

SESSION 4 PARTICIPANTS' HANDOUT

THE RELIGIOUS SON - SELF RIGHTEOUS & JEALOUS

THE SON PRODIGAL

VIEW

Watch Session Four: *The Prodigal Son* (12 minutes)

SESSION BIG IDEA

When the younger son returns to his father's embrace, the elder brother's jealousy and resentment show him as a vindictive and unwilling to offer forgiveness.

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

Luke 15: 11-31 Story Notes

APPLICATION

Jesus had told parables of a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son, but now he seems to almost go off topic and "add on" information about the elder brother. There could be little doubt in the minds of the Pharisees and teachers of the law who were listening, that the behavior of the elder son was an illustration of their own displeasure of the repentance of sinners because of their own self-righteousness and indignation.

Can you think of a time in your own life when you might have also looked at an obvious sinner and muttered, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector [or younger brother].' (Luke 18:11b). Describe below a situation where you might have found comfort in your own righteousness and displeasure in the repentance of others.

Look over the following sins of the heart. How do you see these play out in your own life?

1. I do not always give God the glory He deserves.
2. I have pride and arrogance.
3. I am self-centered.
4. I do things without love sometimes.
5. Lust and covetousness seek to battle with me.

The answer to these struggles within the heart is trusting in the perfect work of Christ. Paul says, "who will rescue me from this body of death?" Then he says, "thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" The heart is desperately wicked! If my salvation was based on my performance, then I would have no hope. My only hope is Jesus Christ my Lord!

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Religion is humanity's attempt to reach out to God. It involves our efforts to become acceptable to God or to try to give meaning to life. This makes religion subjective to each person. **Christianity is** not a religion because it does not involve humanity's attempt to reach God, but rather God's attempt to reach humanity. In this parable, while the older brother tries to please the father by doing all the right things, his attempts end in failure. With which brother do you identify most? How successful have you been with your own attempts to please God?

MEMORIZE

Sometimes, the effects of God's love in the lives of some individuals may be more spectacular than in the more humdrum lives of others, as was the case with Paul himself, and maybe even the younger brother in this parable. It was Jesus himself who said: **'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance'** (Mark 2:17). Does this mean that God loves sinners more than the righteous? Of course not. While God's love may be more obvious in the life of some, we must realize as Romans 3:23 says, **"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"**. The rebellious AND the self righteous owe a sin debt, are separated from God and are in desperate need of a Savior. Take a few minutes each day to memorize Mark 2:17 and Romans 3:23 this week.

PRAY

The Goal: Be a person of celebration, joy, excitement, compassion, and love because we are ALL forgiven by our Savior and restored by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May Psalm 19:12-14 be our daily prayer:

But who can discern their own errors?

Acquit me of hidden faults.

Also, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;

Let them not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless,

And will be acquitted of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth

and the meditation of my heart

be acceptable in your sight,

O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.