

PRODIGAL GOD

READ Plan

November 2026

PRODIGAL GOD: Overview

November 2, 2026

Week 1 Reading Plan

Day 1- Overview of the Prodigal Son Parable

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#)

REFLECT: For some Christians, this parable is very familiar, while for others, it's brand new. Use this guide to slow down and see it with fresh eyes. Understanding the setting is essential for us to grasp the story better. In this period of history, inheritance was everything. When the younger son asked for his inheritance, he was saying that he didn't care anymore about the father, but wished he were dead so he could come into his own. Imagine what emotions the father may have been experiencing in this moment: Pain, sadness, rejection, worry! Now imagine the years that have passed while the younger son is away. The father is grieving the loss of his son and is worried about him. He must also have been hopeful that his son would return, as evidenced by his watching for him when he finally came back. Imagine the emotions that the father must have felt at that moment: love, joy, and excitement! His son is back and alive!!! The younger son and the older son also experienced a range of emotions throughout the story. As you slow down and read through the story, please take a moment to consider their emotions.

ASK YOURSELF:

- What emotions did the younger son experience throughout the story?
- What emotions did the older son experience during the story?
- Which son do you most identify with?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Father, thank you for this time to go deeper into this story that shows your love for me and those around me. Help me slow down so I can see what you have to teach me! Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Who in your life needs to hear about God's incredible love for them during these six weeks? Pray for them today.

Day 2- God's Love

READ: [Zephaniah 3:17](#), [Psalm 103:8](#), [Psalm 103:11](#), [Psalm 106:1](#), [Psalm 138:8](#), [Psalm 139:13-14](#), [John 3:16](#), [Ephesians 2:4-5](#), [1 John 4:16-19](#)

REFLECT: It's easy to say that God loves you, but how often do you actually *feel* it? The children's song "Jesus Loves Me" gives us a clue on where to look to remind us and help us experience His love. It says, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." We must look to the Bible when we don't feel

God's love to remind us what is true about his love for us. The passages in the reading today are just a few of the verses that talk about His love for people. Read them or listen to them a few times today. Let the truth of the verses wash over you and encourage you with the knowledge that the most powerful and amazing God dearly loves you.

ASK YOURSELF:

- What are some things that can remind me of God's love when I don't feel it?
- Which of the verses from today's reading do you need to remember more often?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Father, thank you so much for your love for me! Help me experience your love throughout the day. Please give me the confidence to stand firm in your love. Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Who in your life needs to hear about God's incredible love for them during these six weeks? Text them and tell them: "I've been thinking about you and wanted you to know you matter to me."

Day 3- God's Story

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#)

REFLECT: This Parable is an example of the overarching story of the Bible: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. In this story, Creation is represented by the family before the younger son decides he wants to leave. Everything is as it should be. The Fall happens when the younger son declares he wants his inheritance and leaves. He then eventually falls even further as he squanders his money. Redemption comes when the father welcomes back his son without requiring anything from him. Finally, the father *restores* the son to his previous status, restoring all the rights and privileges of being a son. This story is also our story, but we haven't reached the end yet. We are in the Redemption part, where Jesus has paid the price for us and has not required anything of us. We are partially restored, in that our relationship with God the Father has been repaired, but we await final restoration when the sin of the Fall is removed forever.

ASK YOURSELF: How do you see God's Story reflected in stories within our culture (think movies, books, etc.)?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Father, thank you that this story of redemption is found everywhere in our culture. Give me the eyes to see this story and the courage to share it with others in my life. Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Who in your life needs to hear about God's incredible love for them during these six weeks? Invite them to connect with you and pray for an opportunity to share God's love with them!

PRODIGAL GOD: He Welcomes Sinners

November 9, 2026
Week 2 Reading Plan

Day 1- TWO GROUPS: ONE NEED

READ: [Luke 15:1-3](#);

REFLECT:

Two groups are listening to Jesus: the first are the tax collectors and sinners (both 'white collar' extortionists and 'blue collar' down-and-outers), and the second are the Pharisees and the scribes (religious leaders of the day). The Pharisees and scribes were grumbling about Jesus associating and even eating with these sinners. Eating with a 'sinner' would make one ceremonially unclean. But Jesus is about to explain, via three illustrations (parables), that ALL of them are lost sheep. Centuries before the prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 53:6 (Amplified version) "All of us like sheep have gone astray, We have turned, each one, to his own way; But the LORD has caused the wickedness of us all [our sin, our injustice, our wrongdoing] To fall on Him [instead of us]." In Matthew 15:24, Jesus explained, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." What was true then is still true today. We are ALL lost sheep who need to be rescued, and only Jesus can save each of us.

