



**FAITH**

**& LOVE**

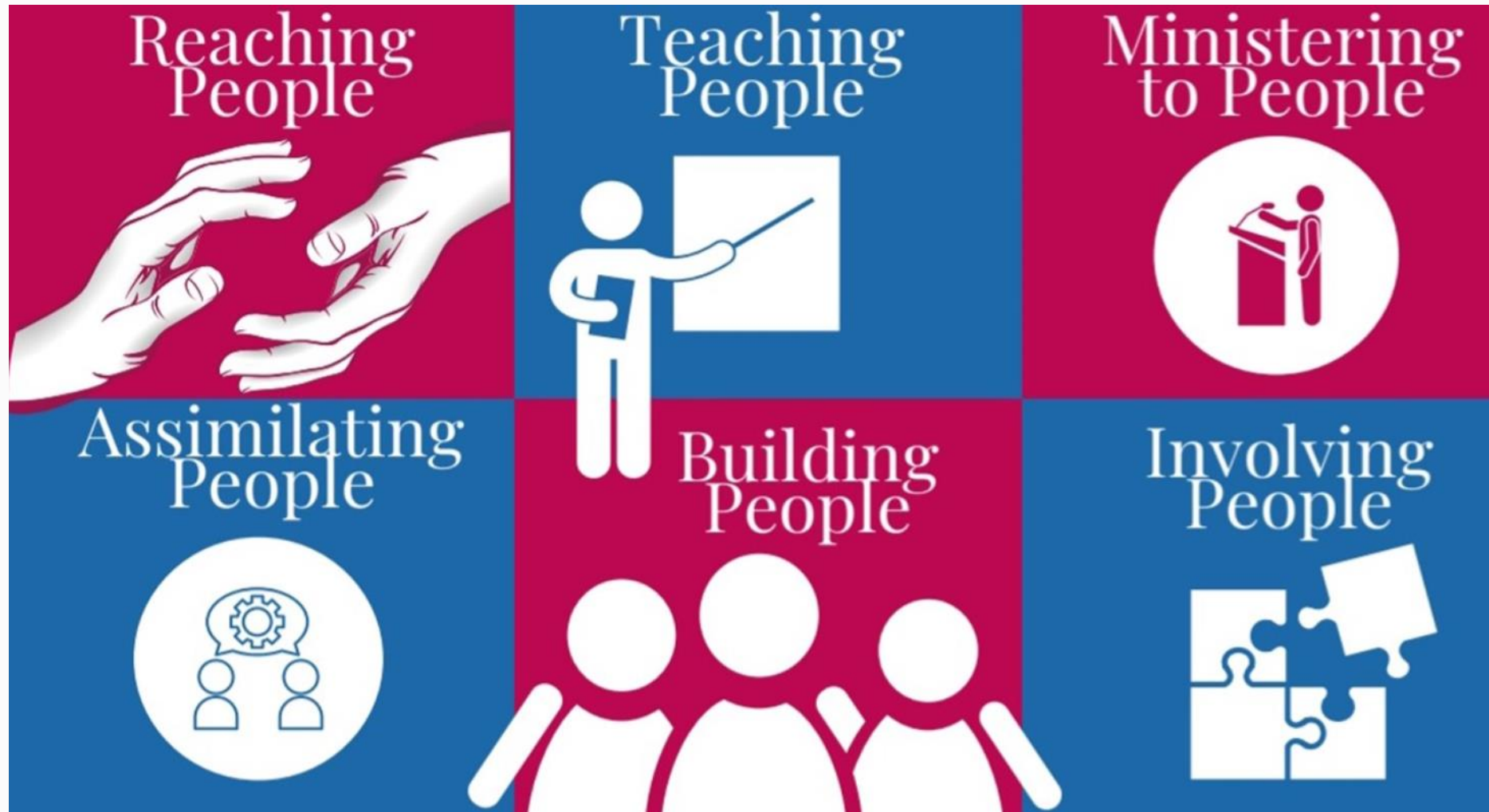
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Church of God in Christ

**Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C  
Sunday School**

**Lesson 9 April 26, 2026  
A FAMILY REUNION**

# SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



**Lesson 9 April 26, 2026**  
**A FAMILY REUNION**



## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

**School/Class:** But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

**School/Class:** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.  
**Psalm 119:105**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**ALL:**

