

TWO PRODIGALS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
I. Intentions Of The Heart.....	1
II. Delusions Of Self-Sufficiency.....	2
III. The Pride Before The Fall	3
IV. Repentance, Forgiveness And Self-Righteousness	4
CONCLUSION	6
BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

TWO PRODIGIALS

INTRODUCTION

In the Parable of The Prodigal Son, Jesus taught about the issues of obedience, discipline, repentance and forgiveness. The attitude of prodigal living is manifest through disrespect, being unthankful, and a failure to properly realize the true values of Christian Life. When you first read the Parable of The Prodigal Son, you may only see one son who had a prodigal attitude. I believe not only did both sons have a prodigal attitude, but the one son wasn't anymore wrong than the other son, just in a different display of the attitude.

I. INTENTIONS OF THE HEART

In Jeremiah 17:10, and 1 Samuel 16:7, the Bible teaches us that God searches the heart of a man, knows his mind and judges based on the thoughts and intentions of the mind. Often man judges a person by the outward appearance and actions without knowing the true intentions of the heart. The bible teaches us that even if we do a good deed but the intentions of our heart is wrong, the good deed is not counted towards us as good. Father God, our only real judge and rewarder knows the true intentions of our heart, and just as in this Parable our true heart intentions will become evident in our lives.

In this Parable the youngest son was blatantly disrespectful and disobedient to his father, however, later when we see the true heart intention of the older brother, he was just as disrespectful and disobedient to his father but was also unforgiving and angry toward his brother. Both sons had a prodigal attitude, one as bad as the other, one was just more public with the display of the attitude and behavior.

In our lives we need to be careful to keep the intentions of our heart pure and honest towards Father God and towards each other. Before making choices and decisions we need to

consider what is best, first for the Kingdom of God and then best for all considering how our actions will affect everyone. We must never take for granted the provisions, talents, and blessings that Father God has placed into our stewardship and live knowing that they have been granted to us for the advancement of His Kingdom and not given to us for selfish indulgence. I have learned through this parable that if we allow the intentions of our heart to become tainted that even while we are working in God's Kingdom we fall short of the perfect will He has for us, and that our hearts intentions will become evident.

II. DELUSION OF SELF SUFFICIENCY

In this Parable, the youngest son was completely convinced that he knew everything that he needed to know to live his life to the fullest. He believed that his father owed him and that without the restraints that life with his father had for him, he would be able to live life better than ever before and that he was truly self-sufficient. Like too many people today this son thought that he knew what was best in every situation and that he could manage every aspect of life on his own.

In this son's prodigal living he wasted every resource he had with no thought or planning for the future. This youngest son had a careless attitude in his life that caused him to live anyway he wanted without any thought for anyone, just an insatiable appetite for pleasure. This son never thought what effects his decisions would have on the life of his father, brother or not really even for himself. Many people today live their life in the same mindless pursuit of self-seeking pleasure, living only for themselves without any regard for others, God's Kingdom or even themselves in the aspect of what is right for them.

Father God has never created anyone to be self-sufficient, but on the contrary to be totally dependent on Him. We can quickly lose our way, like the prodigal son anytime we develop the attitude that we are self-sufficient. Jeremiah 29:11 teaches us that Father God has only good

plans for us, all of us, not just one but all. When we are willing and obedient to His plans rather than just our own we will eat the good of the land, and the entire family of God will benefit.

III. THE PRIDE BEFORE THE FALL

Proverbs 16:18 teaches us that pride goes before a fall. Proverbs 26:12 teaches us that that there is more hope for a fool than for a man who is wise in his own eyes. In this Parable the youngest son was so wise in his own eyes that he believed that his plans and execution of life was better than the plans that his father had for him, and that once he was out on his own, his life would be perfect.

The older brother in this parable believed that his judgement of his brother was more righteous than his father's judgement and that he was superior in his thinking to his father, and that his father was unable to rightly deal with the youngest son's return because he was too quick to forgive his youngest son and the only just way to deal with his brother was strict punishment that did allow for forgiveness or restitution. The oldest son erroneously believed that he had never been honored by his father or that he had never had any access to his father resources, only to have his father remind him that all that belonged to his father was his.

