NO 1**

#### **God loves us (no matter how bad we have been.)**

Have you ever been bad? (Wait for answers.) How bad have you been? (Pause and then go on...) Have you ever been so bad that you got in trouble? Have you ever been so bad that you got sent to "time out?" Have you ever been so bad that... your parents wouldn't love you anymore? (No!)

We are going to hear a story of a man's son who went far away from home and then was very, very bad. Then we'll hear about what happened when the son was sorry and came home...

### **NO 2**

Begin with the Hook by telling a fictional story about a girl who ran away from home at the age of sixteen, because she didn't like the way she was being treated by her mother. Ask if anyone listening had ever felt like this girl did, or has had a situation where they felt like running away from the problem instead of hitting the problem head on. The story would continue with had much trouble the girl gets herself into on the streets: drinking, prostitution, drugs, etc... The parents search for her but cannot find her (much as God comes to us, but we will not answer Him). After a year of heartache and pain, the girl decides that it is time to go home, but believes that she will be rejected and told to stay away forever, so she puts it off and puts it off. Another six months go by, and the girl is living in the gutters of the street; no home, no food, not even a clean change of clothes. In her desperation, she makes a phone call, and finds that she is welcome to come home. Still she hesitates from fear of reprisal from her mother, the one who drove her away in the first place. One day, she finally decides to give it a try; she could always go back out on the street if it didn't work out. But, to her surprise, she is welcomed home with love and a celebration, to find that she is, indeed, a wanted child, and that her parents love her deeply. They all live happily ever after. Amen.

### **NO 3**

## Three Wishes



**Theme:** A prodigal son and a forgiving Father.

**Object:** A book or video of "Aladdin," or a brass lamp would be a great object.

**Scripture:** "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. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. Luke 15:22-24 (NIV)

I am sure that most of you have read a book, seen a movie, or at least heard the story about "Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp." In one version of the story, Aladdin worked in a shop that exchanged new lamps for old ones. Aladdin's job was to polish the lamps and make them look like new. One day, as he was polishing a lamp, a genie came out of the lamp and promised to grant Aladdin anything he wished for. With the help of the Genie, Aladdin gained great wealth and won the love of a beautiful princess.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have your every wish come true? You might think so, but the truth is, sometimes the things we wish for are not good for us. That is what a young man discovered in today's Bible story.

Our Bible story today is about a young man who had three wishes.

1. He wanted a lot of money.
2. He wanted to travel and see the world.
3. He wanted to be his own boss.

The young man got his wishes, but they were not granted to him by a genie. The young man went to his father and asked him to give him the inheritance that would be his when his father died. Even though the father was sad that his son wanted to leave, he gave him his share of the family fortune and the young man left home and traveled all around the world. He visited all of the places he had always wanted to visit and did whatever he wanted to do. He was happy that no one was telling him what to do. Since the young man had a lot of money, if he saw something he wanted, he bought it, and since he had a lot of money, he also had many friends.

This sounds like very happy story, doesn't it? Well, that isn't the end of the story. After a while, the young man ran out of money. When he ran out of money, his friends ran out on him. He was so desperate that he went to work for a man who sent him to feed his pigs. The young man was so hungry that he would gladly have eaten the food he was feeding to the pigs. As he looked at the filthy pig pen, he thought about the mess he had made of his life. He thought about his father and the home he had left behind.

"Even a servant in my father's house lives better than this," the young man said to himself. "I will return to my father and tell him that I am sorry for the way I have behaved and ask him to give me a job as one of his servants."

Do you think the father was willing to take him back? Yes, but not as a servant. He welcomed him back home as a son. He called his servants together and told them, "Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was lost, but now is found."

Well, the story had a happy ending after all, didn't it? This story that Jesus told is really a story about you and me and the way we sometimes behave.

Sometimes you and I make bad choices -- just like the young man in our story. We sometimes wish for things that are not good for us. We sometimes don't want to listen to God and obey what the Bible tells us we should do. When we act that way, we really make a mess of our life. Well, I have good news for you! Just like the father in our story, God, our Heavenly Father, is always willing to take us back if we will admit that we were wrong and return to Him.