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

**2 Peter 3:18**

## Lesson 9 April 26, 2026

### A FAMILY REUNION



- Bible Basis: Luke 15:11-24
- Bible Truth: Practicing and accepting Godlike love and forgiveness can mend broken relationships and make a difference.
- Memory Verse: “For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry” (Luke 15:24)
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will RECOGNIZE God’s compassion through the parable of the prodigal son; FEEL the need for reunion in families and connect that to our relationship with God; and SHARING God’s compassion will reconcile with a repentant prodigal.
- Background Scriptures: [Luke 15:1-32](#) – Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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**Luke 15:11-24 KJV**

**11** And he said, A certain man had two sons:

**12** And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

**13** And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

**14** And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

**15** And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

**16** And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

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**A FAMILY REUNION**



**Luke 15:11-24 KJV**

**17** And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

**18** I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

**19** And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

**20** And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

**21** And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

**22** But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

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**Luke 15:11-24 KJV**

**23** And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

**24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

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## **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

**Father.** The father in this parable represents the patient, caring Heavenly Father who has unconditional love for all mankind. This father illustrates how God values people and reveals His heart for the lost. Some scholars believe embracing his son was to protect him from the shame and humiliation of the community.

## **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

**Younger brother.** The Jews in Jesus' audience would have wanted to identify with the younger brother at first since Jacob, the father of Israel, was the younger of Isaac and Rebekah's sons. However, the parable upsets that close connection, challenging everyone in the audience to consider whether he or she is more like the older or younger brother. Since Luke's audience was probably a combination of Jews and Gentiles, the parable would have challenged everyone to reflect on his or her own behavior with regard to straying from family, community, and responsibility.

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## **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

**Older brother.** Despite remaining faithful to his father and his responsibilities as the oldest son, the older brother faces a situation similar to Esau in Genesis, being left with the responsibility but seemingly little of the recognition from God or his parents. Some have proposed that the older brother represents any Jewish leaders who showed no grace with regard to sinners, but the parable is about more than just religious leadership. It is about love, tolerance, and grace when anyone in the family or community messes up.

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## **LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:**

AIM: Students will know that family relationships become too easily twisted and broken.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Family Dynamics**

According to the Mosaic Law, after the father died, the older son inherited two thirds of his father's land, flocks, and wealth, and the younger sibling one third ([Deuteronomy 21:17](#)). The parable is framed with regard to inheritance, with the younger son squandering his and ending up destitute. However, for both Jesus' original audience and for Luke's community, the economic matters in the story are important but not ultimate. While the older son certainly provides a better model for how to live responsibly with your future and your family in mind, the father's love of both sons regardless of their actions is the real essence of the parable. Parents should love children regardless of their successes and failures. Neither son is perfect. The younger is irresponsible and neglectful, while the older is strident and unforgiving. Yet, through everything, the father remains balanced, loving both and acknowledging their value as members of his family.

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# BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will understand Jesus' parable of God's  
compassion toward repentant sinners.

## **I. THE OPENLY REBELIOUS SON**

Luke 15:11-16

The younger son stood tall in the family as a bold, outspoken rebel. He got into his father's face and demanded his inheritance. If the father, died the elder brother would be in charge; obviously the younger son didn't want to wait for any of this to occur. He wanted to be his own master and move out from under his father's protective wing. He wanted freedom, arrogantly believing he could manage his money and take care of himself. This request broke the father's heart, yet he refused to argue.

## **I. THE OPENLY REBELIOUS SON**

Luke 15:11-16

Once the father's property reached the younger son, he no doubt quickly converted the inheritance of flocks and grains into spendable funds. These kinds of transactions ordinarily took several days of bargaining and negotiation. However, the careless son probably sold to the first bidder, at bargain prices. The son traveled a long way from home, intentionally breaking all family ties. He wasted his inheritance on extravagant, reckless living. He operated from an unsound mind and quickly depleted his funds.

## **I. THE OPENLY REBELIOUS SON**

Luke 15:11-16

Soon a famine hit the area. The son ended up impoverished, begging for a job. He ended up slopping pigs to feed himself, a despicable job for a Jew who labeled swine as unclean ([Leviticus 11:7](#)). His meals consisted of pods from a carob tree, food for poverty-stricken people and pigs.

