

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK: DECEMBER 6-12, 2025

SERIES INFO

The Wanderer. The Rule Keeper. The Reckless One.

Based on the Parable of the Prodigal Son

PERSONAL FUN FACTS

What is the most over-the-top gift you have ever received?

TAKEAWAYS

What were the greatest “takeaways” you had from the message this week about the “Reckless One,” the father, in the parable of the Prodigal Son?

DISCUSSION

1. The Father Who Watches

Scripture: Luke 15:1-32, Psalm 121:3-8, Exodus 3:7-8a

One of the most encouraging passages in all of Scripture is found in Luke 15:20 where while the younger son was still a long way off ... the father saw him. He was a long way off from a distance standpoint as well as a spiritual and relational one. The father saw him in a variety of ways as well: certainly, more than catching a glimpse of him across the field, he saw him internally, relationally, and with a heart full of grace. Notice that the father's gracious pursuit of his son begins before the son even has the chance to repent.

1. What does it say about the Father (God) that He sees His children from “a long way off??”

2. Have you ever knowingly experienced God pursuing you before you pursued Him?

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DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- How might this understanding reshape our efforts in evangelism and disciple making?

2. The Father Who Moves

Scripture: Isaiah 30:18, Titus 2:11; Ephesians 2:4-5

We learned this week that, in ancient culture, men didn't run because it was considered undignified. The father doesn't appear to be concerned with the recklessness of being considered socially embarrassing. He breaks the rules of social convention out of eagerness to show his grace and mercy. Notice that his urgency is not to punish the young man, but to restore him to relationship. The father's heart is moved with joy and gladness that his son has simply returned ... not that he has fixed himself, cleaned himself up, and gotten his act together.

1. Does the Father's running teach us anything about the urgency of grace?
2. What kinds of false explanations or teachings have we learned that would challenge the idea that the Father wants to lavish His grace upon us?

3. The Father Who Restores

Scripture: Luke 15:22-24, Zechariah 3:1-5, Isaiah 61:1-4

When the son stands face to face with his father, it is the father's idea that his son be restored, not the son's. It is the father who called for the robe to restore dignity to his son. It is the father who places the ring—signifying family authority—on his son's finger. It is the father who replaced the son's worn sandals with new ones for he was not considered a slave, but a son.

1. Which part of the father's response resonates with you the most? Why?
2. Think about repentance ... how does this story reform your understanding of what it means to repent, and why is the father's love the catalyst for change, and not simply the result of it?

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APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

- Where in your own life have you experienced the “prodigal” (extravagant) nature of God’s love and restoration?
- How does the father’s example of immediate restoration and love affect how you might personally approach those who have wronged you?
- Thinking back to the sermon, which chair are you really in right now?
 - Wanderer’s chair: if so, tell God where you have been running and what you have been chasing
 - Rule Keeper’s chair: tell the Lord where you have been performing rather than resting in His grace
 - Father’s chair: thank the Father for His grace and mercy ... ask Him, “Who do you want me to walk toward this week with grace?”

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for bringing us together to open your Word and study the beautiful story of your unconditional love and scandalous grace. We thank you for the parable of the Prodigal Son. Lord, help us to internalize the truth that you are always watching for our return. When we wander and fall into the “far country” of our own choices and shame, remind us that you do not leave us there. We pray that you would help us shed the mindset of the younger son who felt he had to earn his place back as a servant, and the mindset of the older brother who struggled to celebrate the redemption of others. Give us eyes to see others, and ourselves, through your restorative gaze. Thank you for the robe of righteousness, the ring of sonship, and the celebration you have waiting for us. Guide us this week to act as agents of your grace, extending the same that we have received to a world that desperately needs it.

In your Holy Name, we pray,
Amen.