

**Luke 15:1-2 (NLT)** <sup>1</sup> Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. <sup>2</sup> This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!

**Luke 15:11-24 (NLT)** <sup>11</sup> To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. <sup>13</sup> "A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. <sup>14</sup> About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. <sup>15</sup> He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup> The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, <sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant." ' <sup>20</sup> "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' <sup>22</sup> "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. <sup>23</sup> And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

When his son came to him and asked for his inheritance, he was essentially saying he wished his father was dead.

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**Deuteronomy 30:19 (NLT)** Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!

Anytime that we go looking to find our life outside of our relationship with God we are leaving home to go to a far-off land.

We miss the outward deceit of the devil and the inward deceit of self.

You will defeat yourself when you dwell on the things in your life that you are not happy with and fantasize living or behaving outside of God's will in your life.

**Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)** Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

**Proverbs 4:23 (NCV)** Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life.

Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay (Old quote, source unknown)

**Ephesians 2:12 (NLT)** In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

**Luke 15:20 (NLT)** "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

**Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We should never give up praying for them and sharing Christ with them and with others we come in contact with.

**2 Corinthians 5:18 (NKJV)** Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, **and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,**

**1 John 1:9 (NKJV)** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God brings conviction, not condemnation.

**Luke 15:25–32 (NLT)** <sup>25</sup> “Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, <sup>26</sup> and he asked one of the servants what was going on. <sup>27</sup> ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’ <sup>28</sup> “The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, <sup>29</sup> but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. <sup>30</sup> Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’ <sup>31</sup> “His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’ ”

Christianity is not a religion of good works but a relationship of truth and love.