

READ over the entire story in Luke 15:11-32 (NIV)

Vs 11-12

1. Why do you think the younger son wanted his share of the estate?
2. How would you describe this young man's character?
3. In what ways are you like him?

Vs 13

1. What does the word 'squandered' mean to you?
2. In what ways do we squander the wealth that our heavenly Father has given to us? How have you 'squandered' it in your own life?

Vs 14-16

1. How low did this person descend? How do you think he must have felt?
2. Describe a time when you felt that your life had reached rock bottom. How did you feel? What caused you to go there?
3. Why do you think the statement "no one gave him anything" is so vital to this story? Why is it important that no one gave him anything?

Vs 17-19

1. What does it take inside a person for them to come to their 'senses'?
2. What is he willing to do?
3. What is the significance of verse 19?
4. What is the real longing that is rising up in this man's heart? What is his real need?

Vs 20a

1. What did he do?
2. Why do you think people can talk about what they need, or what their issue is, but never do anything about it? How can talking about your life's issues become an illusion, or substitute for action?
3. What do you keep talking about but never do anything about?
4. DISCUSS THIS QUOTE

"What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself" ---

Blaise Pascal in 'Pensees'

Vs 20b

1. What is the significance of the words "long way off"?
2. What was the father's attitude towards his son?
3. What did the father do?
4. Why was this important to the son and to the father?

Vs 21

1. What does the son acknowledge?
2. Why do you think some people have such a difficult time acknowledging their behaviours?
3. How is transforming faith at work here? What do you think the son believed about his father?
4. Discuss this Step two (from AA) as written from a Christian perspective. What are the positive faith affirming words used here? Who does the restoring, what must I believe?

"I believe that the power of Jesus Christ, through the working of the Holy Spirit, will restore me to fellowship with God."

Vs 22

1. What is the father's response?
2. In what way does the father deny his son's request?
3. How do you think the son felt?
4. How do you think the father felt?
5. READ 2 Corinthians 12:9. What is the significance of this verse?
6. Please share with the group the name of someone who you feel is at or near rock bottom in their lives. Have your group pray for them. Thinking back to verse 16, why do you feel it is important to let someone hit rock bottom and stop rescuing them?
7. Who do you need to pray for and stop rescuing?

PLEASE PRAY THIS PRAYER OUT LOUD AS A GROUP

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;

Trusting that He will make all things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Neibuhr

ENCOURAGING SCRIPTURES:

Isaiah 55:6-8

Hebrews 11:6

Deuteronomy 4:29

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION THIS WEEK:

1. Make a list of the ways in which you are rebellious, like the prodigal son?
2. In what areas of your life are you still rebellious, desiring our own way? (money, sexuality, insecurity, drugs alcohol, food, seeking attention, needing control or power etc)
3. In what ways are you "squandering" your life and the gifts your heavenly father has given you? (wasting time, lack of excellence in what you do, not serving others, failing to share your giftedness with others, hoarding your resources etc)
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to create conviction in your life and sorry for what you have done. This is not guilt! This is genuine sorrow for squandering the precious life's resources given to you.
5. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you? What area or situation do you need to bring home to the Lord, ask for forgiveness and experience His restoring power?
6. Make the decision to turn that area over to the Lord NOW!

EXTRA: Who are you rescuing, or trying to rescue? Do you realize you could be interfering with what the Lord wants to do in their life? Pray for the courage and power to stop your enabling recuing behaviours and allow the Lord to work in that person's life just like he did the Prodigal son.