

## Does God Really Love Humanity? (Part II)

**Luke 15:11-12:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>*And he said, A man had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. So he divided his wealth between them.*



Jesus was and is evidence of God's love for humanity. The proof is not just in the fact that he came to ransom us from sin and death. It is also displayed in how he taught us God's plan. Still, it is admittedly hard to grasp what God's plan is about - especially when Jesus spoke in parables. Two weeks ago we looked at the first two of a string of five parables he spoke to a very diverse audience of God's people. All of those stories were, as a whole, designed to show God's love for His creation. They were also to demonstrate to God's chosen their responses to that love. This proved to be a two-edged sword, as those

responses (evidenced by our two parables today - the Prodigal Son and the Unjust Steward) were sometimes really bad. Does Jesus pointing out glaring weaknesses in God's people actually display God's love? Let's find out!

Here are the stories - we discussed the first two in Part I:

recap  
recap

-  [The Lost Sheep \(Luke 15:3-7\)](#)
-  [The Lost Coin \(Luke 15:8-10\)](#)
-  [The Prodigal Son \(Luke 15:11-32\)](#)
-  [The Unjust Steward \(Luke 16:1-15\)](#)
-  [The Rich Man and Lazarus \(Luke 16:19-31\)](#)

**Remember the audience: Mixed, NONE of whom were truly following God and the Jewish Law:**

**Luke 15:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near him to listen to him. <sup>2</sup>Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them. <sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable, saying...*




**The Lost Sheep:** A parable showing the one lost sheep representing the entire human race. Humanity was lost and Jesus came to find it. Jesus leaves his heavenly home, recovers the sheep and returns to heaven. All of God's family rejoices over the rescue of humanity.

**The Lost Coin:** A parable about a woman losing one coin from her complete set of ten. It causes her to go to any length to find it. It represents how the human race, as part of God's intelligent creation, was lost and needed to be found to restore the harmony of His intelligent creation. It gives us a sense of the mechanics of lost humanity and how it is part of God's creation.



What has Jesus taught this mixed audience so far? "You are ALL out of harmony with God. No matter how good or how bad you might feel about your current position, you still need me to restore you before God."

God's Love  
for  
Humanity 

...is expressed in the comprehensive **DETAIL** of the powerful **PLAN** He gave us so we can know what is coming.



Jesus continues with another story. With the foundation of all men being out of favor already stated, Jesus now delves into *what happened to Israel* (the chosen ones) when given an opportunity from God.

Luke 15:11: (NASB) *And he said, A man had two sons...*

All of Israel were "God's children," but the two classes Jesus was now speaking to represented the *two sons*:

| Who?            | Representing:   | Description:   |
|-----------------|---|--|
| The older son   | Scribes and Pharisees                                   | Outwardly in line with God. They looked the part because they claimed to follow the Law. |
| The younger son | The tax collectors and sinners who treated God loosely. | Rebellious/independent. They did not pay much attention to the Law.                      |

Jesus' message is changing. It is getting more focused for his specific audience as he asks, "See what God has done for you? What do you do for Him?"

**This third story of the Prodigal Son was very relatable. What would his audience have been thinking?**

The two groups in Jesus' audience were very different. This story would draw in the self-proclaimed, entitled leaders immediately, while capturing the imaginations of the rest. Jesus attracted the clear attention of both groups by showing them their roles. He would then show them their entitlement issues.



Let's face it, we have massive issues with entitlement that keep us from seeing God's love. Entitlement is an ancient response that is still all around us.



**Definition, *The Entitlement Cure*, John Townsend (author), Fox 4 Dallas**

- *Let's talk about what entitlement is and if you've got a real quick definition. It's two things - denying responsibility for your choices and demanding special treatment. We all do that sometimes.*
- *Yeah, well there's normal levels of entitlement, which is human, but then there's toxic levels, and that's when it starts to impact work, and family, and*

*parenting, and careers in this sort of thing. So, when I deny that my actions impact you because I do impact you and you impact me.*

- *Right, and when you say the word “entitlement,” a lot of people of a certain age will immediately say, “Oh this is a book to fix those Millennials at my job. That’s what this is all about.”*
- *Right, and it is not. I did a lot of research on this. We found out that every demographic has it, but I know people in their mid-20s that are like really cool and hardworking, roll up their sleeves. They’re driven. I know people in their 80s that are just absolute nightmares, so it’s a human problem, not a Millennial problem.*

### There was drama right at the start of the Parable of the Prodigal Son:

**Luke 15:12-13:** (NASB) <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.

In other words, “Give me what is mine,” as though the father were already dead. This was disrespectful.

