



## LIFEgroup *Homework*

Week of January 31, 2010

### **The Older Brother Syndrome – Luke 15**

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Who would imagine that the younger brother, the one who blew his life's savings on wild living, would end up happier and with a better relationship with his father than his older brother who stayed at home and did everything that was expected of him.

At the root of the story is the question of "what makes us happy at the deepest level?" For the father, having a relationship with his two sons, was at the core of his happiness. He wasn't so concerned about money and the wealth that was squandered by his Prodigal son as he was that his lost son was found. The father was inclusive in that he invited both his Prodigal son and his self-righteous son to join in on the celebration.

The father's heart was the same for both of his sons, but the story ends with the older son walking away, being alienated, by an act of his will, from both his brother and father. How sad is that?

#### **Sharing Questions**

- 1) Who is the most forgiving and inclusive person in your family?
  
- 2) Who is your favorite relative? Why?

3)

## **Getting Started Question:**

Think of a time when you were treated better than you deserve. What were the circumstances? How did it make you feel?

Have you ever been replaced in the workforce? How did you feel about the person who replaced you and reaped the benefits of your hard labor?

Do you think the older brother felt similarly?

The Prodigal son humbly returned home with nothing. His extravagantly loving father received him in a first class fashion with a robe, a ring, sandals and a party fit for a king, with the finest cuts of meat. He still paid a huge price for his rebellion and he had significantly less than his older brother (who still claimed 2/3rds of the inheritance). Yet with all that was squandered that would never be restored, the Prodigal was still happier than his older brother. Why is that? What passages of Scripture would explain this unexpected phenomena?

## **Homework: Read Luke 15:25-32**

Pretend that you are the older brother and your younger, irresponsible sibling is returning home from college as a drop out, with major debt and an unexpected child on the way. What might you include in your speech?

## **Read Luke 7:36-46**

Who is Jesus speaking to? What is this person's attitude toward "sinners?"

Who was the more loving person in this passage?

What was the driving motivation for the woman's attitude of love and sacrifice toward Jesus?

How is the Pharisee in this passage similar in attitude to the Pharisees in Luke 15?

What common principles do you see in this passage that parallels Luke 15?

## **Read Luke 15:31**

Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, the religious Jewish leaders who had every spiritual blessing available to them, yet they were missing the party with the same self-righteous attitude of the older brother. Why is it so important to understand that we are rich in the things that count?

How does this truth affect our sense of happiness and wellbeing?

Read the following passages and write down what you have that comes from your Heavenly Father:

Ephesians 1:3

Ephesians 2:1-10

Psalms 139:1-18

Psalms 23



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