### 3. CONTENT

#### Idea No1

##### **A. Tell/Read the Story** - Luke 15:11-32

##### **B. Ideas to Discuss**

1. How many sons did the father have? (Two)
2. Where did the younger son go? (He went to a country far away from his home.)
3. Why did the son become poor? (He spent all his money. He wasted it.)
4. Why did the son become hungry? (There was a famine in the land, and there wasn't enough food for people to eat.)
5. What kind of job did the son get? (A job feeding swine)
6. Was he still hungry even though he had a job? (Yes) What did he do? (He went home to his father.)
7. Was the father angry when the son went home? (No. He was happy, and he gave him a big party when he went home.)
8. How did the older son feel when his father gave a party for the younger son? (He was angry and jealous.)
9. What did the father say to the older brother? (That they should be happy that the younger son was home safe!)

##### **C. Further Ideas**

1. Sometimes we do something wrong. We do what we want to do instead of what the Lord wants us to do. Then we are like the prodigal son, and we go far away from the Lord, our Father. But we can come back to the Lord and tell him we are sorry.
2. The Lord is very happy when we turn back to Him and are sorry that we have done something wrong. This is like the father in the story who was so happy to have his son come home!

#### Idea No 2

**Read This:** “But while he was still a long way from home his father saw him, and his heart went out to him; he ran and hugged his son and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20)

**Think:** The parable of the prodigal son has something for each of us. Some of us are the prodigals. We’ve wandered far from home, far from our father, and far from our true calling. The here and now got the better of us and we recklessly pursued the pleasures of this world. But when the emptiness of it all sinks in, we’ve found ourselves completely alone at the end of a dead end street. Without options, we swallow our pride and prepare our hearts to go back to our father’s house.

Others are the older sibling—the one who stayed with the father and worked hard while his younger brother squandered his money away. We are the ones with a sense of duty and obligation, the responsible ones who obey the rules and get the job done. And when the partier comes home to warm welcome from our father, we struggle to rejoice. We become bitter and resentful not only towards our brother but even our father. *Shouldn’t our little brother be punished for his betrayal? Why does he get special treatment after he walked away?* You see, we know our Father’s rules but we do not understand his heart.

There may be times in our lives we’re like the prodigal and other times our attitude is more like the old brother’s, but the truth is we are all called to be like the father.

This isn't just a story of a boy who wanted to experience the wealth of this world or a brother with the heart of a Pharisee. It's the parable of the compassionate father. He loved his sons and showed them grace and forgiveness in different ways. He embraced and celebrated the prodigal who felt so unworthy. But even in the midst of the celebration, he left the party to affirm and encourage his eldest son, while gently correcting his attitude.

Our heavenly Father's love for us is beyond measure. When we are far from home, he eagerly awaits and yearns for our return. And while we are still far from his doorstep, he rushes to meet us and walk with us the rest of the way. In the same way, he has such compassion and understanding for those who have trouble welcoming the prodigals. And he will walk us into the party too. We are in his family and our Father loves all his children.

**Ask:** Of the three characters in the parable who do you relate to best?

**Pray:** Regardless of where your heart is now, ask God to show areas you need to become more compassionate like him.

## Idea No 3

# The Prodigal Son

**To Remember:** God rejoices when sinners repent

### Vocabulary

**repent** - to turn away from sin

**squander** - waste

**prodigal** - recklessly wasteful

### Lesson Luke 15:11-32

**Activity:** Reinforce the idea of repentance being to turn around. Have students line up. Ask review questions. If the person answering gets it right, everyone moves forward. If the person gets it wrong, they have to face the back wall. If the next person gets it right, declare: REPENT, and everyone turns forward again and gets to move one step up. (Don't use repent to face the back - reinforce the idea that you turn away from wrong and toward right). You can even put a smiley face at the front of the room and a frown at the back.

### True or False

1. The young son wanted to live life his way. T
2. The older son was obedient and helpful to his father. T
3. The father held a grudge against his son. F
4. The son expected to be accepted back into the family. F
5. The older son cared about his brother deeply. F

### Review Questions

 linguistic questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What book is this parable in?</li> <li>2. Who told this parable?</li> </ol>
 activity questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Act out the scene where the father welcomes the son home.</li> <li>2. Act out the scene where the brother refuses to come in.</li> <li>3. Draw a picture of a hog.</li> </ol>
 emotion questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What bad feelings was the son having while he was tending the hogs?</li> <li>2. What feelings was the father having before the son came home?</li> <li>3. What feelings did the brother have against the son?</li> </ol>
 application questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How should we feel towards sinners?</li> <li>2. What can we expect from God if we repent?</li> <li>3. Why did the father welcome his son back?</li> </ol>
 fact questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who does the father in the story represent?</li> <li>2. Who does the son in the story represent?</li> <li>3. Who does the brother in the story represent?</li> </ol>
 review questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What had the son done to hurt his family?</li> <li>2. Name 2 sins the son committed.</li> <li>3. What did the father do to celebrate his son's return?</li> </ol>