*So he divided his wealth between them. <sup>13</sup>And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.*

How easily the tax collectors and sinners could have seen themselves in this action. How easily the Pharisees and Scribes might have smiled in knowing agreement as they heard this.



### **Opie and the Spoiled Kid in 5 Minutes, The Andy Griffith Show (1961)**

A friend of Opie’s rides up on a beautiful shiny bicycle...

- *Hiya, Taylor!*
- *Hi, Arnold!*
- *Gosh, you must have been saving up for it since you’s a kid.*
- *My dad bought it for me. Come on Taylor, hop on the rack and I’ll give you a ride.*
- *I can’t. I gotta get this garage cleaned up.*
- *What happens if you don’t?*
- *I don’t get my quarter this week.*
- *Kids aren’t supposed to work for their allowance.*
- *My Pa is awful busy. Maybe hasn’t heard this new stuff.*
- *Maybe.*
- *Ok. I’ll ask him.*
- *Take it from me, talking is a waste of time. You have to take action - kicking a table leg, rolling around on the floor, kicking your feet, pretending you can’t stop crying.*
- *Gosh, I don’t know.*
- *Oh, for crying out loud, Taylor! (starts to cry)*
- *Hey Arnold, take it easy Arnold. I didn’t mean to say nothing wrong!*
- *Get the idea?*

His friend shows Opie how to be entitled. You do not have to work for anything - just throw a tantrum. Entitlement started when Lucifer declared he would be like the Most High in Isaiah 14:14.

## Now the inevitable crash and burn, which is always an eventual result of claiming entitlement:

**Luke 15:14-16:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. (Famines eventually occur where entitlement reigns. There are famines when we hoard more than we earn.) <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, (He now became attached to and dependent upon a pagan; someone outside of God) and he sent him into his fields (far away from the "fun" he left to find) to feed swine. (Jews were not allowed to keep or eat swine. In such a godless place, survival would come from engaging in unclean activity out of desperation.) <sup>16</sup>And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

The younger son was broke, hungry and alone. We can imagine the sinners and publicans squirming as the Pharisees and Scribes gloated.

**Luke 15:17-19:** (NASB) <sup>17</sup>But when he came to his senses, (after learning the harsh lessons of a life lived in utter idolatry) he said, How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! (His first thought is about accepting the lowest level of servitude.) <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.



In the Jewish culture, a slave was one step below being in the family. Slaves had security. A hired hand was hired for the day's work. They would then have to find another day's work in another place. The hired hand was a lower position than the slave because there was less security. The son considered even the lowest position to be valuable.



...can begin to be approached  
by being entirely honest with ourselves  
when we realize the depth  
of our own sin and folly.  
Now we must prepare to boldly face  
accountability.

## Clear and humble thinking becomes decisive and bold action:

**Luke 15:20-24:** (NASB) <sup>20</sup>So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

The shock of the story begins - who would have thought the father would see him afar off? Does this indicate the father was looking for him?

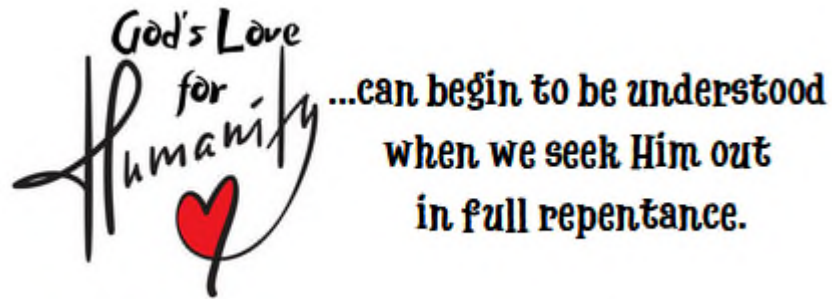
<sup>21</sup>And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

He cannot even finish his plea before his father interrupts him. His father loves him too much.

<sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; <sup>23</sup>and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and



celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to celebrate.



Even though this was a story for the straying Jewish people of that time, its lessons for us are unmistakable.

**Humility reunites a family, and God's love prevails.  
A perfect setting for a happily ever after...right?**

Jesus' whole point is to show God's love, but he shows it in stark contrast to the reactions and responsiveness of those whom God has chosen. This story will reveal the sad truth of an entitlement mentality long before anyone ever thought about it, as this is a universal story about the hearts of men.

When was the last time you  
looked in a mirror  
to examine feelings of  
**ENTITLEMENT?**

While Jesus was specifically talking to a Jewish audience about how they were straying away from the Law, the dynamics of the lesson resound in our lives.

 **Foster gratitude, *Dealing With Entitled Kids, Greater Good Science Center***

- I think one of the most consistent complaints that I hear about this generation of children that's being brought up is that they can sometimes be entitled brats. That they can act a little ungrateful for all that we do for them and how much we care about them. And as parents this can be a very frustrating experience to be raising a child, giving them everything and feeling like they're not thankful for it. So, how do we combat entitlement? Well, I think of the opposite of entitlement as being gratitude, and so one way to combat entitlement is to foster gratitude in our children.*

 **Prodigal Son Lesson: Foster gratitude.**

For the tax collectors and sinners, the Parable of the Prodigal Son was welcomed news with a happy ending. No matter how far they had run from their Father to fulfill the fallen desires of their hearts, they now saw a way back.



## Jesus assures them what they had been hearing from both him and John the Baptist was true:

Matthew 3:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup>Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 3:10-13: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>And the crowds were questioning him, saying, Then what shall we do? <sup>11</sup>And he would answer and say to them, The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise. <sup>12</sup>And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, Teacher, what shall we do? <sup>13</sup>And he said to them, Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.

Everyone is to be generous and grateful with their opportunities. John set the stage for Jesus' lessons.

At the point of the story's gracious reunion, we would expect the Pharisees and Scribes were irritated, because that is what entitlement produces. The younger son was not the only entitled one. The older son was also entitled.

Luke 15:25-28: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. <sup>27</sup>And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.

A fattened calf was normally put aside for unexpected visitors. Here is the point at which one's character will be revealed: Are you a loving brother or an entitled son?

<sup>28</sup>But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began **pleading <3870>** with him.

**Pleading:** Strongs #3870 *parakaleo*, to call near, i.e. invite, invoke (by imploration, exhortation or consolation)

How often did God plead with Israel? Sending Jesus was a three-and-a-half year pleading of grace and mercy. They were supposed to be able to find the Messiah, who was standing right in front of them.

## The older son's argument was, "I am entitled!"

Luke 15:29-30: (NASB) <sup>29</sup>But he answered and said to his father, Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; <sup>30</sup>but when this son of yours (notice: not "my brother") came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.

Israel was acting childish in their entitlement.



IT IS EASY TO OVERLOOK  
A LIFETIME OF PRIVILEGE  
WHEN WE SEE SOMEONE ENJOY  
A MOMENT OF ACCEPTANCE.

This type of entitlement brings us away from the love of God. It was a test for the older son, who represented the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus knew they would be angry upon hearing this thinly-veiled story about them. His warning was, "You are not living in the love of God; you are paying lip service." We should not fall into the same trap.



**Abundance paradox, *Dealing With Entitled Kids*, Greater Good Science Center**

- *Now, there is something of what I think of as an abundance paradox happening right now in that our kids have so much. Even kids in the United States who seemingly don't have a lot have a lot more than they do in some of the developing nations, for example. This abundance that our children have makes it more likely that they will feel disappointed when they don't get what they want, then they will feel grateful when they do. So, gratitude is one of those emotions that arises really naturally in conditions of scarcity. So, you don't find a lot of picky eaters among kids who are food insecure, who are hungry. So, what do we do when our kids have so much? We don't want to create this condition of scarcity. It's great for them that they have this abundance. What we need to do is consciously cultivate that gratitude in them. To give them habits, routines, situations in their regular daily and weekly life which foster the emotion of gratitude.*

When you have everything, it is easy to assume you deserve everything.



