

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK: NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 4, 2025

SERIES INFO

The Wanderer. The Rule Keeper. The Reckless One.

Based on the Parable of the Prodigal Son

PERSONAL FUN FACTS

What is something that you have worked hard for that you felt went basically unnoticed?

TAKEAWAYS

What were the greatest “takeaways” you had from the message this week about the “Rule Keeper” (the older son) in the parable of the Prodigal Son?

DISCUSSION

1. Faith Gets Heavy

Scripture: Luke 15:1-32 (focus on verses 25-32); Revelation 2:2-4; Isaiah 29:13

One of the strongest statements made this week in the message was: “...we show up, we serve, and do all the right things, but somewhere along the way, faith got heavy.” The older son in this parable is the dutiful one. For what we know, he has good morals, and he works diligently—he was “loaded” up with all the right things to do for the family, but somehow, he becomes distant from his father. He does all the right things, but for the wrong reasons—pride, comparison, and entitlement. It is a lot like the church in Ephesus in the book of Revelation where they were doing all the necessary deeds of the church but had forsaken “their first love.” The danger here is that faith gets heavy with religious serving without loving God.

1. How can religious activity mask an unhealthy distance from God? In other words, in what ways can religious activity—teaching, serving, volunteering, going to Bible studies—slowly become habits that we do without a focus on relationship with God?

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DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- Why might it be easier to “perform” for God than to draw close to Him?
- 2. What is the difference between living like a son/daughter and living like a servant/employee in your spiritual life?
- 3. What does it practically look like to “return to your first love” with God?

2. The Rule Keeper’s Resentment

Scripture: Luke 29-30; James 4:1-3

Resentment that slips into our relationship with God is often born out of an idea that God owes us something for our doing good things on behalf of His name. Like the older son, we can say, “All these years I have been slaving for you ...” Clearly, this son believes that his performance gives him the right to be celebrated. So, he yields to making comparison ... comparing his younger brother who is living a life of debauchery to his own life that has been faithfully and dutifully obedient. In doing so, he becomes bitter and has resentment toward his brother and his father.

- 1. What does resentment do to your spiritual life? How does it affect your joy, your prayer life, and your worship experience?
- 2. What might you need to do to “enter the celebration” when God restores someone else, even if you feel overlooked?

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3. The Father's Pursuit

Scripture: Luke 15:28; Psalm 103:8-14

Isn't it interesting that God pursues the religious as much as He runs to the rebellious? Both need relationship. Both need grace. Grace is not just for the obvious sinner, but also for the one who hides underneath the weight of religiosity—which is also a sinful posture. In both the younger son and the older son's experience, the father takes the initiative to bring kindness and love to both his sons. In both scenarios, even as the sons saw themselves as "slaves," the father saw them as "sons."

1. The father said, "Everything I have is yours." Why do we as believers sometimes live as though we lack what God has already provided?
2. Have you ever been in a season of life where you were doing the right things but for some reason, found yourself resisting God's joy or even His grace?

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

- Where do you sense the Father coming out to meet you today and inviting you back into the joy, freedom, and warmth of relationship with Him?
- Where is God inviting you to release resentment or comparison today?
- Where in your life might God be telling you to release the busyness and trappings of religiosity and to enter a more deeply formed relationship with Him?

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PRAYER

Lord, show me where I resemble the older brother, and give me the humility to step into your joy. Thank you that You take the initiative and come out to meet me when resentment overtakes my soul. Teach me to receive Your grace rather than to think I need to earn it by doing good things in Your name. Help me to celebrate what You have already given me with joy, humility, gratitude, and freedom. In Your name I pray. Amen.