

The Father Heart of God

Read together: Luke 15: 11-32

(This is a familiar passage so if you have a alternative translation, maybe you would like to use this instead, for example 'New Living' or 'The Message')

- This parable is rich in meaning. What can we learn about the 'Father' in this passage especially about his love for the 'prodigal' or 'wasteful' Son?
- Think about your relationship with your Father and Mother. Did you always feel unconditionally loved by them? Do you think this has affected your relationship with Father God? In what ways has this happened? How can you overcome this?
- It seems the prodigal son wanted to earn his Father's approval and love once again - are there ways in which you try to earn Father God's love and approval?
- Performance in our society is measured in different ways through out our lives. This is not always a negative thing. However when we link performance with acceptance in our relationship with Father God what can this produce? What ways do you feel this pressure to perform to feel accepted by God? What does the prodigal son's brother have to teach us?
- What do you think about this statement? - "Love is not about what you do, but about who we are and about who loves us"
- The word 'prodigal' can also mean 'extravagant' - so in this parable the Father can be seen as 'extravagant' in his love. How does Father God show us his extravagant love? You may want to look at some of these verses: Ephesians 1:11. 1John 3:1. Psalm 36:5. John 15:13. John 17:23(b). Ephesians 2:18. Colossians 1:12. 2 Corinthians 6:18
- We need to live in the good of the 'Great commandment' before we can live the 'Great Commission'? (Matt 22: 37-38, Matt 28: 19-20) What do you think about this statement?

Spend time praying for each other especially that we know and all experience Father God's acceptance, approval and unconditional love. His love frees us and empowers us. Whatever we have done in the past, however we have failed, no matter what shame or guilt we feel, His love is unconditional and will always remain unconditional towards his children.