



## The Father's Response

*By Terry Kountz on January 22, 2021*

**READING:** Luke 15

The parable of the prodigal son has something for each of us. Some of us are the prodigals. We have 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 find 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. 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 party comes home to a 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 are like the prodigal and other times our attitude is more like the older brother's, but the truth is we are all called to be like the Father. This is not 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 is 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 invite us to the party too. We are in His family and our Father loves all his children.

**PRAYER:** "Father, help me to show compassion to others. Help me treat others as the loving Father you are."

**TOMORROW'S READING:** Weekend is for catch-up and review.

**MONDAY'S READING:** Luke 16

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