When packing your child's lunch, consider preparing extra and telling them, "If you see another child in need, give this to them." This shows compassion to the child who has the beautiful prepared lunch.



★ We need to put ourselves in the mindset of appreciation. God, through this parable, was explaining how the Jewish people were not appreciating what they had been given.

**What was the consequence for the younger son's sin? Did he get away with something?**

Luke 15:31-32: (NASB) <sup>31</sup>And he said to him, Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.

The consequence was the younger son would receive no further inheritance even though new wealth would be created over time. Although the younger son was reinstated, he had to live with his mistakes.

<sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, (God's love in action) for this brother of yours...

Remember, the older son had referred to his brother as *this son of yours*. The father reminds him that as his brother he should respond with respect and love.

...was dead and has begun **to live <2198>**, and was lost and has been found.

**To live:** Strong's #2198 *zaó*, 1) to live, breathe, be among the living (not lifeless, not dead); 2) to enjoy real life; 2a) to have true life and worthy of the name

He finally began to live a life of value because his repentance was complete. He was willing to get nothing going forward.

★ There is a beauty in forgiveness for such complete repentance.



...is expressed in  
powerful **COMPASSION**,  
as well as a just and equitable **PLAN**.  
Loyalty is rewarded with inheritance.  
Repentance is rewarded with  
opportunity.

★ This is a humbling and sad conclusion to what should have been a happy ending. We should ask, "Am I ever like the older son?"

**The older son is mad, and the younger son is unexpectedly happy. What is the bottom line lesson?**

The big lesson here really focused Jesus' audience on looking "in the mirror." The tax collectors and sinners had openly rebelled against their chosen people's status and needed repentance and forgiveness. The Pharisees and Scribes had covertly rebelled by outwardly doing godly things but doing them with a stony heart. They, too, needed repentance and forgiveness. The entire Jewish nation had fallen away from God.

★ Those of us who are mature are NOT exempt from such self-lauding. For us the lesson is the same. Ask, "Am I at all rebellious, squandering my God honoring privilege and needing repentance and forgiveness? Am I complacent in my accomplishing of what needs to be done in God's service, but doing it with a heart of stone and therefore needing forgiveness?"

We are judged on our heart intent, even if we are doing the right things on the outside.



...is expressed in the **CLARITY**  
with which He reveals  
not only privileges and inheritance,  
but also the **HONESTY**  
with which He reveals  
our human weakness and lack.



Jesus' next story is in the same context as the others, but directed to a different part of his audience - his disciples: Luke 16:1: (NASB) *Now he was also saying to the disciples, There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions.*



| Who?                               | Representing:              |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| The rich man                       | God                        |
| The steward                        | Scribes and Pharisees      |
| Those whose accounts were past due | Sinners and tax collectors |

 **Texting on job interview, *The Entitlement Cure*, John Townsend, Fox 4 Dallas**

- *You have some outlandish other examples, though, like I tell the story about this guy who went for a job interview who was turned down for the job because he spent 20 minutes of the job interview texting while the HR manager...*
- *...he's in front of a desk like this?*
- *...during a job interview.*
- *...a professional income job.*
- *Right. Then after the HR person said, “You know, this probably just isn't a good fit for us,” the HR person got a phone call.*
- *Guess who from? Angry mom who said, “You don't understand how special our kid is,” and that was the big jaw dropper. My wife told me the story. The HR director was a friend of hers. The problem is, you understand the kid's got a lot of learning to do, but the mom has to take some responsibility.*

The young man's self-absorption did not allow him to own the opportunity.

In this story, Jesus is extending the warning specifically to the Pharisees and Scribes.

**He is also telling them how they *should* be acting in light of their soon-to-be-lost favor:**

Luke 16:2-4: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>And he called him and said to him, What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.

