

Returning Home: *A Journey of Grace*

A 5-Part FamilyLife Devotional on the
Parable of the Prodigal Son



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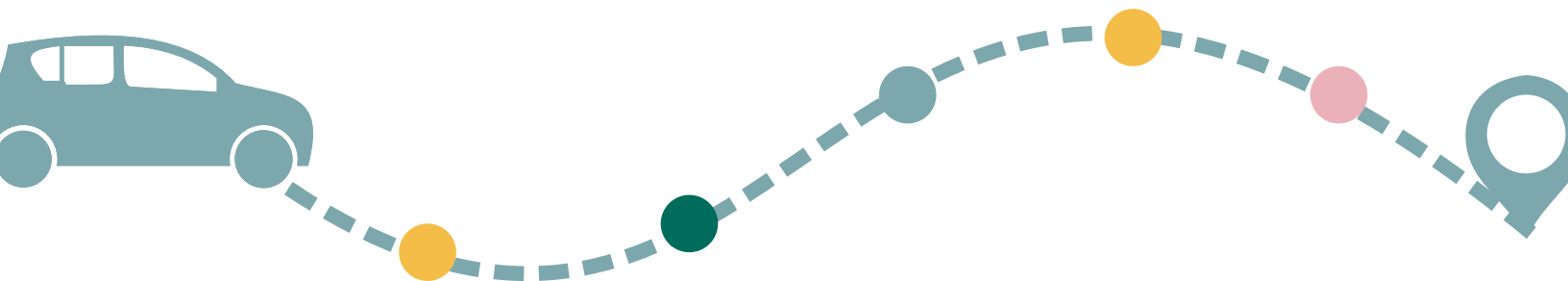
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Before you get started...

FamilyLife is excited to present this five-part devotional series on the Parable of the Prodigal Son found in Luke 15. This devotional was created in partnership with “The Road to Kaeluma” – an audio drama that can be heard wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts.

This devotional is meant for families with children ages 7-12, so expect simple, accessible questions, easy conversation starters, and to have fun along the way. While having your own Bible to read from is handy, we’ll provide everything you need here.



Part 1:

LEAVING HOME – WANTING MY OWN WAY

Luke 15:11-13

“And he said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.” And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.’”





Have you ever wanted something **SO BAD** that you asked for it over and over and over again? Did you get it? How did that make you feel?



PARENTS: Share a story with your kids of a time when you wanted to get something really bad. Maybe it was a birthday or Christmas present. Or maybe it was a pet when you were younger or a visit to your favorite restaurant.

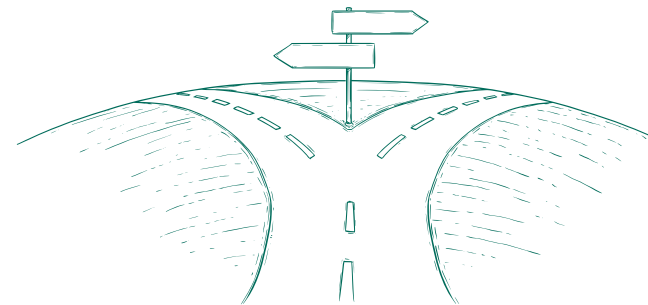


READ ALOUD: Back in Jesus' time, children would receive an inheritance from their parents but only after their parents passed away. The actions of the younger brother were essentially telling his father, "I don't care that you're alive. I want what I want, and I want it now." The younger son wanted his money now, and he didn't want to wait. He thought having lots of money would make him happy.



Why do you think the younger son thought leaving home would be more fun? Was he right?

What are some times when it's important to listen to God and the people who love us the most, even if we want to do something else?





Pray This Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us no matter what. Even when we want something that may end up hurting us in the long run. Forgive us when we have done that in the past. And thank You for your forgiveness when we will mess up in the future. Amen.

Part 2:

MESSING UP – THINGS GET BAD

Luke 15:14-20a

“And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father.





Have you ever made a choice that **seemed fun at first**, but then things went terribly wrong? What happened?