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**I. THE OPENLY REBELIOUS  
SON**

Luke 15:11-16

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

As if the two previous parables ([vv. 3-10](#)) are not enough to fully illustrate His point, Jesus proceeds to tell a story which has become one of the greatest illustrations of man's relationship with God the Father. Here Christ illustrates people's sinful nature, how we wander away from God by our acts, and how God, through His loving compassion, seeks to save us from our sin, as well as God's attitude to repentant sinners who come to Him. It also illustrates the difference between God's concern and the attitude of the murmuring religious people over the salvation of a lost soul.

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The story's setting is a typical Jewish household where the children can live off their family's inheritance during their father's lifetime, while the estate remains under his control until his death. According to Jewish custom, and consistent with that of many countries (especially in Africa), at the death of the father, the children would share his inheritance among themselves. For example, among the Igbo of Nigeria, the eldest child would inherit one-half of the property, with the other half shared among the rest of the children. If there are only two children, the eldest receives two-thirds of the inheritance.

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However, in ancient Israel people, the eldest received the double portion of the inheritance ([Deuteronomy 21:17](#)), while the rest shared the remaining portion among them. Although most often the eldest son probably received the double portion since it was a patrilineal society, there is evidence that daughters also received an inheritance and may have been treated equally in some families.

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This knowledge will help us understand the implication of the younger child's request of the father, and the gravity of his sin. Asking his father, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," is irregular in the Jewish custom. It shows disrespect for the father and, by implication, amounts to treating the father as if he were already dead. Neither Jewish nor Roman law permitted the father to arbitrarily dispose of his estate.

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The young man asks his father to give him his own portion of his father's estate. His father complies, dividing his estate between his two sons. The younger son takes off after a few days to "a far country" with his inheritance. There he "wasted his substance with riotous living." The word here translated "wasted" is *diaskorpizo* (Gk. **dee-ahskor-PEED-zoh**) which means to disperse or scatter abroad; used in the context of money, it means to squander.

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Therefore, the young man squanders his possession with "riotous" (Gk. *asotos*, **ah-SO-toce**) or loose lifestyle. The word *asotos* is found only here in the New Testament. Its noun form, *asotia*, is found three times and translated as "excess" ([Ephesians 5:18](#)) and "riot" ([Titus 1:6](#); [1 Peter 4:4](#)). Jesus' parable therefore gives a picture of a young man overwhelmed with so much wealth who does not know how to control himself. He lives extravagantly.

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**I. THE OPENLY REBELIOUS  
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Luke 15:11-16

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

After he has "spent all" (*dapanao*, **dah-pah-NAH-o**), which means to incur expense in a good sense or to waste or squander in a negative sense, he finds himself starving. He becomes destitute in a foreign land. His situation is made worse because of "a mighty famine" that fell on that land. He is left without help, including those who helped him waste his riches. No one seems to care about him. The situation becomes so desperate that he accepts the most humiliating and repulsive type of work: taking care of swine.

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To this Jewish audience and many other nations, tending to swine is repugnant and degrading employment, because to them, pigs are unclean animals. Among the Egyptians, swine tenders were cut off from society – they were not allowed to marry even from the lowest class in society, and they could not worship the gods.

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His deplorable situation is heightened by the fact that not only does he accept this most humiliating job, but he also hungers after the pigs' food. The word "fain" is from *epithumeo* (Gk. **eh-pee-thoo-MEH-oh**), which can have a positive or negative meaning for strongly desiring something, including good deeds ([1 Timothy 3:1](#)), material goods ([Acts 20:33](#)) or a person ([Matthew 5:28](#)). This word and the clause "and no man gave unto him" suggest that he is in the field as a slave, feeding swine without food or pay. It also implies he is not even allowed to eat of the swine's food, just as slaves on sugar plantations were forbidden to eat any sugar cane on penalty of beating. How much lower could he go?