No matter what he did now, he was going to be fired.

<sup>3</sup>The manager said to himself, What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig;

This was honest work of an average person, like the prodigal son, who would do anything.

*I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.*

This was a panicked approach. How will he live without this most favored position?



### He finally acts responsibly:

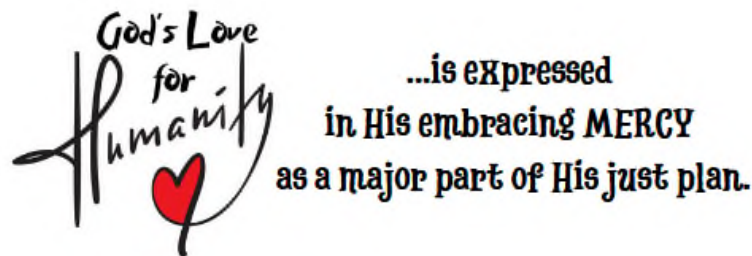
Luke 16:5-7: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, (a long overdue action) and he began saying to the first, How much do you owe my master? <sup>6</sup>And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty. <sup>7</sup>Then he said to another, And how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, Take your bill, and write eighty.

He discounts what they owed to the master. This was simply applying good business savvy and he should have been actively collecting debts all along. The steward had an ongoing lack of respect for his master and was lazy.

Likewise, the Pharisees had a lack of respect for the job they had in bringing the community to God.

Luke 16:8: (NASB) *And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.*

Jesus' point: Sadly, those in the business world were more astute regarding responsibility than those tasked with being stewards over God's favored ones. These demean and shun those who are "past due" instead of working with them to reestablish a restored and favorable standing with God.



God's justice functions with mercy. Jesus' disciples would be the stewards later on, so this was applicable to them as well as the Scribes and Pharisees.



They were to look at the failure in this story and learn the appropriate lesson: God's justice embraces mercy.

Once again, an ancient parable of Jesus helps us to see the danger of ever seeing ourselves as entitled.

**This is a very blunt judgment on the part of Jesus.  
What is he telling the Pharisees and Scribes to do?**

Looking at these four parables, Jesus painted the big picture of God's love in the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. Then he painted the smaller, personally-relevant picture of responsibility to that love in the Prodigal Son and the Unjust Steward. He is showing his audience where they are and what to do about it. "Just get over yourself and LET GOD LOVE YOU!" How are we supposed to do that?

Luke 16:9: (NASB) *And I say to you, (to his disciples, not the Pharisees) make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.*



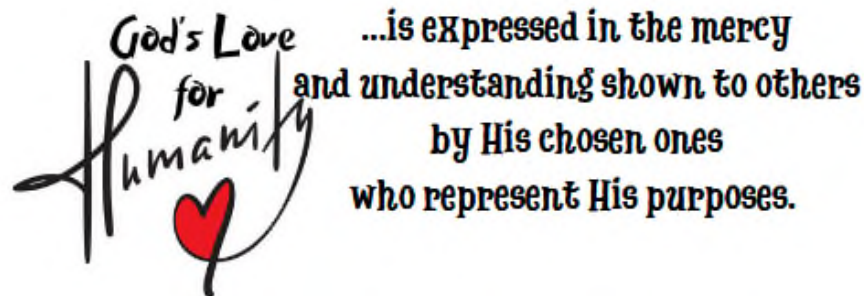
The "Rick paraphrase" of this verse: "I tell you, my disciples, be merciful to and honest with all whom you have dealings. Do not look down on those who are not in your position. Once this world and the comparably small responsibilities we bare in it passes, you will be received into a heavenly reward for so doing." Be gracious, merciful and just in all you do and God will reward you. This is Christlikeness.

Jesus' message is: "Do not do what your predecessors are doing for they have lost the privilege of stewardship as a result. Instead, see others as I see them."

1 Peter 2:11-12: (NASB) <sup>11</sup>*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.* <sup>12</sup>*Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Peter later on tells us how we should act especially when in the company of Gentiles - unbelievers.

★ Jesus' disciples are supposed to rise above entitlement, laziness and ego to reach for something higher.