ASK YOURSELF:

- If you were to place yourself in the crowd listening to Jesus, would you identify more with the tax collectors and sinners or with the Pharisees and scribes? Why?
- Why do you think sinners seemed to flock to listen to Jesus?
- How might you defend the Pharisees and scribes' grumbling about Jesus eating with sinners?
- How did Jesus demonstrate His love for both groups?

PAUSE TO PRAY: Jesus, help me see my need for Your rescue in new ways today. Help me understand my sin leads to death unless I let You rescue me.

TAKE A NEXT STEP: As you meet or pass people throughout your day, remind yourself that Jesus came to rescue each of them and say a short prayer for them.

Day 2- VALUABLE ENOUGH TO SEEK AND RESCUE

READ: [Luke 15:4-10](#)

REFLECT: It really doesn't make sense. Why would a shepherd leave 99 vulnerable sheep to go after one that was lost? Jesus is trying to help his listeners understand the value of each life. The shepherd is willing to go to any length to find that ONE, no matter what! And the amazing truth is that each of us is that ONE. In that time, many rabbis believed God would only accept a sinner who came to Him in the right way; Jesus, however, is turning that thought upside down by showing God will actively go in search of the lost. Interestingly, shepherd and author Phillip Keller describes that a sheep can often be in danger just by getting 'cast' or turned onto its back. Unable to right itself, the sheep will die if not

rescued by the shepherd. How easy it can be for even those of us who follow Christ to get 'cast down' and need to be righted by our faithful Shepherd, Jesus.

In the following parable (verses 8-10), a woman loses one very valuable coin out of ten, but it is that very value that sets her on the hunt. First, she sheds light on the house, then she keeps sweeping away the dirt and looking intently until she finds it. Similarly, as we realize the value of the lost, we're driven to shed light and gently sweep—not to condemn the darkness and dirt but to find the valuable souls it hides.

ASK YOURSELF:

- How do I show I believe Jesus loves me and finds me valuable enough to seek out and rescue?
- How does realizing Jesus is willing to seek out every person who is lost change the way I view the people I see each day?
- In what ways can I follow Jesus' example and shine a light to seek those who are lost?

PAUSE TO PRAY: Jesus, help me see the true value of myself and those I meet today. Help me to see each person through Your eyes, as a beloved child of God.

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Find one way you can bring positive light to someone who is lost today.

Day 3- REPENTANCE: KEY TO RESCUE

READ: [Luke 15:4-10](#)

REFLECT: These parables assure us that Jesus is seeking the lost. If Jesus wants all to be rescued and He is actively seeking the lost, why doesn't every person come to true faith in Him? At the end of each of these parables, Jesus says there will be rejoicing in heaven "over one sinner who repents." We know that neither a sheep nor a coin can repent, but Jesus reminds us that for lost humans, the key to rescue is repentance. Jesus will not force the rescue on us. R.C. Sproul writes, "There is tenderness involved in the way the shepherd brings that lost sheep back. He doesn't go with a chain or collar and put it around the sheep's neck and drag it, bleating and kicking, back home. He puts the sheep around His neck and carries it home." The sheep has to surrender to this gentle rescue, and we human 'sheep' also surrender to Jesus' rescue of us by agreeing that we have sinned and need that rescue (confession) and turning from that old life of sin to live life with Jesus (repentance).

ASK YOURSELF:

- What is Jesus trying to rescue you from right now?
- How can you surrender to that rescue?
- How would you explain confession and repentance to someone who doesn't know Jesus?

PAUSE TO PRAY: Talk to Jesus about that thing He wants to rescue you from and ask Him to help you surrender.

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Write down one sin or failure you've been carrying shame about. Pray this prayer: *"God, I confess this to you and receive your forgiveness."* Then tear up or burn the paper.

PRODIGAL GOD: Give Me My Share!