PARENTS: Share a story of when you messed up as a kid. Maybe it was the time you broke something in the house. Or maybe when you wrecked your car. How did your parents respond? How do you wish they would have responded?



READ ALOUD: When the younger brother went off from his family, he thought he had everything he needed to be successful. He had all the money he thought he wanted, but he left things—and people—that are much more important than money. When things got hard, the friends he thought he had quickly left him and he realized, “Uh oh. I’m in trouble.” He had to work some really hard jobs, like feeding pigs, in order to survive.



How do you think the younger son felt when he had no money or food?

Who are some of the people you can turn to for help when you make a mistake or when things get hard?



Pray This Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us no matter what. Thank You that even when we feel lonely, we know that we are never alone. And when things get really difficult, please remind us that You will always be there for us. Amen.

Part 3:

RUNNING BACK – GETTING A BIG HUG!

Luke 15:20b-24

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. ‘But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”





What are some **words** to describe a really good hug?

How do you think the younger son felt when his dad ran to him and hugged him?



PARENTS: Share a story of when you needed a hug. Maybe it was when someone close to you died. Or maybe when you hurt yourself on the playground and needed some comfort. Did you get it? How did it make you feel? Or how do you wish someone would have responded when you didn't get what you needed?



READ ALOUD: When we're away from the people we love for a long time, we almost always celebrate reuniting with them by hugging each other. Why is that? The act of hugging is an act of security. It communicates, "You're here. And you're safe." In the parable, the younger son had been gone a long time and was in some very unsafe situations. He must have felt so much relief to come back into the warm embrace of his father's arms. Just like the father in the parable, God is always happy when we come back to Him. And if we've been gone a long time, it's a cause for celebration! Good food! Dance music! Maybe costumes! God is always ready to embrace us when we come back to Him.



How does God feel when we pray to Him and ask for forgiveness? How do you know?

What are some ways we can celebrate being loved and forgiven by God?



Pray This Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us no matter what. Forgive us for the times when we have walked away from You in the past and thank You for Your forgiveness for when we will walk away from You in the future. Thank You for always being ready to welcome us back when we have been away. Amen.

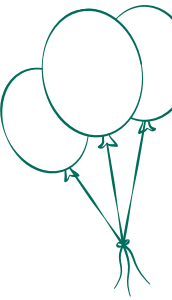
Part 4:

THE OLDER BROTHER – BEING HAPPY FOR OTHERS

Luke 15:25-32

“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”





Have you ever felt a **little jealous** when something good happened to someone else?



PARENTS: Share a story of when you followed all the rules and things still didn't go your way. Maybe you were a straight-A student and someone else got chosen for an award. Or maybe you obeyed your Sunday school teacher and they didn't notice or say thank you. How did you feel? How do you wish someone would have responded?



READ ALOUD: Finally, we come to the older brother. The son who did everything right—followed all the rules, did what his father told him, didn't make any trouble. But as we read the story, we see that the older brother is mad! He's done everything right, but where's his party? Where's his inheritance? Where is his embrace? The older brother thought that by following all the rules, he could earn his place in the family and the love of his father. He thought by doing something good, he would get something good in return. But this is not how real love works. Real love accepts others for who they are—exactly how they are—not by anything they have or haven't done. And the father gently reminds his oldest son of this truth. The oldest son always belonged in the family by simply being part of the family. We know this is true because we belong to our families. We didn't do anything to be a part of it. We were simply born into it and, as such, were loved by our parents simply because. Just like the father in the parable, God loves us no matter what. We're part of His family no matter what. Nothing can separate us from being part of the family.



What are some ways that make you feel like you are part of your family?

What are some ways that make you feel like you are part of God's big family?