We are expressions of God's love for humanity. If we are not living as such, maybe we are feeling a bit entitled. We need to be careful.

🔊) **The entitlement cure, *The Entitlement Cure*, John Townsend, Fox 4 Dallas**

- *The problem here is that somebody who has that attitude, you call it the entitlement cure. That's got to come from inside, because you are never going to convince that person that they have this disease.*
- *Sooner or later you have to be in a context where they know you like them and you are for me. If you're mad at them all the time they withdraw. Secondly, you've got to show them that they are responsible for their actions and for their future, because they don't think about the future very much.*
- *And maybe when they've hit enough dead ends it might dawn on them that "Maybe I'm the problem, not everybody else."*
- *Pain is a teacher.*

★ Pain is a teacher. God's love for humanity often comes through pain. We experience pain of being out of harmony and out of favor with God by what we say, think and do. This can bring us to the realization of what we need to do to come back.



Jesus then goes on to enhance this critical lesson of caring for the things of God.

**At this point, the Pharisees are not at all happy with these lessons - rightfully so for they were being exposed:**

Luke 16:10-12: (NASB) *<sup>10</sup>He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.*

This is the core of the matter - this world's experience is a test for future stewardship worthiness. The Jewish nation did not do that job well and lost it. They had the Messiah in front of them, but they rejected him.

*<sup>11</sup>Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?*

Both of the parables we reviewed have to do with *how people handled the responsibility given to them*. With the Prodigal Son, the younger son demanded what was to be his but was not yet. The older son saw the younger returned as a broken man and felt it was not fair that he was being welcomed back, even though the older son now owned everything. The older son had no sense of loyalty and responsibility.



This Unjust Steward is about not taking care of the little things for which we have responsibility. If we cannot do that, how can God trust us with the big things later?

**The Parable of the Pounds teaches us there will be a reward for the faithful:**

Luke 19:17: (NASB) *And he said to him, Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.*

A pound was about \$60 United States dollars. God gives us little things in our little life and wants to reward us with big things. He cannot unless we are faithful. Israel, specifically the Scribes and Pharisees, lost their opportunities.

Jesus has plainly done a separating work here. He has given hope to those who were lost and a stern warning to those who deemed themselves worthy, but lacked true godliness. Everyone is shown where they are “off.”

Luke 16:13: (NASB) *No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*



Be faithful in the things of this world, but we cannot *serve* those things because our hearts are to be with God. We are to do them diligently as unto God.





**...is expressed in His search for those who would put Him before any and all others. Only upon the shoulders of such faithfulness can the kingdom be administered.**

There must be clear, unrelenting faithfulness. The Jewish nation was not fulfilling the responsibility. The time would be short before they would lose a tremendous opportunity.

**What was the reaction of the Pharisees? Exactly what Jesus described:**

Luke 16:14-15: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

Their entitlement and sense of superiority came from serving self, not God.

Jesus would continue his stories with the Rich Man and Lazarus. **For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episode 1027 "Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible? (Part III)."** This story shows us the loss of Jewish favor being replaced by Gentile favor. This parable would prepare the disciples to understand that, as Christians, they would be the chosen ones through which the stewardship of God's plan would be handled. The system of the Law and the Pharisees would be over.



**...is unshakable. His plans and purposes show us His eternal heart.**

These four parables are a dramatic expression of God's love for humanity.

Lost Sheep: The entire world was lost and Jesus came to save them.

Lost Coin: Humanity's position in relation to God's creation was lost and needed finding.

Prodigal Son: God's chosen people, Israel, did not live up to their responsibilities, privileges and opportunities. Israel was essentially made up of two kinds of people - those who pretended to be faithful and those who just were not. Neither was good.

Unjust Steward: Specifically the religious leaders of Israel were lazy, complacent and did not care about God.



As stewards of the gospel, let's make sure we do it from the heart, from the inside out. Learn the lessons so we can be faithful to the incredible, wonderful, magnificent opportunities we are given now and later.

*So, does God really love humanity?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on July 15, 2019:  
Ep. #1082: How Do I Live a Life of Repentance?