November 16, 2026

Week 3 Reading Plan

Day 1- My Share

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#)

REFLECT: The younger of the two sons requests his "share" of the inheritance. This was something that he would receive from the father on the father's deathbed. He did not want to wait for his father to die. He wanted it now. His father giving that portion to him was a total indulgence for that boy. He was not demanding anything of his son. He gave his son his share and let him go. God does not stop us from taking our share and living away from him. We can take the life and the grace God gives us and live in such a way that we appear to think God is dead. The son wanted the father's things more than he wanted the father. What things in life are keeping you from the father? Is it a job or a relationship? Could it be status, or are you seeking power? What in your life have you put before God, and even replace God with? We practice idolatry when we put anything in God's place in our lives. We are like the younger son when we want what the world can give us more than we want God. We have the free will to choose the world over God, and God does not stop us from doing so. He offers a way out but never forces that way upon us. We must choose to follow Him.

ASK YOURSELF:

- What is it in your life that you are putting before God?
- What stuff is keeping you from a relationship with the father?
- What do you think about a son who wants his inheritance before his father has died?

PAUSE TO PRAY: Father God, you are the creator of all, and you deserve all glory! Please forgive me for all the ways I put things and people before you. Thank you for all the ways you work in my life. Please fill me with your Spirit and open my eyes to the things that I hold as Idols in place of you.

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Identify something that you are holding in place of God. Take steps to release it and confess it to God.

Day 2- A Far Country

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#) [Proverbs 14:12](#)

REFLECT: The son takes all his inheritance and goes to the far country. While there, he indulges all of his desires. Trouble came to him in the far country. All of his money was gone, and the fair-weather friend had all left him. He had no money and no food, so he hired himself out to a pig farmer. He is at the lowest of lows and having spent everything on worldly living, maybe he is sick and hungry, addicted to drugs or strong drink. He is a Jewish person working to feed pigs. This would paint a picture to the listeners of the parable of true trouble. They would see the son in rebellion against the father, and they would also see his troubles as a judgment for his sins. He is considering eating the food for the pigs, having fallen so far. It often takes us to hit rock bottom before we turn our attention back to the father who can save us. The father offers grace and forgiveness, but we must repent and turn to Him first. It sometimes takes reaching the lowest of lows before that happens. We can all see some of ourselves in the rebellion of the son.

ASK YOURSELF:

What have you indulged in that led you away from God?

How far down did you have to fall before you turned back to the father?

Are you still in the pig pen now?

What will it take for you to turn back to the Father?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Lord God, thank you for the grace you supply. Help me to turn from what has drawn me down back to you and your salvation. Help those around me to see you in me and desire to turn to you and away from sin.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Pray for those who have found themselves in the "Far Country" That they turn around and turn to God.

Day 3- Going Home

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#) [2 Corinthians 7:10](#)

REFLECT: The verse says, "But when he came to himself", some say that the best place in the world for a man to come to is to come to himself. He saw where he stood in the pig pen, and it was nowhere compared to even being a servant to his father. So he turned away from the pig pen and the far country, and he decided to turn back to his home, where he could appeal to his father's mercy and tell his father that he had sinned and did not deserve to be his son, but could he return and be a servant? We all need to turn from the world and sin and turn to God. That is called repentance. When you turn away from something, you always have to turn to something else. The world will tell you to turn to self-help, behavior modification, and medications. Jesus says turn and follow me! The son was really hoping for mercy from his father. In that culture, he could have shunned him or worse. The father's response was grace and forgiveness. The father's response to us is the same. Read [John 3:13-18](#). We have salvation through Jesus! The son hoped that he could be the father's servant. He did not expect the father to run to him and give him grace and forgiveness. Read [1 John 1:9](#)

ASK YOURSELF:

What is keeping you from turning and coming home to the father?

How should we respond to the father's grace and mercy?

What does this tell you about the father's character?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Father, thank you for sending your Son! Please forgive my sins and fill me with your Holy Spirit to guide me. Lord, help me to show Your grace to others so that You might be glorified.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Who in your life needs to hear about God's incredible love for them? Text them and tell them: "I've been thinking about you and wanted you to know you matter to me." Then invite them to come with you.

PRODIGAL GOD: He Refused to Go In

November 23, 2026

Week 4 Reading Plan

Day 1- He Refused to Go In: Timing and Questions

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#), [Ephesians 6:10-18](#)

REFLECT:

This portion of the prodigal son story is not about the prodigal son, but about the other, older son of the same father (vs. 25-32). This week, we examine the older son's response to his brother and the father's response to the younger son's transgressions. We can apply this story to our own rebellion and obedience to God, with the hope of reminding us how God sees our hearts rather than individual actions.

