

## THE PRODIGAL FATHER: LEARNING THE PRINCIPLES OF BEING A SPIRITUAL FATHER

Family Series

Dr. Ché Ahn

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**Luke 15:11 And He said, “A man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So he divided his wealth between them. 13 And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. 14 Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving *anything* to him. 17 But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”’ 20 So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.**

Luke 15:25 “Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he summoned one of the servants and *began* inquiring what these things could be. 27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.’ 28 But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and *began* pleading with him. 29 But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and *yet* you have never given me

a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ 31 And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and *has begun* to live and *was* lost and has been found.’”

### **INTRO:**

- 1. God is love (1 John 4:8 & 16).**
- 2. He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father (John 14:7-11).**
- 3. We are called to be lovers (John 13:33-34, Matthew 22:37-29).**
- 4. What is the prodigal father? Prodigal means lavish. The Apple dictionary: “having or giving something on a lavish scale.”**
5. Generous, lavish, liberal, unstinting, unsparing, bountiful; copious, profuse; abundant in, abounding in, rich; (*literary*) bounteous. (ANTONYM: mean).
6. Baptize nations in the Father’s love, saturate the nations with the teachings of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRODIGAL FATHER:**

#### **I. THE PRODIGAL FATHER LOVED UNCONDITIONALLY**

##### **A. HE LOVED HIS SON EVEN WHEN HIS SON REBELLED**

- 1. Luke 15:11 And He said, “A man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So, he divided his wealth between them.”**
2. It was totally dishonoring for a son to ask for the inheritance before the death of the father. It is like saying, “I wish you were dead.” The father could have said no, or even worse, “You are no longer my son, and you have no inheritance from me.” I have heard of many fathers when the son or daughter is in rebellion, they cut them off from the family and say, “You are no longer part of this family!” Maybe your parents said that to you. My parents never disowned me during my years of rebellion.

##### **B. THE HEAVENLY FATHER LOVES UNCONDITIONALLY**

1. One of the most powerful verses:
- 2. Romans 5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**



3. **John 8:10** Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”

**C. WE TOO, AS FATHERS, MUST LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY**

1. YOU CAN HATE THE SIN, BUT YOU MUST LOVE THE SINNER
2. What if your son or daughter backslides? Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8, Acts 16:3).

**II. THE PRODIGAL FATHER MADE HIS FAMILY A PRIORITY**

**A. THE FATHER GAVE HIS SON HIS INHERITANCE. IT SPEAKS TO HIS PRIORITY BEING HIS FAMILY. “ALL I HAVE IS YOURS.”**

1. **Luke 15:31** “And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.’”

**B. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER HAS GIVEN US OUR INHERITANCE BEFORE WE DIE**

**C. A GOOD MAN LEAVES AN INHERITANCE FOR HIS CHILDREN’S CHILDREN**

1. This implies that the grandchildren will receive an inheritance while they are young.
2. The principle is that we need to give an inheritance while they are young when they can practically use it to get ahead in life.
3. For our children, Sue and I gave them all an inheritance by helping them purchase their first homes.

**D. WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THAT IS WHERE YOUR HEART IS ALSO**

**III. THE PRODIGAL FATHER LOVED BY EXAMPLE TOWARD HIS SERVANTS**

**A. THE REBELLIOUS SON REMEMBERED HOW HIS FATHER TREATED HIS SERVANTS**

1. **Luke 15:17** “But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!’”

**B. JESUS SET AN EXAMPLE OF LOVE**

1. **John 13:1** Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.



- 2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, to betray Him...
2. John 13:12 So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for *so* I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.”
  3. John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
  4. We lead by example.
  5. My father loved my mother.

#### IV. THE PRODIGAL FATHER WAS GENEROUS

##### A. THE PRODIGAL FATHER GAVE HIM THE ROBE, THE RING, AND THE SANDALS—HE IS GIVING TO HIS SON WHO IS REPENTING BEFORE HIM

1. Luke 15:22 “But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.’”

##### B. GOD THE FATHER GAVE US HIS SON

##### C. WE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE GENEROSITY TO OUR CHILDREN

1. Matthew 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

#### V. THE PRODIGAL FATHER SHOWED PHYSICAL AFFECTION

##### A. THE PRODIGAL FATHER KISSED HIM ALL OVER

1. Luke 15:20 “So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”

##### B. THIS IS MY DARLING SON, WITH WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED

##### C. FATHERS, WE MUST SHOW AFFECTION TO OUR CHILDREN

1. I can never remember my father kissing me.

2. Maybe that is the reason why I showed so much affection to my children. I had my lips glued to their faces as I would carry them while they were young.

## **VI. THE PRODIGAL FATHER WAS QUICK TO FORGIVE**

### **A. HE DOESN'T SAY, "I FORGIVE YOU," BUT HE BEGINS TO BLESS HIS PRODIGAL SON WHO JUST CAME HOME. BY HIS ACTIONS HE HAD FORGIVEN HIS SON.**

### **B. JESUS AND THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY**

1. **John 8:10** Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."

## **VII. THE PRODIGAL FATHER KNEW HOW TO AFFIRM HIS SON'S IDENTITY**

### **A. HE GAVE THE RING, THE SANDALS — SLAVES WENT SHOELESS, BUT NOT A SON**

### **B. THE HEAVENLY FATHER SAID TWICE, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON!"**

### **C. WE MUST AFFIRM OUR CHILDREN'S IDENTITY WITH OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS**

1. **Major healing came when I was 38 and my father said two things to me.** "I love you, and I am proud of you that you are a pastor like me."
2. **Luke 10:21** At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight."

## **VIII. THE PRODIGAL FATHER GAVE AUTHORITY TO THE CHILDREN**

### **A. SIGNET RING — LIKE AN AMEX CREDIT CARD**

1. **Luke 15:22** "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.'"

### **B. Our Father has given us authority (Genesis 1:28).**

1. **Psalm 8:4** What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? 5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! 6 You make

him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.

2. **Matthew 16:17-18, Luke 19:10, Matthew 28:18.**

**IX. THE PRODIGAL FATHER LED IN FAMILY CELEBRATIONS**

**A. HE KILLS THE FATTENED CALF AND THROWS A PARTY**

1. **Luke 15:23** “and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

2. Fathers, be generous with family celebrations and vacations. Build memories.

**B. ALL OF HEAVEN REJOICES WHEN THERE IS ONE SOUL SAVED**

**CONCLUSION: HOW TO BE A LOVING FATHER**

1. **LOVE YOUR CHILD UNCONDITIONALLY**

2. **MAKE YOUR FAMILY A PRIORITY**

3. **TEACH YOUR CHILD PRIMARILY BY EXAMPLE**

4. **SHOW PHYSICAL AFFECTION**

5. **BE GENEROUS**

6. **BE QUICK TO FORGIVE**

7. **LEARN HOW TO HAVE FAMILY CELEBRATIONS AND FUN**

8. **AFFIRM YOUR CHILD'S IDENTITY**

