

Introduction:

- Luke 15:11-20
- Hosea 2:1-11
- One thing that weighs heavy on every believing parents heart is the spiritual condition of a wayward/lost son or daughter. You want the best for your children. You want them to experience freedom and life. You want eternity written in their hearts. You want to spend eternity with the very people you brought into the earth.
- There are many sermons being preached about the return of wayward children. There are many prophetic words about the prodigals returning home. There are many prayers that are prayed daily for children to return home to God.
- What I desire to do this morning is to encourage and equip you in bringing these loved ones home. Encouragement is what most parents and siblings need when praying for the prodigal.
- The first thing I want to do is talk about what we are working with. To remind us of what it means. Sometimes as time goes by we forget what it was like when we were lost or not walking with God. Then we will look at some prayers. And last our position in prayer.

I. Understanding The Lost Life

- A. In Luke 15, we gain several insights into the wayward son's life. Three things will happen as we do:
 1. I want us to note these insights as a reminder that this was once our life too.
 - a) Doing this helps us to stay free of religion which turns off people from Christ.
 - b) Doing this helps us to stay humble as we approach God and our lost family.
 - c) Doing this helps us to recognize what they might be thinking and feeling.
 2. I also want us to note these insights because it gives us strategy in how to pray.
 - a) Pre-wayward. No pain, just FREEDOM!
 - b) Mid-wayward. When freedom shifts to pain and life starts getting fearful. Things are now getting beyond our control.
 - c) Post-wayward. No Freedom, just pain.
 - d) There is a strategy of prayer to be done in each scenario.
 3. It shows us what stage of return that loved one may possibly be in.
 - a) This helps us to prepare so that we do not get in God's way.
 - b) This helps us to prepare so we know how to encourage and to speak.
- B. The Wayward son is 'in control' of his life. Luke 15:12-16
 1. "Give me!" Luke 15:12, *"And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, **give me the share of property that is coming to me.**'"* (Luke 15:12, ESV)
 - a) Narcissistic - its all about me. It is the condition of most lost people.
 - b) Pride - I am doing it my way...no matter the cost.

- c) Arrogance - showing an attitude of superiority to the Father. "You know nothing!"
- 2. He does three things: And this is of his own doing...his own choices.
 - a) One, he leaves the fathers house and gets as far away from Father as he can. He is done with Fathers ways/rules/principals and watchful eye. Father is to confining. *"Running away from God starts by feeling free! Yet ends in misery."*
- John Piper.
- b) He, vs. 13 *"squandered his property in reckless living."*
 - (1) Squandered - he scattered, or dispersed his capital, his sustenance. No money management skills.
 - (2) Reckless - Gr. ασωτως - asotos - amusement, entertainment, recreation. He is free! And enjoying his freedom! Not aware of the sudden destruction that lies ahead.
- 3. He spent everything. That means he now has nothing. The one who was living a life of 'freedom' is now feeling the pain of his choices. (take note and stay out of God's way)
- C. The wayward son was no longer in control.
 - 1. "Interesting that a famine strikes" right when he has spent everything.
 - a) He is forced into working for a gentile pig farmer. He is moving from FREEDOM to bondage. He is eating worse than his fathers servants.
 - b) When you break your attachment with God the Father you will end up connected to something else and the end result will always be misery (now or later).
 - 2. The famine is beyond the control of the wayward son. The famine produces hunger at three levels:
 - a) Physically - he has no money. He longs to eat the slop he is feeding the pigs.
 - b) Emotionally - he has no friends. There is no one to help him. *"no one gave him anything."* vs 16
 - c) Spiritually - he is now realizing just how empty he is.
 - 3. It is here, in his hunger, that *"he came to himself"* or came to his senses. The word means to think rationally.
 - a) If you run from God you are running from yourself. This is where repentance is required because of waking up to the truth. We are praying for awakening in our nation. Let it begin with wayward sons and daughters!
 - b) When one is awakened to the truth, he starts turning to God and in so doing comes to himself, comes to his sense. "Made by God, to be like God, for God!"

John Piper.

4. Knowing this reminds us that we were once lost too, and in need of mercy. Gives us strategy to pray and prepares us to receive and to love! Hosea 2:6-7 Gives us the same picture only its Hosea's adulterous wife: thorns, walls, confusion, loneliness...then she decides to return to her husband. Hosea, like Father, has love greater than the pain. "The reason Hosea didn't give up on his wife when the pain was at its most intense is because His love was greater than his pain." ^{Steve}
 Hobbins, Pastor Toledo Ohio. Your love has to be greater than the pain caused by your wayward child.

