

GOING DEEPER

The Parable of the Two Sons | Luke 15:11–32
Pastor Patrick Bottoms • A Weekly Guide for Personal Bible Study & Reflection

CENTRAL TRUTH

The parable of the two sons reveals the steadfast character of the Father, whose mercy, grace, and love extend to sinners in need of repentance—whether their rebellion is obvious or hidden beneath an appearance of righteousness.

DAY 1 | Understanding the Father's Heart

Read: Luke 15:1–10; Luke 15:11–32

Jesus told three parables in response to the Pharisees and scribes grumbling because He received sinners and ate with them. The lost sheep, lost coin, and two sons reveal the gracious work of God's kingdom. The final parable draws our attention to the father and his response to both sons.

1. What prompted Jesus to tell these parables (Luke 15:1–2)?
2. What themes connect the lost sheep, lost coin, and two sons?
3. How does reading the parable in the context of Luke 15 shape its meaning?
4. What do the father's actions reveal about God?

Pray: Thank God for revealing His character through Scripture.

DAY 2 | The Nature of Rebellion

Read: Luke 15:11–19; Genesis 3:1–7; John 3:19–21

The younger son wanted his father's possessions without his father's authority. His departure illustrates the nature of sin: desiring the gifts of God while rejecting His rightful rule.

1. What does the inheritance request reveal about the son's heart?
2. How does his rebellion resemble the rebellion in Genesis 3?
3. Why do sinners resist the light according to John 3?
4. Where might we desire God's blessings while resisting His authority?

Pray: Ask God to expose pride and rebellion and grow joyful submission to His Word.

DAY 3 | The Father's Abundant Grace

Read: Luke 15:17–24; Ephesians 2:1–10; John 6:44

The younger son expected to return as a servant, but the father ran to him, embraced him, and restored him as a son. His compassion preceded the son's completed confession. The son received what he could never earn.

1. What brought the son to recognize his need?
2. How did the father's welcome differ from the son's expectation?

3. What do the robe, ring, sandals, and feast signify?
4. How does Ephesians 2 describe salvation as God's gracious work?
5. How does God's character encourage repentance?

Pray: Praise God for undeserved grace and the gift of salvation.

DAY 4 | The Danger of Self-Righteousness

Read: Luke 15:25–30; Matthew 23:25–28; Romans 3:9–24

The older son remained at home, yet his anger exposed pride and resentment. He treated his service as grounds for reward and resented the mercy shown to his brother. Outward obedience can conceal a heart far from the father.

1. What did the older son think his obedience entitled him to?
2. How does his response mirror the Pharisees' grumbling?
3. Why is concealed self-righteousness difficult to recognize?
4. How does Romans 3 challenge confidence in our own righteousness?

Pray: Ask God to replace pride with humility and grateful obedience.

DAY 5 | Rejoicing in the Kingdom's Work

Read: Luke 15:31–32; Luke 15:7; Luke 3:7–9

The parable ends without revealing whether the older son entered the feast. Jesus leaves the Pharisees—and us—with a call to recognize our need for repentance and rejoice in God's saving work.

1. Why might Jesus leave the older brother's response unresolved?
2. How does the father's final appeal reveal patience and steadfast love?
3. What does Luke 15 teach about rejoicing over repentance?
4. Where do you struggle to extend mercy to others?
5. How can your life reflect the Father as you make disciples?

Pray: Ask for a heart that rejoices in God's work and shares His mercy.

A TRUTH TO CARRY INTO THE WEEK

The younger son openly rejected his father; the older son stayed but did not share his father's heart. Both needed the same mercy and grace. May we repent humbly, rest in God's grace, and rejoice in the work of His kingdom.