

DAVID SMITH

DESTINY DECISIONS

STUDY GUIDE: THE PRODIGAL SON



Small Group Study Guide

When Your Child Is a Prodigal

Text: Luke 15:11–14

Theme: How to respond in faith, love, and wisdom when someone you love is far from God.

Session Goals

- Understand the spiritual dynamics of prodigal living.
- Explore biblical principles for responding to prodigals.
- Encourage hope, healing, and intercession for wayward loved ones.
- Support and strengthen parents, grandparents, and family members in the waiting season.

Icebreaker

Share a time when someone you loved made a difficult or painful decision. How did it affect you emotionally? What helped you get through it?

Read Together: Luke 15:11–24

Key Truths to Explore

1. A prodigal is someone wasting their life apart from God.

2. There are different types of prodigals; some are public, some are private.
3. God's love remains constant, even when ours fails.
4. We can't rescue, fix, or change a prodigal; only God can.
5. Our role is to stay faithful in love, hope, and prayer.

Discussion Questions

1. Understanding Prodigals

- What stood out to you in the story of the prodigal son?
- Why do you think Jesus focused so much on the father's response?
- How does this story give us a picture of God's heart for the lost?

2. Types of Prodigals

- Review the five types of prodigals: Embarrassing, Defiant, Intellectual, Lukewarm, Religious.
- Which type have you encountered (in others or even in yourself)?
- Why is it important to recognize these differences?

3. Parenting and Personal Reflection

- Read Proverbs 22:6. What is the difference between a principle and a promise?

- Pastor said, "*Be firm, be fair, and be fun.*" How do you strike that balance in your family?
- Have you ever needed to apologize to a child or loved one? What happened?

4. Responding to Prodigals

- Which of the five unhelpful responses (blame, ignore, cover, nag, fix) do you tend to fall into?
- Why is it important not to short-circuit the "pigpen" experience in a prodigal's life?
- How do you care for yourself emotionally and spiritually when a loved one is far from God?

5. Living in Hope

- Read Romans 12:12 aloud.
 - What does it mean to rejoice in hope?
 - How can we be patient in tribulation?
 - What does it look like to be faithful in prayer?
- Share a story (personal or someone you know) where prayer brought a prodigal home.

Prayer Focus

- Pray for the prodigals in your lives by name.
- Pray for strength and peace for the parents and grandparents in your group.

- Ask God to send godly influences into the lives of those who are far from Him.
- Pray for wisdom to know when to speak, when to stay silent, and when to let go.

Memory Verse

Romans 12:12 – “Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.”

Optional Weekly Challenge

- Write a letter to your prodigal; whether you send it or not. Pour out your heart in grace and truth.
- Choose one day this week to fast and pray specifically for your prodigal.
- Start a prayer journal with Scriptures and prayers for their return.

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David Smith Ministries
3321 Sollie Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695
www.pastordavidsmith.tv