The youngest son had the results of his pride made manifest in his life when he was at the lowest point in his life and was left destitute to feed with the swine. The oldest brother had the results of his pride made manifest in his life when he refused to forgive his brother, honor his father's wishes or even celebrate that his brother was alive, repentant and humbly desired to be restored to his family. The effects of pride in anyone's life will always lead to a fall, and separation from our Father, just as it led to the fall and the separation of these two brothers from their father. Pride is and has always been a tool that Satan uses to bring devastation and destruction into people's lives. We must always keep ourselves from pride, knowing that with it comes destruction for us as well as all everyone who our lives touch.

IV. REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

In this Parable Jesus teaches us about the necessity of repentance and forgiveness, as well the dangers of self-righteousness. The youngest son in this Parable had to come to a place of total repentance toward his father before any hope of restoration could come to his life. The Father loved his son without reservation, regardless of his sin and was quick and willing to forgive his son even before his son could ask. The oldest brother was so full of self-righteousness that he truly believed that he was the only person that was right in his thinking and judgement. Like all of us the youngest son fell short of the glory of his father, and knew that true repentance was the only way his relationship with his father could be restored.

Once we repent, Father God is willing to forgive us and restore us to our proper relationship with Him. The father in this parable was not able to restore his prodigal son until his son repented. In our lives we are not forgiven and restored until we repent to the Father. Then not only are we forgiven, we are restored to our proper relationship with Him. And our sins are forgotten, never to be remembered again! What divine love that the Father has us, beyond our understanding. We must forgive others as quickly and completely as God forgives us. The Bible teaches us that if we do not forgive others we are not forgiven.

The oldest brother had so much self-righteousness in his heart that he was disobedient to his father in welcoming his brother home, and he was unwilling to forgive his brother. The oldest brother allowed jealousy and resentment to swell in his heart until he not only was unable to obey his father, or forgive his brother, but would not even go into his father's house. If we allow self-righteousness and forgiveness in our lives we will be unable to obey our Father or properly enter into His House. Self-righteousness will separate us from every good plan and gift that Father God has for us.

We must remember that our only righteousness comes from Christ alone, and that our righteousness to God is as filthy rags. In order for us to accomplish God's Kingdom in our lives and here on the Earth, we must be quick to repent, forgive, and stay in fellowship with Father. This parable has affected my life by teaching me that not only do we have to repent quickly before destruction sets into our lives, but that we must keep pride from our lives and be just as quick to forgive others as God forgives us. We must be willing to celebrate with all of Heaven when people are saved and forgiven and be just as excited for their restoration to the Kingdom as we are about our restoration.

When we truly love others as the Father loves us, like the father in this parable we will long for other's restoration back to the Father. We can never allow ourselves to be the judge of other people, we are not all knowing like God, and we are not in a position to judge the intentions of their heart. This parable has also taught me that if we fellowship with God to know His plans for us and to seek His wisdom we will avoid the heartache of delusions, pride, and the bitterness of unforgiveness.

If we are careful to keep the intentions of our heart in line with God's Word and avoid the delusions of self-sufficiency we should be able to keep the pride from our lives. Seeking God's plan and being submitted to His plan with a willing and obedient heart will allow us to be a success both personally and for His Kingdom. The very core of this parable is love, both proper and improper. The father had proper love for both of his sons', however, neither son at first had the proper kind of love for their father or for each other. Both brothers were selfish and didn't realize their choices in their life would take down the hard road before they would learn about proper love.

With correct consideration of this parable we will be able to have our lives in the right order and have the wisdom to help others to have their lives in the right order.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this parable the keys to living successfully in God's Kingdom are taught to us by Jesus. We are to stay submitted to our Father's perfect will and plan for our life. We are to keep our heart pure before Him. We are to know that every good and perfect gift comes from the father and that we are not the Creator therefore we are never self-sufficient. We are to keep our heart free from pride, to be quick to repent and forgive, just as we want to be forgiven knowing that our righteousness comes from being in Christ.

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