## **II. THE FLIGHT HOME**

Luke 15:17-20A

The rebellious son, in his demoralized state, began to change his mind about his father and repent. The father used to be the barrier between his money and a good time, but now, the son thinks of him as a fair and generous man. The son admitted he had messed up; he thought real living was doing anything and everything he pleased. He confessed that home with his father was better than living on his own. The son did not merely dwell on pleasant memories; he decided to return to his father. He rehearsed a confession, "I sinned against heaven," which revealed a heartfelt brokenness before God. He admitted, "I don't deserve anything." He'd ask his father to make him a hired servant, feeling he no longer deserved sonship.

## Lesson 9 April 26, 2026 A FAMILY REUNION



### II. THE FLIGHT HOME

#### Home Is Where I Belong

Luke 15:17-20A

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

The turning point of the story comes when his condition brings him to his senses, and he realizes that if he continues, it would be his end. Disillusioned by his desperate condition, he acknowledges how foolishly he acted by deserting his family, and plans a way to return home. "And when he came to himself" is a figurative way of saying that he came to his senses. Talking to himself out of frustration and disgusted with himself, he compares his present unpleasant and shameful condition to the condition of his father's "hired servants," or *misthios* (Gk. **MEESE-thee-ose**). They are paid servants, and they have "enough and to spare" while he is not even allowed to eat from the pigs' pen. The phrase "enough and to spare" is a translation of the Greek word *perisseuo* (**peh-rees-SU-oh**), which means superfluous, to have excess. They have more than enough while he suffers in poverty.

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## **II. THE FLIGHT HOME**

### **Home Is Where I Belong**

Luke 15:17-20A

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The thought of this spurs him to a decision. Instead of continuing in this despicable situation, he decides to return home and plead for the lowest place in his father's household. He rehearses how he is going to plead with his father. From this plea, we see a sense of remorse, repentance, faith, and action working together. He feels sorry for his action and repents. He has faith that his father would not reject his confession nor his plea. Hence, he says that he would go to his father and would confess to him saying, "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." He realizes that his sin is both vertical (against heaven) and horizontal (against his father) in nature.

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## II. THE FLIGHT HOME

### Home Is Where I Belong

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He doesn't say he sinned only against his father. He first says, "I have sinned against heaven." This reference to heaven is a substitute for God. God's residence is heaven, so to sin against heaven is to sin against Him ([Psalm 51:4](#)). This is the proper perspective on sin. All sin, no matter to whom it is against, is sin against God, for all sin is disobedience of God's law. Next the son acknowledges that what he did offended his father as well. The son's sadness over his sin is seen in the abdication of his rights as a son. He believes he is no longer "worthy" (Gk. *axios*, **AK-see-ose**), which conveys weight or value; it also has the secondary sense of what is congruous or befitting. The son is saying he is not fit to be a son because of his past sin.

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## **II. THE FLIGHT HOME**

### **Home Is Where I Belong**

Luke 15:17-20A

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

After his resolve to return home and rehearsing how he would approach his father, the prodigal son acts. He begins his journey home. As he gets near, his father sees him while he is still afar off, runs to him, embraces, and kisses him. The word "fell" translates the Greek verb *epiptō* (**eh-pee-PIP-tow**), which means to seize, embrace, to press or fall upon someone. Used metaphorically, it means to take possession of someone. It is used, for example, for the Holy Spirit in His inspiration and impulse. The word translated "kissed" here is *kataphileo* (**kah-tah-fi-LEH-oh**), which literally means to kiss in greeting or farewell.

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# **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

## **A Grand Welcome Back Home**

A few important facts should be noted here about the father. Although his son deserted the home, the father's love for him never wavered. He never stopped hoping and looking out for the return of his lost son, which is why he is able to recognize him afar off. He is driven by loving "compassion" (Gk. *splagchnizomai*, **splankh-NEED-oh-meye**), which literally means to be moved to one's bowels, seen as the seat of love and emotion. He runs immediately to meet him, affectionately hugging and kissing him. This clearly demonstrates God's extravagant love for the repentant sinner. He always yearns, and lovingly awaits, for the return of the wayward.

### **III. THE FORGIVING FATHER**

Luke 15:20B-24

The father saw his son coming home and ran toward him; he refused to wait. The son admitted his guilt, but the forgiving father interrupted; his return home said enough. The father ordered the servants to bring one of his best robes, a ring, and shoes, all symbolizing restored sonship. He insisted on a kingly feast, serving a prime calf, one the father may have been saving, in hopes of his son's return.

