

Reflection questions for the prodigal son story Lk 15:11-32

General interpretation

Jesus is telling this parable to the religious leaders of his time. They are like the older son in the story who are jealous that Jesus is welcoming into the Kingdom many who had not been doing all the hard work necessary to follow the law and “be good”. It did not seem fair or just to them. Additionally this story is often referred to as the prodigal son but scholars point out that it’s more about the Father’s generosity, mercy and forgiveness, and humbleness, to accept back a child who was so unfaithful. This is the way our God is to us, and if we are able to take the father’s point of view, it brings us joy not jealousy when we see others recognize and accept this love and Mercy.

Questions for individual reflection

- Which of the two children can you best relate to? Which son’s feelings resonate with you more?
- If you can relate more to the younger son, have you experienced that embrace and kiss of the Father? Have you encountered others that were not accepting of your conversion in your new life? Are you able to now live in the joy of the banquet? Take a moment to give God thanks.
- If you relate more to the older child what are some of the feelings that you have that are similar? Do you feel that God owes you for all your hard work? Do you feel that you have not been rewarded for all your hard work? Are you angry at the way God is treating you? Do you feel God is treating others better than you? Can you hear the Father coming out and pleading with you to come into the banquet? Can you hear his love for you expressed perhaps in a different way?
- Are there some in your life who are like the Younger son that you may feel resentful towards? Who are they? How does God look at them? How would God want you to look at them?
- Is the father being unfair in this parable? Why or why not?
- Be sure to also pray this passage from the point of view of the loving father. How does doing so speak to how we should treat (and think about) others in our lives, and who we read about in the news? Who are those who are like the younger son and those who are like the older son? Who are the people in your life that would be like the younger son, who are the people

in your life that would be like the older son? How is God calling us to think about, and act towards these people.

- Perhaps you are a parent or a grandparent, how does this passage help you to look at all your children, or grandchildren, who may be different and require different responses? How might this passage speak to their need to know that they are equally loved by you the parent or grandparent? How could this passage perhaps help you to help them see each other differently? Do you believe God can show you how to be a more loving parent, grandparent? Ask Him.