



“The Pursuer’s Heart”

Luke 15

Small Group Plan

prod·i·gal

Pronunciation: prä-di-gəl

Etymology: Latin *prodigus*,
from *prodigere* to waste, to squander

fa·ther

Pronunciation: fäth-er

Etymology: Old English *fæder*, Latin *pater*, Greek *patēr*
begetter, originator, one who imparts life

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What is the closest you came to running away from a problem? Explain.
- If you were to “run away” to a “far country,” where would you go and why?
- If you had access to a lot of wealth to “squander” how would you do it?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— THE REBELLION —

LUKE 15:11-16

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. 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.”

- Why would a boy with such a loving Father choose to leave?
- Why did the father agree to his son's foolish request (v. 12)?
- What would be the modern equivalent to "squandering" in "wild living" (v. 13)?
- What does this parable tell us about the nature of humanity?
- Describe the kind of mindset that spends "everything" (v. 14)?
- What is the modern equivalent to being "in need" (v. 14)?
- What changes would make a Jewish man want to eat pig's food (v. 15)?

— THE REALIZATION —

LUKE 15:17-20A

¹⁷ When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired men 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 men." ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

- What brought the boy to "his senses" (v. 17)?
- Why did he rehearse his speech?
- What was he expecting from his father?
- Find the process in the story that turned the boy's life around.
- Why is it significant that when he returned it was to a Relationship rather than to a set of rules? — "went to his father" (v. 20)

— THE REUNION —

LUKE 15:20B-24

²⁰ 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. 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.

- Notice the conjunction — "The son said ... But the father said" (vs. 21-22).
- What does the Father in the story teach us about the nature of God?
- Does this parable speak to the issue of grace and works? How?

— THE RESENTMENT —

LUKE 15:25-32

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. 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. 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.”

- Who does the older brother represent?
- Why does Jesus tell this story and who is it aimed at?
- How is it possible to be with the “Father” (v. 31 — God) and not have His heart?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Who are you most like in the story — the leaving prodigal, the hurting Father, the returning prodigal, the resentful older brother? Explain.
- How do you identify with the younger son?
- How would you compare your spiritual journey to that of the younger son?
- This story ends with celebration. What do you have to celebrate?
- As you close in prayer, ask God for His heart of mercy and grace.