

Day 1

July 16



Pray | Thank God for continuing to shower you with blessings

THE SQUANDERER

A rich young boy demands his inheritance before his father has passed away, sells any possessions he's acquired, and takes the cash to run away and live a wild life of unbridled freedom, with no accountability and no one to tell him otherwise. What a dream! And then the money runs out, and he is starving, dirty, and destitute. As with many stories in the Bible, we can look at this young man and scoff at his poor decisions and shake our heads at his hubris. But of course, somewhere in our hearts, his story resonates with ours!

Just as this young man squandered his entire inheritance and brought shame on his father and his family, we too squander the good gifts God has given us.



Read | Luke 15:11-15; James 1:17



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

In what ways does taking freedom with what God's given us, and squandering it, lead to slavery instead of freedom?

We've been given good gifts and all of them are from our God who longs to give us more and better blessings. But why is it that we sometimes squander the good gifts we're given, just like the younger son squandered his inheritance?

Sometimes we think we don't deserve a hardship we're experiencing, or we do deserve good things that come our way. In this respect, how do you feel about the hardships you've experienced or the blessings in your life? What part does God play in both?

Day 2

July 17



Pray | Thank God for the undeserved blessings that he showers on you every day

IMMEASURABLY MORE

In today's passage, we see the father of yesterday's story run out to meet his wayward son with cries of joy and celebration, tears, and most of all, forgiveness. This father responds in a way that was far beyond what the son expected. The son was going to ask to be hired as a servant, which would be a far better life than he was living, but instead, consider what the father gives him.



Read | Luke 15:15-24; Ephesians 3:20-21



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

In what ways does the father's treatment of his son go above and beyond what anyone expected?

Consider some of the times in which God has stepped into your life, or the life of someone you know. Consider the miracles you see around you in people and in nature. Consider the blessings you have that God has given you. In what ways does God's treatment of us go beyond what we might hope for?

If you've never spoken to your Father the words of the prodigal son to his Father, now is a wonderful time to do so! Confess that you've sinned against him, and then let him bless you more than you ever imagined he would.

Day 3

July 18



Pray | Thank God for knocking even when you've shut the door.

THE OTHER BROTHER

We tend to focus on the Prodigal Son but forget the other. But the fact is, there were two sinful sons: one who followed the rules self-righteously, and one who openly did the opposite. And because in God's eyes there is no sin-o-meter, both were equally at fault and equally sinful.

The older brother, who initially appears to be the "good" brother, turns out to be quite self-righteous. And the opposite of self-righteous is openness: openness toward his younger brother, openness toward the forgiveness of their father, openness to the grace of our Heavenly Father.

And despite his sinful attitude, look what the father says to him in the last verse of today's passage.



Read | [Luke 15:25-31](#)



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

What were the good gifts that the older son had that he was selfishly dismissing? How did this affect his attitude toward his brother?

How can our "good deeds" be a way of walling ourselves off from a relationship with God?

Just as the good-deed-doing son's heart was walled off toward his rebellious brother, how can a heart that is closed off to "sinners," close us off to God? Praise God for always pursuing you, even when your heart is closed off to him.

For more on this son, check out another sermon:
<https://whchurch.org/sermon/brotherly-loathe/>

Day 4
July 19



Pray | Praise God for always wanting a reunion with you!

FAMILY REUNION

There was a reunion full of rejoicing in today's passage! And if we can see it from the father's point of view, we, too, can rejoice! Why? Because we all love a good homecoming story, like the story of a naughty little fish, pushing boundaries, getting kidnapped, and whose dad must risk thousands of dangerous ocean miles to find him. These stories always touch a soft spot in our hearts because deep down we are all searching to be reunited with our creator.

These stories, in one way or another, mirror the great story of the world, in which sinners who are lost and in bondage need to be found and set free. Yes, even when these stories are our own stories: we all are sinners who gotten ourselves into predicaments requiring forgiveness and restoration.



Read | Luke 15:7; Luke 15:22-24



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

What does Luke 15:7 say about God's response to just one sinner's return to him?

Some family reunions are tense and uneasy because of discord in relationships. Being wounded by someone close to us can be tough to forgive or set aside, and this story's father was no exception. His son had treated him horribly AND squandered a very large portion of this man's estate. We would say he had a right to be angry. But he put aside his own hurt feelings and his sense of justice, as well as the scrutiny of the community around him, to rejoice that his son was home. As the younger son, how would you feel about your father's response? How do you feel knowing that God the Father loves you exponentially more than the father in this story loved his own son? If you've never allowed God to rejoice over you, accept his love and forgiveness today!

Consider this story from the perspective of the father who has been waiting and hoping for his son's safe return. Why do you think he was so excited to be reunited with his son, rather than angry or offended at his son's malicious, disrespectful behavior? How does it feel to know that you are the son, and God is the father in this story?

Day 5

July 20



Pray | Smile and thank God for recklessly chasing after you.

RECKLESS LOVE

We read in Luke 15:20 that this wealthy dignitary ran down the road to meet his manure-encrusted son. As if running wasn't shameful enough for a man of his stature, in order to run he would have had to lift up his robes, exposing his legs. After kissing his disgraced son in an undignified display of affection, he ordered robes and rings for his son to wear to finish the walk home in. The dignitary became undignified to dignify the undignified.

God readily lays himself down for both the self-righteous "us" as well as the rebellious "us" in reckless ways. Jesus took on the painful and humiliating death on a cross so that we could be richly crowned and robed in heaven someday. We can celebrate God's unending grace that is extended to ALL sinners, not just the ones we deem worthy.



Read | Luke 15:30-31



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

If you've never let God run down Main Street in his boxers (so to speak) after you, ask him today to help you see him as he pursues you no matter where you are in life.

Have your life choices ever kept you from accepting God's love? If so, today ask God to help you understand that he loves you because of who *he* is, not because of who *you* are.

When was the last time you felt overwhelmed by God's reckless love and pursuit of you? If you'd like to be overwhelmed, take time today to dwell on his reckless love for you. If song ministers to you, listen to the lyrics in the song, "Reckless Love" by Cory Asbury.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>

If you'd like another deep dive into this reckless, prodigal God, check out this sermon: <https://whchurch.org/sermon/prodigal-god/>

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