### **Bonus Material!**

*You've got to think about big things while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction. — Alvin Toffler*

Here are more of the practical observations discussed in [Episode #708 - Have YOU Ever been a Prodigal Son?](#)

**First Prodigal Observation - based on the natural position of the younger son:** Sometimes we have great blessings and opportunities we do not even recognize, much less appreciate. This can often happen when we are given these blessings at an early age or are born into them.

*The Lesson: Thank before you think.*

**Second Prodigal Observation - based on the perspective of the father:**

The father in his wisdom sees the thankless rebellion in his younger son's heart and knows his stubbornness must give birth to its own actions. This will provide the opportunity for learning humility.

*The Lesson: Let go when letting go presents more long-run potential for growth than hanging on.*

**Third Prodigal Observation - based on the listening perspective of the**

**Pharisees:** The Pharisees and Scribes must have liked this story so far - they would have seen themselves as the faithful son, favored and at home, while the rebellious one was now poor, miserable and alone.

*The Lesson: A sure sign of a prideful heart is finding satisfaction in another's misfortune.*



**Fourth Prodigal Observation - based on the actions of the younger son:**

Excitement is always short-lived and is always overcome by life - by things like famine, need and difficulty. In your misery, you wake up one day and find that you would gladly rise up to a level that you would have never dreamed of stooping down to! This son was reduced to feeding swine, an unclean animal for a Jew, and he was reduced to desiring their food, though there was none offered to him. How far he had fallen!

*Lessons:*

- *The further we run to fill a proud and thankless heart, the more lost we will become.*
- *The higher the thrill we seek, the lonelier and darker the fall.*
- *Thankless actions produce an empty life.*

**Fifth Prodigal Observation:** This younger son finally realizes reality. He resolves to go back to his father - *I will get up and go* - the word for *get up* is often used relating to “rising up,” as in resurrection. This son rehearses his repentance speech - he has sinned against heaven - he has lived a life entirely out of harmony with God, and therefore he has sinned before his father who was a righteous man. His judgment upon himself is to be stripped of his sonship and to become as a hired hand. The severity of this self-judgment shows the sincerity of his repentance.

*The Lesson: The truest values in life can only be realized when we have been humbled to such a point that our eye for life is no longer seeking external events full of thrill and excitement, but has been brought to a new level of vision, a level of clear sight, a level of insight. It is at this point that we can once again go home.*

**Sixth Prodigal Observation:** This son, having truly found himself, goes home. His father in his wisdom had let this son go, and now in his wisdom is and has been looking for this son’s return. Upon seeing his son afar off, this wise father springs into action, knowing the true character of his son and wanting to pour out compassion upon him. The son is as good as his word in his repentance. The father is as good as his wisdom in his acceptance.

*Lessons:*

- *Make the DECISION to repent.*
- *Follow through with the DISCIPLINE to act.*
- *Receive the DELIVERANCE of forgiveness.*

**Seventh Prodigal Observation:** The eldest son sees life through the prism of himself and outward appearances. He does not have the wisdom of his father and is devoid of compassion.

*Lesson: Rebellion can come in different forms. It can be overt, as in the case of the younger son. It can be covert, as in the case of the eldest son. Regardless of its form, it is always destructive. In the case of a covert rebellion, its manifestation is usually in the form of an overwhelming resentment that eats away at our character.*



## A few other lessons regarding our Christian stewardship taken from **Episode #648 - Should You Ever Befriend Dishonesty?**

**Matthew 6:24-25:** (NASB) <sup>24</sup>No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. <sup>25</sup>For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

**Matthew 6:33:** (NASB) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

### The stewardship of our lives is serious business:

**Titus 1:7-9:** (NRSV) <sup>7</sup>For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; <sup>8</sup>but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. <sup>9</sup>He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

### We are to be examples to all men in our service to God and our respect for all others:

**Matthew 5:13-16:** (NRSV) <sup>13</sup>You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. <sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

### We reap what we sow - no more and no less:

**Galatians 6:7-10:** (NRSV) <sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. <sup>8</sup>If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup>So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup>So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

