

Shift - Earner To Heir | The Father Is Not Who You Think |

GUIDE - *Luke 15:11-24*

www.ordinaryfaith.net/sermons/the-father-is-not-who-you-think/

Chances are good that your opinion of God is inaccurate. We all know that "God is Love", but what does that mean? When we trust in God's Love, we submit to Him and serve Him because of what He has done and what He has given. We stop trying to earn His gifts.

Am I A Good Man?

Decades had passed since Capt John Miller had used his last words to state, "Earn this." Those words clung to Private Ryan his entire life. Can you imagine living with the weight of that moment for the rest of your life? You could never be free of it. In fact, Jack Ryan's poor wife tries and fails to help him put his burdened heart back together. "You ARE a good man."

What if you couldn't earn it? If you worked 100 hours a week, making \$1000 an hour, for 40 years. You would earn 208 million dollars. But no amount of money would afford you an eternity of bliss, with no more death and no more sorrow. No amount of money will buy you an audience with the Creator of the universe. Besides, God doesn't want your money. God doesn't want what you can earn.

Isaiah 64:6 (NLT) ...When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags.

What Do You Think About God? (Luke 15:11-24)

The Father has Endured the MOST Brutal of Insults.

Luke 15:12 (NLT) "I want my share of your estate now before you die."

Time and time again, God's children demonstrate *entitlement*. "Give me what You have sacrificed to build with no effort on my part." "I don't want You. I don't want a relationship with You. Just give me what I am ENTITLED to and I'll be on my way."

Can you feel that? You have probably experienced utter and complete rejection by your own child. You brought them into this world. You sacrificed, protected and suffered through sickness, colic, tears, crying, temper tantrums, worry. You hoped they would enjoy life, succeed, and make a difference. Most parents have had a moment or two in this neighborhood. **But it gets worse...**

The Father has Endured the MOST Humiliating Treatment.

Luke 15:12 (NLT) "this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land"

There is a scene in the last few minutes of the film "The Hobbit". Bilbo has returned home after his adventure. He finds an estate sale in the shire. HIS ESTATE! They are selling all of his possessions. Then, to add insult to injury, they make him prove He is Bilbo, even though they know who he is.

Bilbo's son had dragged the family name through the mud turning his inheritance into cash. It's one thing when you have a falling out with your child. It's entirely another thing when all your friends witness the DRAMA.

This is Genesis 3. This is the backstory that involves what you can't see in the drama with the snake and the judgments of God. This is the insult that ALL OF MANKIND levied at the Father, accusing HIM of being the unreasonable one. All this happens while we throw our temper tantrum.

The Father Endured All of that in Expectancy of His Son's Return.

Luke 15:12 (NLT) "And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming"

Yet, the Father was ever vigilant for His Son's return. When he first caught sight of him, he

dropped everything to run to him. The Head of Household in ancient Israel did not "RUN" to their children. That act would have been humiliating, but still, he ran.

He embraced his filthy son and kissed this homeless beggar, fresh from the pigpens. He called all business dealings for the day and invited EVERYONE to celebrate the return of His Son. He invited the same people who had gossiped while the son sold everything, who looked down upon the failure of the Father to control his son. He did not care. His son was home, safe, and back in the family.

The One Who Deserves all the Praise, all the Glory, has Endured all of Our Abuse. It's time to change our thinking. We don't deserve God's blessing. We enjoy God's blessing. We live in the Garden just like Adam. We pluck the low hanging fruit and we live. We consume the fruit. We lose the fruit. Because of the corruption of the world, the fruit may go bad. We must learn to celebrate the gifts, grieve the losses, and enjoy the next season of blessing.

How Much Could You Earn?

The Son's Way Home Was As An Earner.

Luke 15:18-19 (NLT) I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."

Consider the son's "earnings" in the pigpen. It was there that he was finally reaching his earnings potential. Before that, he enjoyed and took for granted the Father's earning potential. He never got to the last sentence. There was no way he could ever recover what was lost. There was no earning his way out of this. The Father had no interest in more servants. The Father only wanted His son.

You Can't Earn This

When we trust in God's Love, we submit to Him and serve Him because of what He has done and what He has given. We stop trying to earn His gifts. You can surrender to the Father's goodness. You can submit to the Father's mission. Stop trying to earn your way through religion and return home.

Romans 3:22-24 (NLT) We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. 23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Talk About It...

- *Of all the people you know or have even heard of, who do you think will go to heaven? Why?*
- *Who deserves to go to heaven? Why?*
- *Highlight or underline any words or phrases that you find interesting in [Luke 15:11-24](#). Discuss your selections with the group.*
- *If you had been the Father in the story of Luke 15, how would you have felt at the son's request? What possible reasons could the son have for his request?*
- *Discuss the things the Father endured throughout this affair. Why would He?*
- *The son's first plan was to earn his way back into the household. Why do you think he abandoned that plan?*
- *What are ways we try to earn our way into God's favor and into heaven?*
- *What do you learn about God from this scripture? What do you learn about People?*
- *If you really believe this is from God, what should you do?*

- *What did you discover that you would be excited to share with a friend?*