II. Praying For The Wayward One

- A. Get 'em God! But be as tender and merciful as possible. This is important! Do not let your own anger or disappointment cause you to pray vindictive prayers. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. Still true when you pray.
 1. Mercy triumphs over judgement. James 2:13.
 2. God is rich in mercy. Eph. 2:4
 3. Love covers a multitude of sin. 1 Peter 4:8
 4. Remove the blinders from the eyes that they might perceive truth. 2 Cor 3:14. Eph 2:18
- B. "Lord change me!" Sometimes we are so focused on others that we forget that, maybe God wants us to change first. Don't be afraid of the Psalms in which David expresses his disappointment and pain.
 1. Maybe God wants to work on our pain, our bitterness, our disappointments first.
 2. Maybe God wants you to find comfort in Him first.
 3. Maybe God wants to take a little self-righteousness out of us first.
 4. Maybe Gods wants to take our despair and change it into joy and thanksgiving.
 5. Maybe God wants us to live in His anointing so that His kindness and pleasure will be expressed clearly to that prodigal that comes home.
- C. Get 'em God. May life's pain point the prodigal home. Note: the wayward son, in Luke 15, *did not start the process of change until the pain of not changing was greater than the pain of change itself.* AA calls that the bottom. May your prodigal find the bottom fast. The bottom is different for each one but it still feels the same.
 1. Another name for this is brokenness. "Lord, break me but be gentle." That is how we should pray. Hosea 2:6 God speaks of hedging her way with thorns. What is He talking about? He is talking about using pain to keep her moving towards home.
 2. To process pain we have to see accurately. So we bind truth to the wayward one. We bind lying spirits from deceiving. Pain can point to a bottle just as easy as it

can point to a Bible. Pain can point to a pill just as easy as it can point to the person of Christ.

3. Most prodigals do not look for help until they become very needy. We don't just want to solve a need we want the need to meant in Christ.

D. Lord, Use My Wayward Child's Friends

1. A prodigal expects his parents to push him toward God. Therefore they very often disregard them as a voice in their life. On the other hand, a friend, a stranger, a neighbor all have a better opportunity to get through to them. Pray godly people into their path and life.
2. Pray things like, "Lord, bring a godly friend into my prodigal's life to share the message of hope and demonstrate a life of lived in You. Bring somebody who will love my wayward child with Your love and point them to Jesus.

E. Pray and Fast for Holy Spirit to Get 'em!

1. Nobody works like the Holy Spirit can! Dreams, visions, encounter, etc.
2. The Holy Spirit brings conviction that prepares the hearer for the entrance of the Word!
3. The Holy Spirit brings conviction and brokenness to the human heart like no one else can.
4. The Holy Spirit has options that we will never ever think of until they come home and tell us.
5. The Holy Spirit can reveal the kindness of God, love of God, compassion of God like no one else can! May they truly see the goodness of God and desire to come home. Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved.

III. My Posture In Prayer

A. Don't worry be happy

1. Joy is your strength, "...*And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*" (Ne 8:10). We are joyful because of who He is and what He has already done. Praise Him and thank Him!
2. Joy helps you endure the wait! Through faith and patience we inherit the promises.
3. Praise silences the enemy. "*You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.*" (Psalm 8:2, NLT)
4. Praise brings breakthrough. Sing a lot! Acts 16:25-30 Paul and Silas in prison.

B. Know that all things are possible for those who believe. Mk 9:23

1. Faith that reaches an entire house! "*They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household."*" (Acts 16:31, NLT)

2. The promises are real! *"Thus says the Lord: 'Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work, declares the Lord, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future, declares the Lord, and your children shall come back to their own country.'*" (Jeremiah 31:16-17, ESV)
3. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Heb 11:6
- C. Say and see; in that order.
 1. When you stand in faith in the truth of God's Word and pray His promises over your children, you will begin to see change.
 2. Speak it when you do not see it! The enemy over time will try to discourage you. You have to read it, write it, speak it, sing it! Until you see it! When you see it, speak it bold in prayer.
- D. God never fails.
 1. *"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."* (2 Corinthians 1:20, ESV)
 2. *"... Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant."* (1 Kings 8:56, ESV)
 3. If you are believing God to bring your child back to Him, declare it daily. Don't be moved by what you see be moved by what God has said.
 4. As you are speaking, this is to God no anyone else.
 5. You have authority. *"Behold! I have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you."* (Luke 10:19, AMP)

E. If God Never Fails Then You Never Quit!

1. Through faith and patience inherit the promises.
2. Look to Jesus the Author and Finisher of your faith.

Conclusion:

- A month could be spent on this topic. But I believe what you need most is inspiration to keep on praying when it looks like nothing is happening.
- Amazing Grace