



Daily Verse and Comment

[Luke 15:29-32](#)

(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.'"

New King James Version

What can we learn from the father in this story? After all, if anyone was wronged in this parable, it was the two young men's loving father. Instead of reacting with the bitter hatred, envy, and self-centeredness of his elder son, he handled the situation with [love](#), [longsuffering](#), [kindness](#), [goodness](#), [faithfulness](#), gentleness, and [self-control](#). His wise words to his elder son in verses 31-32 help to put everything in its proper perspective.

In essence, the father tells his offended son, "Don't be so short-sighted, lest you become as greedy and foolish as your little brother. All that we have here is yours, so keep your eyes on the bigger picture and the greater reward."

We all long to feel appreciated—to receive our “fatted calf”—particularly if we strive to sacrifice and work hard in service to others. But we should never lose sight of the fact that the purpose of our faithful service is *not* for a pat on the back or the approval of others. Otherwise, we are no different from the Pharisees who did their works before men and thus, as Christ declared, “Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward” ([Matthew 6:2](#)).

In summation, the Parable of the Prodigal Son contains two important stories and a handful of invaluable lessons for practicing Christians:

- » [God](#) is our only Judge, and He looks on the heart.
- » Our sins have consequences.
- » We should always be ready and willing to forgive any grievance as God does—unconditionally—and to seek reconciliation.
- » Our walk should be defined by the spirit, not just the letter, of the law.

While both sons' sinful attitudes and actions brought dishonor upon the father, his willingness to forgive them both provided hope for all, just as our [merciful](#) Father in heaven provides for each of us. While the narrative ends without revealing what happened to the two brothers, it is worthwhile to imagine that they reconciled—that they healed their relationship and restored honor to the family name.

Because there is hope for reconciliation, we should pray for it—even expect it! Never give up on God. Those who are loyal and faithful and endure to the end will, one day, receive the greatest thanks and exaltation that measure far beyond our ability to envision. For [Jesus Christ](#) Himself will welcome those into His Kingdom with a resounding, “Well done, good and faithful servant . . . Enter into the [joy](#) of your lord” ([Matthew 25:21](#)).

— Ted E. Bowling

To learn more, see:
[The Elder Brother](#)

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