

Like A Son | A Father Who Loves You Like A Son | GUIDE - Luke 15:11-32

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Many people struggle with the idea of God as a Father. This is because many of us have issues with our own earthly fathers that we tend to displace onto our own image of God. Jesus captured the father abandonment wound perfectly when He said . . .

Matthew 27:46 (NLT) At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means **"My God, my God, why have you abandoned Me?"**

The sinful nature we were born into tends to make us feel that the chasm between us and God is simply too far to bridge. To avoid God in this way is to miss redemption altogether. We need to understand that when Jesus was on the cross, He bore that abandonment in order to bring the Father and His children back together. Your Father is dying to meet you, to know you, and to be known by you. You may want to read **Luke 15:11-32** to better prepare for today's topic.

The Generosity of the Father - **Luke 15:12** I want my share of *your estate*

Everything Belongs to the Father. He created everything out of nothing. You will never see or stand upon anything that did not come from His hand. If it is good, it is as He intended. If it is evil, it has been corrupted (but it still came from Him).

Everything you Possess, He Gave you. Yet He freely gives, even if we use it against Him. Despite what we may have been told, God is not stingy with His gifts. He is KIND and GENEROUS and wants wonderful things for our earthly and spiritual lives.

Matthew 5:48 (NLT) But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

The Wisdom of the Father - **Luke 15:12** So *his father agreed* to divide his wealth

At times we may question the wisdom of the Father, but God knows what He's doing. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, we might call the father an unwise enabler, giving his wealth to his immature son. But this story is meant as a metaphor; we are all the prodigal, we are all slaves. Will we ever concede that it is goodness that leads to change?

Romans 2:4 (NLT) Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that His kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

Repentance produced by guilt will not last, but when produced by goodness and kindness it will.

The Compassion of the Father

Luke 15:20 ...his father saw him coming. **Filled with love and compassion**, he ran to his son...

2 Samuel 18:33 (NLT) ...he cried, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son."

Just as David mourns his son when he dies, God mourns us when we stray. Just as the father in Luke 15 was overjoyed upon his son's return, God is also delighted when we return to Him.

Ephesians 3:18 (NLT) And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.

Do you have any idea the kind of love that can look upon an unkempt, mess of a man, covered in the remnants of the pigpen and see none of that? All the Father could see was His Son!

The Forgiveness of the Father - Luke 15:22 **"But his father said..."**

Forgiveness was an Action, Not Mere Words. The son spits out his prayer of forgiveness. The Father jumps to the party! Forgiveness is an action with the Father. It is not mere theology.

Romans 4:5 (NLT) But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners.

Why do you think God will not forgive you? Why do you not feel forgiven? Admit it, you don't get it. God doesn't make sense to you. ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL? Isn't that the best news ever?

The Intercession of the Father - Luke 15:28 **His father came out and begged him,**

This is a Disturbing Picture. An angry slave of a son opposes his caring Father. He is trying to restore both of his sons. He is pleading with this son, "Son, can you not see how wonderful this is? Do you not understand that we must celebrate?"

How Could We Ever Think God is Against Any of us? He cares about us and He cares about how we relate to each other; how could we ever call down judgment on anyone else? Why not react with mercy just as God does?

James 5:19-20 (NLT) ... if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, 20 you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

The Joy of the Father - Luke 15:32 **We had to celebrate** this happy day.

Your Father is VERY HAPPY. He is always in a good mood and He is always ready to celebrate! It's why there is so much beauty in the world. It's why life has so many reasons to celebrate built right in: birth, birthdays, marriage, parenthood, successes, retirement, even death is a celebration.

- *He Loves To Celebrate You.* He shares your joys and achievements.
- *He Loves When We Celebrate Him.* When we magnify His glory He shares it!
- *He Loves When We Celebrate Each Other.*

Romans 12:10 (NLT) ...take delight in honoring each other.

You look so much like your Daddy. I'm not talking about all those empty affirmations taught in some self-development classes. I'm talking about how beautiful you really are when you act like your Papa! Just in case there is any question about what Your Papa looks like:

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Every Christian must come to know God as Father. Don't hold God at an arm's length. Trust Him. Surrender to Him. Take the journey that He is calling you on.

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *How do the issues that we have with our earthly fathers affect our perception of God?*
- *How has God been generous and kind to you? How often do you think about God's kindness and generosity? What might cause us to doubt it?*
- *Of the six characteristics of God discussed today, which is the most encouraging and why?*
- *How might we "celebrate" God? How could we honor each other? Discuss **Romans 12:10.***
- *Did you discover anything about God today that you did not realize? Discuss it with the group.*
- *Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?*