

# LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## God's Forgiveness

### Luke 15: 11-32

Objective: To explore the forgiving character of God and how we can respond to his grace.

Every evening the old man sat on the porch after a hard day of work. He looked out the gate and down the road, hoping to catch a glimpse of a traveler. During the day, out in the fields, he would stretch his back and scan the horizon, watching for a figure headed home.

Then one day he saw him. A thin, ragged, young man turned in from the road, and the father knew it was the person he had been waiting for. In a burst of joy and desperate anticipation, the old man did something his servants had never seen him do. He ran to meet his son.

**Group Discussion:** Did you ever run away from home or know someone who did? Where did you or that person go? And what happened? What are some of the reasons people run away from home?

**Introduction:** We are going to read the story of the prodigal son. This story shows us how we can come to him and become a child of God. As his child, we can rebel or stray away and how he will always welcome us home with open arms. We look at the story and discuss what we think how those in the story may have felt. The prodigal son is the third parable Jesus tells. This was in response to the Pharisee's accusation that he was around sinners who they looked down upon because they did not follow and live according to their rigid laws and traditions. Jesus tells these parables to show that God goes after those who are lost and how he rejoices when the lost is found.

# LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## God's Forgiveness

### Luke 15: 11-32

**\*\*\* Note: There are no right or wrong answers to the questions and are intended to be discussed in a group setting that allows people to answer what they think.**

### **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. A. How would you describe the younger son's feeling when he first left his father's home? **Liberated; that he had everything under control; grown up and responsible.**  
  
B. When he was living it up in a distant land? **Happy; joyous; on top of the world.**  
  
C. When he was feeding pigs? **Lonely; like nobody cared; realized he may have made a mistake; regretful; deserted; somber; sad.**  
  
D. When he saw his father running toward him? **Puzzled; scared; happy.**
2. If you were the father would you have given your son his inheritance? Why or why not? **It would depend on the maturity of the son. If he was mature and I believed he would not squander it I probably would have given it to him. On the other hand, if I knew he did not know how to handle it and would be careless with it I would not have given it to him.**
3. Why didn't the father go looking for his son and instead waited for him to come back on his own? **The son could not have told his Father where he was going so the Father would not know where to look for him. The Father could also have taken the attitude that he son was going to have to look out for himself. He could have thought about waiting to see if the son would come back and how soon.**

# LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## God's Forgiveness

### Luke 15: 11-32

- 4 What are some of the other ways the Father could have responded to his son when he came back home? **He could have rejected him and not allowed him to come back; he could have disowned him; mistreated him; given him the cold shoulder; yelled and scolded him.**
- 5 What does this tell us about God and his character? **That God is a forgiving God who has an unconditional love for us and no matter how bad we sin or hurt him he will always look at with grace, mercy and compassion.**
- 6 In verses 17-20 what does this show us that happens to the son? **He realized that his home was a blessed home and that he had made a mistake and needed to ask his Father for forgiveness.**
- 7 How would this apply to a Christian who leaves God? **This shows us that God is a forgiving God and will always take us back no matter what we do we can always go back home.**
- 8 Looking at the father's response at his son's return, what would you tell a Christian who has walked away from God and is thinking about coming back to the Lord? **It's never too late to come back to God and he is waiting for them to come back home just like the Father in the story was. He will welcome them with open arms and be happy to see them come back and rebuild that relationship that they once had.**
- 9 What do you think the word prodigal mean?  
**I think that the word means "lost".**
- 10 Would you use "prodigal" to describe God? Why or why not?  
**No I would not because I do not believe that God is lost.**

# LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## God's Forgiveness

### Luke 15: 11-32

- 11 What do you think was the son's attitude and behavior toward his father after he came home? **I believe that he was very submissive and respectful toward his Father and that now he was very appreciative, thankful and no longer took anything for granted.**
  
- 12 What does this tell us about Christians motivation to live obediently to God? **We should live obediently to God and stay in a right relationship with him.**
  
- 13 What do you find in the older brother's response that is reasonable and understandable? **That things are not fair. He did everything that he was suppose to do and yet his brother who squandered his inheritance receives a celebration.**
  
- 14 How does the father respond to the older brother's objections? **By telling him that he has always been by his side and that he still has his inheritance and will always have everything.**
  
- 15 How does the phrase "there's no place like home" apply to this story and to a Christian who leaves home. **God is a forgiving Father who's love is unconditional and forgiving. Not matter what a person does his loving Father will always welcome him home and rejoice when he returns.**

# LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## God's Forgiveness

### Luke 15: 11-32

**Summary:** In this story we are shown the characteristics of who our God is. The Father represents our God and the son represents a believer who walked away from God. We learn and remember that no matter how bad we mess up or walk away from God he will always welcome us back home with open arms. He stands with his arms open just like he was when he was nailed to the cross and will always be joyous to see one of his children come back home. Our God has an unconditional love for us that he will never stop loving us or abandon us. For he says in Hebrew 13:5 "I will never leave you or forsake you". Even though he is a forgiving God, this does not give us a license to sin because in James 4:14 we are told that our life is like the morning fog - it's here a little while then it's gone. We may not get the chance to make things right with God. We are the ones who walk away from God and sever our relationship with him, however, he will always be willing to build that relationship with us once again. For those believers who do not leave God, things may not always seem fair. It may look like those in the world and constantly being blessed while we may not be receiving the same blessings as we stay obedient to God. In reality, the blessings that the non believers receives, though they may be many, are temporal and cannot compare to one blessing that every believer has and that is the promise of eternal life. If you have walked away from God....come home where you belong.....in a personal relationship with God. If you know someone who has walked away from God pray for them and encourage them to come back home because nothing in the world compares to the love, peace, and joy that a true believer has in his heart.