



## IHL Devotionals 2024-25: Game 4

### **Bible story: The prodigal son**

*prod-i-gal (adjective): characterized by profuse or wasteful expenditure; lavish*

#### **What happens in this story?**

We're reading today from the gospel of Luke. When Pharisees and teachers of religious law complained to Jesus that he allowed tax collectors and other sinful people to listen to him teach – Jesus was “even eating with them,” they lamented – Jesus offered them three stories as an explanation. He closed with the parable of the prodigal son.

Luke 15:11 (NLT) To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: “A man had two sons. 12 The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

13 “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. 14 About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. 15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. 16 The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

17 “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.”’

20 “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. 21 His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’

22 “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, 26 and he asked one of the servants what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’

28 “The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, 29 but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. 30 Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’ 31 “His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. 32 We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’”

## **Takeaways**

The main theme of the prodigal son is that no matter how far off the beaten path we might be, and no matter how much bad we have done, no one is beyond redemption and Jesus welcomes everyone with open arms.

- Often times, we may be upset with others receiving love from a father, and become resentful when we aren’t recognized for doing what is right
- Despite the son’s sinful nature, he recognized the importance of a loving father. Likewise, we cannot go through life alone
- The story also reinforces how a parent will do anything to care for his child, much like our heavenly father.
- In our fallen world, perhaps we should be aiming to build a culture of welcoming

## **Questions**

1. Has there ever been a time when you’ve felt unworthy of God’s love, with shortcomings, and afraid to come to him?
2. Have you ever been jealous of others receiving praise, which you thought you rightly deserved?
3. Have you ever steered away from the church because you thought you wouldn’t be welcomed?
4. How can we emulate the parable of the prodigal son, and celebrate when someone tries to make a change for the better?

## **Closing and prayer requests**