

Protecting our Families & Responding to Prodigals

Luke 15 | 8.28.22

Luke 15:11-31 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' ²⁰ "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, '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 fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry. ²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' ²⁸ "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰ But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' ³¹ "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. ³² It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "

Rebellion | Repentance | Reunion | Rejoicing | Resentment

The Way of the Prodigal (posted at gbcmaison.org)

1. The prodigal wants choices without consequences.
2. The prodigal wants autonomy without accountability.
3. The prodigal wants leaving without loss.

The Fool: "Folly" addresses behavior. "Fools" addresses the person.

Resource: Lou Priolo - *Getting A Grip - The Heart of Anger Handbook for Teens*

Rules address behavior, but they do not deal with the heart. Grace, on the other hand, is internal. It works on the heart level. **Grace actually changes our heart from what we want to match what God wants.**

“Folly is a more dangerous enemy to the good than evil. One can protest against evil; it can be unmasked and if need be, prevented by force. Evil always carries the seeds of its own destruction as it makes people at the least uncomfortable. Against **folly** we have no defense. Neither protests nor force can touch it; reasoning is no use; facts that contradict personal prejudices can simply be disbelieved – indeed, the **fool** can counter by criticizing them, and if they are undeniable, they can just be pushed aside as trivial exceptions. So the **fool**, as distinct from the scoundrel, is completely self-satisfied; in fact he can easily become dangerous, as it does not take much to make him aggressive. A **fool** must therefore be treated more cautiously than a scoundrel; we shall never again try to convince a **fool** by reason, for it is both useless and dangerous. If we are to deal adequately with **folly**, we must try to understand its nature. This much is certain it is a moral rather than an intellectual defect...The fact that a **fool** is often stubborn must not mislead us into thinking that he is independent. One feels in fact when talking to him that one is dealing, not with the man himself, but with slogans, catchwords, and the like, which have taken hold of him. He is under a spell, he is blinded, his very nature is being misused and exploited. Having thus become a passive instrument, the **fool** will be capable of any evil and at the same time incapable of seeing that it is evil. Here lies the danger of a diabolical exploitation that can do irreparable damage to human beings. But at this point it is quite clear, too, that **folly** can be overcome, not by instruction, but only by an act of liberation... The Bible’s Words that **‘the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’ (Psalm 111:10)** tell us that a person’s inward liberation to live a responsible life before God is the only real cure for **folly**.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Nazi Prison in Berlin 1943-45)

Eight Questions to ask yourself as a parent of a prodigal:

1. Did I model Jesus Christ’s love, grace and mercy to my child/children?
2. Did I recognize my need of God’s grace to fill in for my inconsistencies?
3. Did I excuse or cover up my sins or did I confess them?
4. Did I ever claim to be the model parent without personal challenges?
5. Did I have a desire to please Jesus in my parenting?
6. Did I communicate that Jesus was the highest priority in my life and family?
7. Did I express unconditional love to my child/children?
8. Did I realize only God could change my child’s heart?

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