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WARM UP

Did you have someone you looked up to when you were young. Who were they and why?

WORD

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

By putting a flawed elder brother in the story, Jesus is inviting us to imagine and yearn for a true one. And we have Him (Tim Keller, *Prodigal God*).

NOTES

1 Send the Search Party

²⁹but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

[Luke 15:29-31](#) (ESV)

The three stories in Luke 15 of the lost sheep being found, the lost coin being found, and the lost son, all include three features: one, something valuable is lost; two, the protagonist goes out of his or her way to find what was lost; and three, there is a celebration. However, what makes the story of the lost son different, is that he is not searched for in his lost state, though it would seem someone was supposed to look for him.

- Can you remember a time when you were completely lost? How did you find your way out?
- God has a relentless love towards you that will pursue you endlessly. Do you sense that love for you? Do you believe that He loves you like that?

2 Don't Touch My Stuff

²⁷And 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.' ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,

[Luke 15:27-28](#) (ESV)

The father pursues both the younger son and the older son, but surprisingly, it is only the younger brother who enters into this unconditional love. Since the property of the father had already divided his two sons, could it be that when the youngest son came home, the older one was angry because the fattened calf and party was part of his inheritance?

- Have you ever seen someone get rewarded, but you felt *you* deserved it? What happened?
- Do you battle with sharing what you have with others?

3 Jesus is the Elder Brother

⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[Philippians 2:4-11](#) (ESV)

Jesus, unlike the Pharisaic older brother, shares His inheritance as a payment in order to see the younger brother (us) return home. He brings us back into the family at His expense. He didn't just go to a far off country to restore us, but He also left Heaven for Earth to see us welcomed back home, and He celebrates us. He pursues us relentlessly in order to see us walk gracefully into our God-given purpose.

- What role does service play, where God has you in this stage of life?
- As Christians, how can we represent Christ in both the literal and figurative streets looking for the "younger brothers" amongst us?

PRAYER

- Pray for a fresh revelation of the love God has for us through the true "older brother", Jesus Christ.
- Pray for the grace not to feel comparative and entitled, and pray for the restoration of relationships of those you know are broken.
- Pray that you would never stray from the Father's love, and in His love, you would have a love for the lost like He does.