The number of small details included in scripture is astounding, and from each we benefit by learning a nuance of the story. Today, we examine the topics of timing and the questions that can be gleaned from the insightful details Jesus provided in his story.

Timing: When the older son first heard of his wayward brother's return, he was coming in from working in the fields (vs 25). Whether at lunchtime or at the end of the day, who is not tired? Physical and mental fatigue, along with hunger, distort how we perceive a problem or situation. Unless an emergency, timing is everything. If there is bad news to be told, we typically do not share it when they open the door to our house; we wait until the right time. Well, the servant must have thought it was good news, as he did not observe this practice. The elder brother was not prepared for what he was about to hear. Being ready for the day starts with prayer, spending time with God. Using Ephesians 6:10-18, "I will put on the whole armor of God, so that I might be able to stand in the evil day..." is also a powerful tool Paul provided for us to ask God for His protection and to use each morning to train us to respond with a God view in mind even when the news is bad and we are tired.

Questions: The older son asked a few good questions to inquire about what was happening and to account for the activity and noise. We learned in the last sermon series on Habakkuk that when something is out of the ordinary, ask questions. In that case, Habakkuk asked questions of God; in this case, the older brother asked the servant. Gathering the facts surrounding a situation usually lends itself to understanding and developing a plan to deal with the situation; yet, as we will see in Day 2, the older brother did not use the answers in a wise manner.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Reflect on the ways timing influences how you process difficult news or criticism, and why?
- Consider who you rely on to help with difficulties and why?
- Contemplate what you can do to better prepare yourself for the next bit of trouble or difficult situation.
- In your experience, recall how you used questioning: to clarify or to frame a judgment.

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Today, Jesus, I will start with You. I proclaim You are my strength, and I will move forward in the day with You. I rest in Your promises and Your love. Amen*

TAKE A NEXT STEP:

When the next sign of trouble comes, I will start with prayer, take a few breaths, clear my head, and even prepare a response before outwardly responding to an inflammatory social media post, email, or confrontation.

Day 2- He Refused to Go In: Reactions and Why

READ: [Genesis 4:3-13](#), [Proverbs 14:29](#), [Proverbs 15:18](#), [Exodus 34:6-7](#), [Luke 15:11-32](#), [John 8:3-11](#), [Matthew 15:8](#)

REFLECT:

Application is the intended purpose behind knowledge acquisition, learning, and these biblical stories. Today, we will take a closer look at identifying our own similarities to the older son with the intent of moving toward a path of repentance.

In Luke 15:28-29, we learn how the older son:

- Reacted quickly and in anger over the prodigal son being extravagantly welcomed back home by the father
 - Read Genesis 4:3-13, Proverbs 14: 29, 15: 18 and contemplate, ruminate over, what it means to be slow to anger. The older son's immediate reaction of deep anger reveals his thoughts of superiority and entitlement, and perhaps even how he has inadvertently given himself a god-like voice of authority. Additionally, many Old Testament examples demonstrate God is slow to anger, as exemplified in Exodus 34:6-7. Here God has allowed the situation to develop, allowing time to pass, and with the acknowledgement

that only in God's great sovereignty does He know when to be angry over sin sickness in His people.

- “refused to go in.” He put his foot down in two ways by using religious and societal conventions.
 - ♣ The Parable of the Prodigal Son really begins in verses 1-2, where the religious authorities attempt to trap Jesus in his words. In response, Jesus highlights the discrepancy between their religious practices and God's intent. Similar to how sin separates God from the sinner, we see in Luke 15:29 that the older brother chose to separate himself from the younger brother because of his sin. Yet was the older son sinless, or did he think of himself as self-righteous? Jesus points out errors of religious conventions within the story of the adulterous woman, when he challenges the self-righteous religious people, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her," to condemn her (John 8:7). Jesus also cautions not to worship Him with our lips while our hearts are far off from Him (Matthew 15:8).
 - ♣ Mercy. The older son refused to extend mercy to his brother. The older son also discounted and even disrespected his father, all because the father extended mercy to the prodigal son (vs 32). Judging is the opposite of showing mercy. God alone is our Judge; we are only tasked with holding ourselves to obedience and showing mercy. And as the last words of Jesus from the John 8 story indicate, "Neither do I condemn you: go, and from now on sin no more" (vs 11).

ASK YOURSELF:

How do you feel about your neighbor having more___ than you?

Consider a time when jealousy and or judgment kept you from making conversation with someone or even deepening your friendship with them?

How does knowing God is slow to anger, because of His deep love for you, change how you feel about others when they wrong you in some way?

How does knowing that showing disrespect to another person also disrespects God make you feel?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Lord, forgive me when I place myself in Your Holy shoes, help me to understand how knowledge is limited and how mercy extends beyond my understanding. Help me to be the person You intend me to be: what it means to be good by loving mercy and to walk humbly with You, O' Lord. Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP:

Next time I am tempted to judge another person, I will consider showing mercy instead & evaluate my own heart for self-righteous thoughts, rule-keeping, empty works, lovelessness, and a stubbornness in extending my generosity to others.

Day 3- He Refused to Go In: Repentance and Joy

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#), [Luke 19:10](#), [Luke 15:8-10](#), [Psalm 13: 5](#)

REFLECT:

Rejoice, rejoice, developing a heart which reflects the true joy of being a forgiven son or daughter of the Most High is how we will end this week. Yet it all starts with repentance.

Forgiven: the father forgave the prodigal son but also the older brother, as evidenced in the statement "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours" (vs 31). Notice the present case of each of these two phrases. The father does not reject the older son because of his judgment of his younger brother; instead, the father affirms his inclusive relationship with the older son and assures him of his love and provision. This is what Jesus has done for us. He provides the means to be forgiven, forgives us, invites us into his Holy family, and assures us he will always be with us.

Rejoice: The father also states, "It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive. He was lost and is now found" (vs 32). This directly parallels another of Jesus' teachings recorded in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost." And in Luke 15:8-10, Jesus also tells the story of the woman who lost a coin, then found it, and asks all those around her to celebrate with her, symbolically representing the great rejoicing that will be over one sinner who repents. Lastly, as David proclaims in the Psalms, "I have trusted in Your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation" (Psalm 13:5).

ASK YOURSELF:

Why do you see the sins of others more clearly than your own?

How will you respond to God's offer of undeserved forgiveness?

Explore the definition of prodigal and how you would apply this term to God.

Are your thought patterns consumed with: nothing in particular, the sin you see in yourself, the sin you see in others, or freedom over being forgiven? And why?

Consider the approaches you take with God concerning your sin and why: a part of daily prayer, recognition, repentance, avoidance, turning from it, embracing it, the joy of sweet release from it, thankfulness?

How do you express and celebrate the joy that comes after repentance, while walking in a relationship with God?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Oh, generous Father, You bring me to my knees and You immediately lift me up. Even though I am the worst kind of prodigal son/daughter, You are the best prodigal God, as Your mercy exceeds comprehension. I rejoice over Your extravagant goodness and Your reckless offer of mercy and love. Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP:

I will ask Jesus to forgive me of my sins against him and ask him to be Lord of my heart. I will thank and praise him for paying the price for my sin and taking away the judgment I deserve.

I will make evaluation and repentance a daily part of my chair time with God.

I will choose to live joyously in the freedom of forgiveness, and I will share my joy over this with at least one person I meet today or this week.

PRODIGAL GOD: The True Elder Brother

November 30, 2026

Week 5 Reading Plan

Day 1- The True Older Brother

READ: [Luke 15:4,8, 11-32](#); [Hebrews 2:11-18](#)

REFLECT:

When the Parable of the Prodigal Son is compared to the two previous parables, a character is missing - the one who pursues the lost. In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to seek the one. In the Parable of the Lost Coin, the woman does not quit searching until she finds her one lost coin. But who goes after the wayward son?

The one who should have been searching for the younger brother should have been the older brother. Those of Middle Eastern culture, who were hearing Jesus' parable firsthand, would have known that the older brother should be pursuing his younger brother at all costs. But the self-focused older brother did not fulfill his role.

The three parables combined paint a beautiful picture of the gospel as it really is. We have a merciful and loving Father, who is waiting for both the rebellious and the self-righteous to come home. But we also have the good shepherd, the one who lost a treasure, the true older brother, who did not simply wait and hope for our return, but left his throne in heaven and came after us.

As you read Hebrews chapter two, you will see that the Son of God became our brother when He was born a human, sharing flesh and blood with us. He needed to take the humbling step of becoming our brother to come after us, to die for us, to sanctify us, and to help when we are tempted. To destroy the power of death, to be our merciful and faithful high priest, and to make atonement for us. This is our true older brother.