Pray This Prayer:

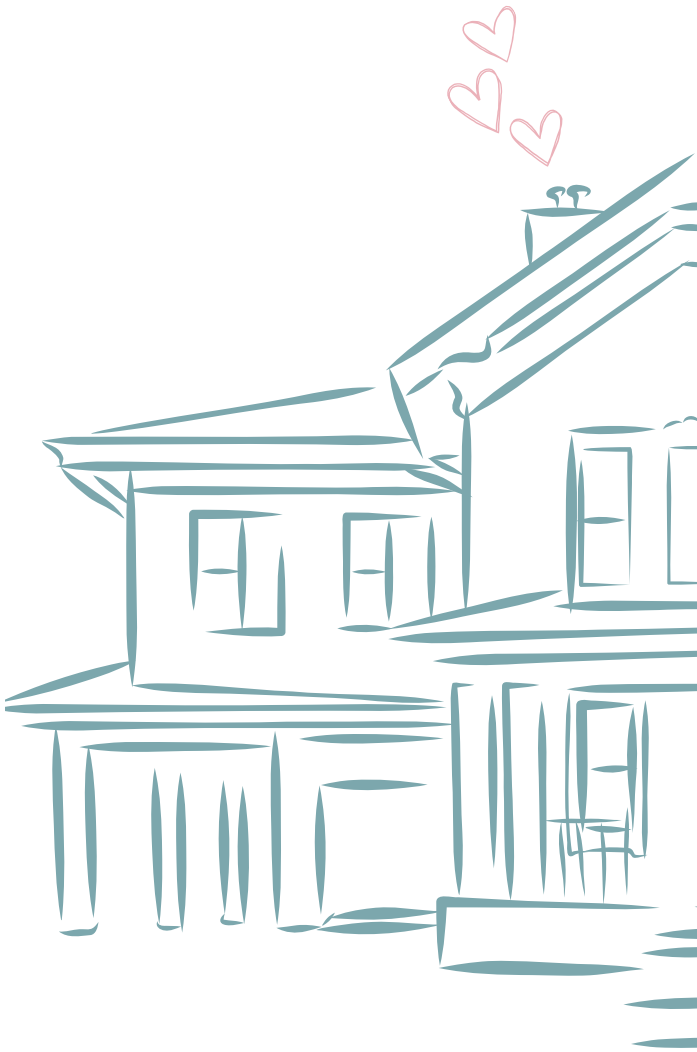
Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us no matter what. Forgive us for the times when we followed all the rules trying to earn Your love and our place in Your family. Help us to feel confident that nothing can separate us from Your family. Thank You for being the loving father who will celebrate us even when we mess up. Amen.



Part 5:

THINKING ABOUT HOME – REMEMBERING LOVE

Luke 15:1-10



“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’

“So he told them this parable: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.” Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.” Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”



These two parables come directly before the parable of the prodigal son. **How are these two parables similar** to the parable of prodigal son? How are they different?



PARENTS: Share a story of a time when you lost something. Maybe it was your car keys. Or maybe you accidentally threw away your retainer in the trash. Maybe you once left a stuffed animal at a friend's house and had to go the night without it.



READ ALOUD: Whenever we lose something valuable, we'll spend hours and hours looking for it. Between couch cushions. Underneath car seats. We'll leave no place unsearched to find the thing we are missing. These two parables follow the same pattern. Something valuable gets lost; someone goes and looks for it. But when we talk about the parable of the prodigal son, when the younger son gets lost, why doesn't anyone go look for him? It's possible that Jesus wanted the listeners of these stories to ask that very question! The older son should have gone to find his brother, but he didn't. The father doesn't go looking for his son either. It seems like there is a missing character who would have gone out and left no stone unturned to find the missing son. Do you know anyone who left everything behind to go find people who were lost? Yes! Jesus!



Have you ever missed your family when you were away? What did you miss?

What are some of the ways you know that God loves you, even when you make mistakes?



Pray This Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us no matter what. Thank You for being the true older brother who left everything and came down to save us. Help us to know that You are near even when we mess up. Thank You for the truth that nothing—absolutely nothing—can separate us from Your love.



GOING ON A SUMMER ROAD TRIP?



Based on the Parable of the Prodigal Son from the Bible, *The Road to Kaeluma*, an audio drama adventure, paves the way for natural, easy conversations about grace and the importance of good relationships with our parents and God, our Heavenly Father. Listen on your favorite podcast app or visit [here](#) to learn more.





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