

**Welcome to the  
Common Ground Café!**



**Sunday, July 8, 2018**

**Two Ways to Miss God  
A Study of Luke 15:11-32**

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Where were you in the birth order of your family? Did birth order have any impact on the way you related to your parents? Your siblings?

In today's study, we're looking at Jesus's story of two sons. The younger one left home and the older one stayed home. But neither had a real relationship with his father.

Last week we looked at two ways to *find* God. We looked at two parables about a farmer discovering treasure in a field and a pearl merchant finding a pearl of great price (Matthew 13:44-46). Summarize what we learned last week about the two ways people find God.

In this week's study, we'll look at two ways to *miss* God. In Luke 15, Jesus told a parable of two sons. One illustrates how we can miss a relationship with God through self-indulgence. The other illustrates how we can miss a relationship with God through self-righteousness.

### **Self-Indulgence**

Read Luke 15:11-24.

List words from verses 11-13 describing self-indulgence.

List ways a person might squander the resources of our heavenly Father in frivolous living.

In verses 14-20, what led the wayward son to "come to his senses"?

What must a person admit in order to "come to their senses"?

In verses 18-19, what were the hopes/expectations of the repentant son? What did he think he deserved?

In verses 21-24, how did the father surprise the son? What one word would you use to describe the father's reaction?

How does God "surprise" a repentant person today?

In verses 23-24, how does Jesus describe what a life with God is supposed to be like? List some reasons why the Christian life is so joyful.

This doesn't mean that the Christian life is one big party with no sad times. Can we know the joy of life with the Father even in bad days? Explain.

### **Self-Righteousness**

Read Luke 15:25-32.

In verses 25-27, what was the older brother doing when his younger brother returned home from wasting the father's money?

In verse 28, how did the older brother feel and what did he do?

We tend to think that the older brother's problem is his attitude toward his younger brother. But what can you point to in the story to show his real problem was with his father?

In verse 29 what word does he use to describe the work he did for his father all these years?

Do we ever get resentful toward God in this way and start thinking of serving God as "slaving for you"? How?

By the end of the story, which brother is on the outside and which brother is on the inside?

Why do you think Jesus ended the story without telling us whether the older brother came around to his father's way of thinking?

Have someone summarize the first three chapters of Jonah. (Feel free to use the summary in Wikipedia if you need to.) Then have someone read Jonah 4.

Why do you think the book of Jonah ends (just like Jesus's parable) without telling us whether Jonah came around to God's way of thinking?

You are called on to “complete the ending” of the book of Jonah and Jesus’s parable with your own life. You do this in two ways:

- ❖ By relying entirely on God’s grace and not on your goodness for your salvation. How can a believer improve in this area?
- ❖ By becoming more patient and gracious with the “younger brothers” in your world. How can a believer improve in this area?

### Conclusion

If you had to go to one of the two brothers with a deep personal problem, who would you choose?

The younger brother was lost through self-indulgence. The older brother was lost through self-righteousness. Which brother reminds you of your own spiritual story?

Whether you are the younger brother or the older brother, the Father wants you in the “party.” What’s keeping you from joining the party?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests