



Study Guide for Prodigal A Father, His Sons, and You January 17, 2010 “Prodigal God”

Open Up

Talk with your group about words whose meanings have changed over time, for example the word “gay” meant happy, but in current culture it is associated with homosexuality. Some of the evolutions in meaning might be humorous, some might be controversial – groups should use their discretion in going overtime on this opening section. TRANSITION: In his message on today’s topic, MCC Spiritual Formation Pastor Ethan Magness explained that the word “prodigal” used to mean wasteful and extravagant, but is now so closely associated with this story of Jesus that we usually think of it meaning “lost” or “runaway.”

Dig In

- 1) As we have the other two sessions of this series, read Luke 15:11-32. As you compare the father in Jesus’ story to real-life parenting, how might someone criticize the father for being foolish in how he dealt with his runaway son at the beginning of the story and at the reunion? In Jesus’ time and in our own, do we expect God to be “reasonable”, “rational”, and “fair”?
- 2) Read Ephesians 2:4-10 and Ephesians 3:16-19. What kind of words does Paul use to describe God’s love? According to Paul, what should be our responses to God’s love?
- 3) Read Romans 5:6-9 and Romans 6:1-2. How do these two sections connect God’s love and our response? Based on these verses, discuss with your group the possible responses of the runaway son and the stay-at-home son to the extravagantly-loving father in Luke 15.

Work On

- 1) The Star Trek science fiction series created to characters known for their logical outlook, the Vulcan Starfleet officer Mr Spock and the android Starfleet officer Data. According to human, Vulcan, or computer/android logic, is God’s grace logical or wastefully extravagant and prone to abuse by repeat offenders? Do you know anyone who has a hard time understanding God’s love for those who don’t deserve it? Does anyone really deserve God’s love?
- 2) Talk with your group about how you might grow more extravagantly forgiving, and patient, and reaching-out, etc. - like God is.

Lift Up

In your prayer time, consider being extravagant and overflowing in your gratitude to God for His love.

Another Step – Advanced Study

MCC’s worship service on this theme of “Prodigal God” included the “Your Love Is Extravagant” by Darrell Evans. This link is a YouTube version <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkb0Dmf0Ris>