ASK YOURSELF:

- When have you been most aware that Jesus was coming after you?
- How can seeing Jesus as a brother impact the way you relate to him?
- What is your favorite part of Hebrews 2:11-18?

PAUSE TO PRAY: Using Hebrews 11:11-18, write a prayer of praise, thanking Jesus for the many things he has done for you.

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Make a list of the first people that come to mind when you think of where you live, work, learn, and play. Commit to praying for them at least once a day for the next 5 days. Pray for their walks with Jesus or that they would come to know Jesus as their Savior.

Day 2 - How can salvation be free?

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#), [Philippians 2:6](#), [Galatians 3:13](#), [1 Peter 2:24-25](#), [2 Corinthians 5:21](#), [Matthew 27:46](#)

REFLECT: Perhaps the most scandalous moment in the parable of the lost son is when the father welcomed the son back into the father's home at no cost to the son. This young man would not dare to think that he could return without earning his keep. In his mind, his only hope would be to pay his father back by being a lifelong servant. But the father didn't even hear the son's offer of payment. The son was welcomed into his father's house for free!

However, the son's restoration was not without cost. Whose inheritance will the younger brother now live on? Whose robe was hung over his shoulders? Whose ring was placed on his finger? Whose shoes were put on his feet? Who is covering the cost of the extravagant celebration? Remember the words of the father to the older brother, "all that is mine is yours." This means that all the father spent on the younger brother was at the expense of the older brother! The cost of the wayward son's return was paid for by his brother!

For us, the true older brother paid for our return willingly. On this side of heaven, we may never fully understand the cost of our salvation. But Jesus paid it all! What did our reconciliation cost our Savior? For starters, he left his throne in heaven. He left His glory to live a life of humiliation. Even though Jesus deserved the constant worship of everyone who stood before him, instead, few honored Him. Even worse, people argued with him, mocked him. After an unjust trial, they beat him, spit on him, and nailed him to the cross. But the cost of our salvation did not end there. On the cross, he carried the weight of all of our sins on his shoulders. And as he became sin for us, he was forsaken by His Father. And finally, our reconciliation cost him his blood; it cost Him his life. We caused him great suffering that we cannot fully understand.

ASK YOURSELF:

- How have I taken the gift of salvation for granted, because it cost me nothing?
- What will I do with this free gift?
- How will I show my gratitude to my true older brother?

PAUSE TO PRAY: Use the prayer tool ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication) to offer praise for your salvation, to ask forgiveness for any way today's reading brings conviction, and to pray for those who still need to discover this free gift.

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Take time to write Ephesians 2:8-10 (or another related passage) and begin memorizing this passage.

Day 3- Have you received the free gift of salvation?

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#), [Romans 6:23](#), [Romans 10:8-13](#), [1 Peter 1:18-21](#)

REFLECT: By now, you should be very familiar with Luke 15:11-32. Let's reflect on the ending of this story now. The tale concludes, leaving the reader with a mix of emotions. For the younger brother, it's a happy ending. We are left with the picture that he accepts his father's generous offer to return home as a restored son. If the story ended here, the last images in our minds would be those of a grand feast and celebration—the music and dancing heard from a distance.

But sadly, the story ends with the response of the older brother. The older brother feels deserving of the gifts he has received from the father. He feels he has earned his inheritance. He does not know the grace of his father. Moreover, he does not want the younger brother to experience the same grace. For the father, the words "for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found" brought joy, gladness, and cause for celebration. But the older brother did not share his father's heart. He may have allowed his father to affect his behavior, but nothing more. He had not accepted the father's grace for what it was, a free gift. And to the reader's surprise, as the rebel son is found, it is discovered that the good son is lost. The story ends as sad as it began, with a wayward son.

The message of Jesus could not be clearer. Our God is a God of reckless, extravagant love. He is ready to give mercy and grace to all who come. He will forgive. We will be his children forever. However, we must first recognize our needs. Whether openly rebellious or inwardly self-righteous and proud, we have to realize that we have gone our own way. Without his grace, we are lost. We are dead.

Recognizing our need, we must turn back to our Father. We must repent and receive His grace - the free gift of salvation. The free gift that was made possible through the atoning sacrifice of our true brother, Jesus Christ. He calls us only to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And as we receive the grace of the Father, we will receive the heart of the faith and join Him in welcoming the dead and lost home.

ASK YOURSELF:

- How do I know that I have received the free gift of salvation?
- What keeps me back from wholehearted belief in Jesus as my Savior?
- Who have I refused to pray for and refused to hope for their salvation?

PAUSE TO PRAY: If you are ready now to trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior, say a prayer telling Him that you believe he died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead. Ask him to forgive your sins and to be your Lord and Savior. (Be sure to tell another Christian about your decision.)

If you have peace that you have already trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior, take time to pray for those who, as far as you know, have not received Christ.

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Take time alone or as a family to worship God while listening to "Reckless Love" by Cory Asbury.

PRODIGAL GOD: Feast of the Father

December 7, 2026

Week 6 Reading Plan

Day 1- The Feast of the Father

READ: [Luke 15:11-32](#); [Luke 15:10](#)

REFLECT: Have you ever been surprised by how excited someone is to see you? Their eyes light up, a smile comes to their face, and often they also embrace you in some way! On the receiving end of that reaction, you feel joy and love from them, possibly encouraging you to stand a little taller in the confidence of their love.

Imagine the father's reaction when the younger son comes home! Then there is the ordering of a Feast! The father shows an outpouring of love for the younger son and can't help but celebrate. "*For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found*" (v. 24). This is the party of the century!

The feast in this parable reflects the celebration that takes place in heaven when people come to salvation and look forward to the heavenly feast once sin and death are defeated forever. Celebrations revolve around food. They bring people together, allowing barriers to break down and stories to be told. Memories are made, and people relax with their bellies full.

ASK YOURSELF:

- When was the last time you celebrated something with food and people?
- What would it look like to have a feast with God the Father when someone comes to salvation?
- Who would you invite to a feast to hear about God's work in your life?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Father, thank you for this glimpse into the celebration that you have when one of your children returns to you. Help me to have the same heart when I hear of people coming to you! Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Invite someone over to dinner who needs to hear about Jesus.

Day 2- The Lord's Supper

READ: [Matthew 26:26-28](#); [Acts 2:46-47](#); [1 Corinthians 11:17-26](#)

REFLECT: The feast of the father from yesterday reminds us also of the Lord's Supper. As the true Elder Brother, we can celebrate that Jesus has saved us and restored us in the relationship with the father. The Lord's Supper is both a remembrance and a time to celebrate. We remember how lost we were, and we celebrate the gift of being found and brought back. In Acts, at the beginning of the global church, they regularly celebrated the Lord's Supper together. It was a joyful experience and a source of great praise to God that people came to believe in Jesus daily after witnessing their celebratory meals.

Somewhere along the way, the Lord's Supper got distorted, and in the letter to the Corinthians, Paul is calling out their distortion. He mentions how they don't wait for each other, some go hungry, while others are stuffed! There are also cliques and divisions, rather than the unity that should come from all of us being on equal footing. Even today, divisions persist over the various ways the Lord's Supper (Communion) is observed. What if we went back to the example of Acts? What would it do for our witness to others about Jesus?

ASK YOURSELF:

- What would it look like to experience the Lord's Supper with your family or small group?
- How can you make it more like a celebration, even during the church service?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Father, help me to celebrate communion in a way that honors you and gives you the praise. Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Plan a date to celebrate the Lord's Supper with close friends or family.

Day 3- The Heavenly Feast

READ: [Isaiah 25:6-9](#); [Revelation 19:9](#); [Luke 14:12-15](#)

REFLECT: The feast of the Father in Luke 15 also reminds us of the heavenly feast that the father has planned for us one day, when sin and death are defeated forever. We will live with Him in the new heaven and new earth. Isaiah and Revelation prophesy about what this will be like. There will be no lack or need, no pain or crying. It will be the celebration to overshadow all other celebrations!

While we wait for this heavenly feast to come, we can practice it here with our church families and by inviting outsiders to experience it too. In Luke 14, Jesus encourages his followers to invite everyone to a feast, including the poor, the sick, and others, not just their wealthy friends. This is a picture of how the father welcomes all to his table, not based on their merit, but based on his gracious gift of forgiveness through Jesus.

ASK YOURSELF:

- How can I more regularly remember the hope of the heavenly feast?

- How will it impact my day-to-day life?
- Who could I invite to a feast?

PAUSE TO PRAY: *Father, help me to know who I can invite over to share about your grace and forgiveness. Give me eyes to see those I pass by every day. Amen.*

TAKE A NEXT STEP: Plan a feast and invite people whom you wouldn't usually have over for dinner. Find a way to celebrate God's forgiveness during the dinner.