

LESSON AIM: The love of the father in our story is a picture of God's love for us: He willingly lets us enjoy all that belongs to Him.

KEY SCRIPTURES: Luke 15:11-32

REVIEW QUESTIONS: (*“Ok, who remembers from last week’s lesson...”*)

- 1) What food did the little boy have that Jesus multiplied?
- 2) How many people did the loaves and fishes feed?
- 3) What were some things you did this past week with your “fives and two’s”?
- 3) Can someone explain last week’s Bible verse in their own words?

I. INTRODUCTION

(Utilize the following example either as role-play, or with a puppet, or as a personal story)

"I'm going to run away from home! I hate living here. I'm always getting bossed around. Every day it's the same old routine. *[List chores relevant to the age group]*. I have to get up at ___ o'clock, go to bed at ___ o'clock, I wish I could do the things "I" want to do, WHEN I want to do them!"

Have you ever felt like running away because you were tired of living at home? Perhaps you've lain in your bed at night thinking of what it would be like living somewhere else. It's very easy to become dissatisfied with what you have when you constantly think about the things you don't have rather than remembering all the good things you do have. Perhaps that's what happened to the boy in a story Jesus told. Things looked a lot better anywhere else than home...

II. PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

A. A wealthy man had two sons; the younger son demanded his inheritance so he could live on his own (v. 11-12).

[Because the Pharisees and scribes complained about Jesus' kindness toward tax collectors and sinners, Jesus confronted them with three parables (stories). 1) The lost sheep, 2) The lost coin, and 3) the lost son, all to show them God's love for the lost sinner (v. 1-3).

B. The father granted his son's request and divided the inheritance (v. 12).

[If he desired, an heir could ask for his share of an estate before the death of his father. The eldest son was entitled to two-thirds (**Deuteronomy 21:17**).]

How good this father was to his son! He was willing to give his hard-earned savings to the one he loved so much. In a far greater way than you could ever imagine, God loves you and me. He is very good to us and has given us many things to enjoy! Can you think of some things God has given you? (*Discuss.*) The Bible says that God is "abounding [overflowing] in goodness" (**Exodus 34:6**). As our Creator, God has filled the earth with his goodness (**Psalms 33:5**). Why is He so good to you? Is it because you deserve it or because you have earned it in some special way? No, God loves you because that is just the way He is. "God is love" (**1 John 4:8**), and you are His treasured creation.

C. The younger son traveled to a far country and wasted his money (v. 13).

The son had disregarded his father's love and care, deciding to go his own way. How foolish! God's Word says that you and I are much like that son. God has been very good to us: He has provided for

our needs and given us many things to enjoy. Yet we, too, go our own way (**Isaiah 53:6**). We often do things that displease God (*ask for/give several examples.*)

D. After the son had spent all he had, a famine spread across the land (**v. 14**).

E. The only work the son could find was a job feeding the pigs (**v. 16**).

[Working with swine/pigs was great humiliation for a Jew. Swine were considered unclean, and their meat was forbidden as food (**Leviticus 11:7-8**).]

F. Starving, the son desired to eat the food he was feeding the pigs (**v. 16**).

G. Suddenly the son realized his sin against God and his father and decided to return home to ask for a position as a hired servant (**v. 17-19**).

H. While the boy was still a great way off, his father ran to meet him (**v. 20**).

The father had eagerly waited for months, perhaps even years, for his son to return from his foolish ways. How he longed to provide generously for the one he loved so much! God's Word says that even though you and I do not deserve God's continued goodness as we foolishly go our own way, the "kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared" (**Titus 3:4-5**).

I. The son confessed his sin and unworthiness to his joyful father (**v. 21**).

III. CLIMAX

Showing his full acceptance and forgiveness, the father celebrated the return of his much-loved son (**v. 22-24**).

[*The robe, ring, and sandals were signs of wealth, favor, and affection.*]

IV. ENDING

A. Conclusion

1. Hearing the celebration, the older brother became angry (**v. 25-30**).

[*The elder son may represent the Pharisees who were finding fault with Jesus' allowing "undeserving sinners" to be part of His Kingdom (v. 1; 14:15-24).*]

2. The father assured his older son of his position in the family and encouraged him to rejoice on behalf of his younger brother (**v. 31-32**).

MEMORY VERSE:

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins."

Proverbs 10:12