### **III. THE FORGIVING FATHER**

Luke 15:20B-24

The son returned to the father's loving arms instead of the shame and guilt that he thought would await him. Instead of condemnation, there was a celebration. The community which would have humiliated him now celebrates him. This would have been a shocking surprise to the earlier hearers of this story, and it is shocking even now. To know that we have a Heavenly Father who embraces us and removes our shame is an amazing reality that we ought to treasure. It also should motivate us to embrace others who may feel shame and guilt over wrongs they have done.

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### **III. THE FORGIVING FATHER**

#### **A Son Begs for Forgiveness**

Luke 15:20B-24

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

The son repeats his rehearsed speech before his father and throws himself at his mercy. The father's response is more than expected; he says to bring forth the best robe (Gk. *stole*, **stolay**). This word can refer to a garment worn by kings, priests, and people of rank. This would have been the father's robe since it was the best robe in the house. He receives a ring, which more than likely was a family signet ring. This ring symbolizes his reinstatement as a son. He puts shoes on his feet. Only servants walked around without shoes. By putting shoes on his feet, the father receives his son back as true family, not a hired hand.

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### **III. THE FORGIVING FATHER**

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Next the father calls for a fatted calf for them to kill and eat. For the father, it is time to be merry (*euphraino*, **ew-FRAI-no**). This word connotes being joyful and is often used for the merriment of a feast. This feast would include not just the immediate family; a fatted calf would have been enough to feed the whole village. The context shows that this family is well off, so this party would have included family, servants, neighbors, and friends.

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### **III. THE FORGIVING FATHER**

#### **A Son Begg for Forgiveness**

Luke 15:20B-24

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The father gives the reason for the occasion: there union with his son. He was dead (Gk. *nekros*, **nek-ROCE**) – this word can mean dead in a physical or spiritual sense – but now his son is alive again (Gk. *anazao*, **ah-NAD-zah-oh**). This word, found only in the New Testament, means to live again but also can mean being restored to a correct life. This is what happened to the prodigal son and what happens to all those who reunite with their heavenly Father. They are lost (Gk. *apollumi*, **ah-POE-loo-me**) – not in location, but destroyed or made of no use. Those without Christ are damaged and lack hope of being restored. Only God can restore them. The son was lost and was now found (Gk. *heurisko*, **hew-REES-koe**), which carries the usual meaning of discover or find; here it signifies how the lost person who is destroyed gets restored. They are found by God and put in right relationship with Him.

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# **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

## **The Misery of Arrogance and Selfishness**

In Jewish society, swine tenders would be treated as lepers. Jesus made use of this fact to show how desperate the young man was, to what depths of misery his riotous living had brought him. This illustrates the depravity and misery of sinners in their wrongdoing and sin.

# **BIBLE APPLICATION**

AIM: We will affirm that we all need to repent and return to a loving God; we can all rejoice at the prodigal son's return.

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**BIBLE APPLICATION**

It is easy to discard someone and treat them as an outcast. We often do it to celebrities who get into trouble with the law, or when one of the clergy has fallen into sin. This matter hits close to home when a relative is addicted to drugs or a child has gotten pregnant out of wedlock. God does not make light of our wrongs, but has nailed them all to the Cross. He can show compassion on us, so we can have compassion on those in our lives who society would treat as outcasts.

# **STUDENT RESPONSES**

AIM: We will see how love and changing attitudes can help bring families and relationships together.

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## **STUDENT RESPONSES**

Ask God to bring to mind any family member, friend, church member, or co-worker you might be holding something against. Read the Scriptures below, one each day this week, and make the verses a prayer for help with forgiveness:

[Matthew 6:14-15](#)

[Colossians 3:13](#)

[Ephesians 4:31-32](#)

[Matthew 18:21-22](#)

[2 Corinthians 2:5-8](#)

# Prayer

Lord,

Our families need extra love and care from You and from us. Give us Your peace, prosperity, and guidance on what to do and how to do. Holy Spirit, we need Your presence in each of us. Letting go of attitudes, accepting forgiveness, and learning ways to show love for one another, are crucial to building and restoring broken families.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

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Next Sunday  
May 3, 2026  
Lesson 10  
“Increased Faith”  
Luke 17:1-10