## 4. CHALLENGE

### NO 1

**Compare Two Sons:** Use the following questions to help the children

<b>Young Brother (ran away)</b>	<b>Older Brother (stayed home)</b>
How did this brother dishonor his father?	How did this brother dishonor his father?
How did the Father respond to this bad behavior?	How did the Father respond to this bad behavior?
What do you think it would take to make the Father stop loving this Son?	What do you think it would take to make the Father stop loving this Son?
What do you think the Son will do next?	What do you think the Son will do next?

### NO 2

**Test:** Call on volunteers to answer the following questions. Ask follow up questions to ensure they understand the objective of the lesson.

Which brother do you think Jesus wants us to copy?

Which brother do you think deserved to be forgiven by the Father?

What does this the Father in this story show us about God?

According to this story, what kind of people does God not love?

**Look / Took:** Ask the children to think about one real person they know, or have heard about that seems like a very “bad” person. Then ask the following questions:

How does God feel about that person?

How does God want you to feel about that person?

Ask them to begin to pray for that person and to ask God to help them love that person better.

Make a plan to do that tonight.

## **5. ACTIVITIES – See Activities File**

Choose an activity that is age appropriate

### **NO 1**

**[TWO VERY GOOD POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS CAN BE FOUND AT:](#)**

[http://www.ebibleteacher.com/sites/default/files/flipcharts/1/ppt/ProdigalSonStory\\_0.ppt](http://www.ebibleteacher.com/sites/default/files/flipcharts/1/ppt/ProdigalSonStory_0.ppt)

[http://www.sermons4kids.com/prodigal\\_son.ppt](http://www.sermons4kids.com/prodigal_son.ppt)

### **NO 2**

## **YOUTUBE VIDEOS**

<http://skitguys.com/blog/post/the-prodigal-devotional>  
**(VERY GOOD)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V96rkM5Gpn0>  
**(VERY GOOD)**

<http://ministry-to-children.com/prodigal-son-video/>  
**(VERY GOOD)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yf8SzLbJlXk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCMRglp7xUs>  
**(MUSIC VIDEO)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3TYkAWRdU4>  
**(MUSIC VIDEO)**

## **6. HELPQUEST**

**Use the questions in this section to help you plan a revision quiz.**

1. What the younger son asked from his father?
  - a. the blessings
  - b. the share of the estate
  - c. the whole estate
  
2. What he did with his wealth?
  - a. he saved his wealth
  - b. he sold his wealth
  - c. he squandered his wealth in wild living
  
3. After he had nothing what happened to that country?
  - a. there was a severe famine in that whole country
  - b. there was war in the country
  - c. there was peace in the country
  
4. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the ..... were eating
  - a. sheep
  - b. pigs
  - c. donkeys
  
5. What he thought to himself when he came to his senses?
  - a. how many of his father's hired servants have food to spare
  - b. how many of his father's children have food to spare
  - c. how many of his father's hired servants have food to spare
  
6. What action he took when he had come to his decision?
  - a. he got up and went to his father
  - b. he got up and sat down
  - c. he got up wondered
  
7. His father saw him and was filled with ..... for him
  - a. happiness
  - b. compassion
  - c. joy
  
8. Which of the following did the father tell the servants to bring:
  - a. best robe, a ring, sandals and the fattened calf
  - b. best robe, a ring and sandals
  - c. best robe, a ring and the fattened calf
  
9. Where was the older son
  - a. in the party
  - b. in the house
  - c. in the field

10. When the younger son was back what happened?
- they began to worry
  - they began to mourn
  - they began to celebrate
11. How the older son reacted when he saw this?
- he was over the moon
  - he was smiling
  - he was angry
12. The father said, 'this son of mine was dead and is .....'
- awake
  - alive
  - afraid
13. The father said, 'he was lost and is .....'
- fine
  - back
  - found
14. What the father said to his older son who complained?
- you are always with me, and everything I have is yours
  - you are not always with me, and everything I have is not yours
  - you are always with me, and everything I have is ours
15. Who was telling the story of the prodigal son
- Pharisees
  - John
  - Jesus

Answers: 1-b, 2-c, 3-a, 4-b, 5-c, 6-a, 7-b, 8-a, 9-c, 10-c, 11-c, 12-b, 13-c, 14-a, 15-c