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### **Reconciling Faith**

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 /1913 Edition  
or Roget's Thesaurus – **April 24, 2016**

### **Luke 15:11-24**

**Introduction:** On this particular day, Jesus was speaking to a mixed audience. **Two distinct** groups are mentioned (Luke 15:1-2). **TAX COLLECTORS** and others considered to be **SINNERS** by the **religious elite** were there for the specific purpose of hearing Jesus teach.

Since tax collectors worked for the Roman government, they were viewed as traitors and outcasts. The problem for the religious leaders was that Jesus **sat** and **ate** with these less-than-desirable people! Such action indicated identification and welcome, something they avoided at all costs. In their minds, Jesus was also guilty because of his association with such bad people of low reputation.

Because of their condescending attitudes, Jesus decided to **instruct them** in his special style of teaching – namely, **parables**. On this particular occasion, he used a series of three parables with a lost object being found in each one. What we learn is that such **reconciling** causes **JOY in Heaven**.

*(Source: The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series)*

**Luke 15:11**, And he said, A certain man had **TWO sons...**

**NOTE:** by the "two sons" are meant, **NOT angels** and **men**, as that angels are the elder, and men the younger son; for though angels are called the sons of God, and may be said to be elder than men, with respect to creation; and good angels may be said to have been ever with God, and always serving him, and never sinned against him; yet they are never called the brethren of men, nor men their brethren; and besides, are **never angry** at the **return** and **reception of repenting sinners**; for this would be to represent them just the reverse of what they are said to be, in the preceding verse: **NOR** are the **Jews** and **Gentiles** here intended, which is the more received and general sense of the parable: those who go this way, suppose the Jews to be the elder brother; and indeed they were so, with respect to external privileges; and were with God, being his household and family; all he had were theirs, that was external; and the character of the elder brother throughout the parable, agrees with the far greater part of that nation; and it is certain, that they did resent the calling of the Gentiles: and these suppose the Gentiles to be the younger brother, who indeed were brought into a church state, later than the Jews; and might be said to be afar off in a far country, and to have spent their substance in idolatry and wickedness; to have been in the utmost distress, and in the most deplorable condition: but to this sense it may be objected, that **the Gospel was NOT as yet preached to the Gentiles**; nor were they brought to repentance; nor were they openly received into the divine favour; nor as yet had the Jews murmured at, and resented the kindness of God to them: rather standing and fallen professors may be designed: since the former are very apt to carry it toward the latter, in like manner as the elder brother is represented in this parable, as carrying

himself towards the younger: but the TRUE SENSE, and which the CONTEXT and OCCASION of the parable at once determine, is, that by the **elder son** are meant, the **Scribes** and **Pharisees**, and self-righteous persons, among the Jews; and by the **younger**, the **publicans** and **sinners** among the **same people**; as it is easy to observe, the same are meant by the two sons in the parable in Matthew 21:28. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/luke-15.html>)

**Matthew 21:28-32**, But what think ye? A certain man had **two sons**; and he came to the FIRST, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, **I will not**: but afterward **he repented**, and went. And he came to the SECOND, and said likewise. And he answered and said, **I go, sir**: and **went not**. Whether of them twain **DID the WILL of his father?** **They** (the chief priest and elders in vs. 23) **say** unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the **publicans** and the **harlots** go into the kingdom of God before you. For **John** came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye **believed him not**: but the **publicans** and the **harlots** BELIEVED HIM: and ye, when ye had seen it, **repented not** afterward, that ye might believe him.

**Luke 15:12**, And the **younger** of them **said to his father**, *Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.*

**NOTE:** It may seem strange that such a demand should be made, and that the parent should have acceded (complied, agreed) to it, when he knew that it was to minister to his debauches (EXCESS in eating or drinking; intemperance [EXCESS]) that his profligate (ruined in morals) son made the demand here specified. But the matter will appear plain, when it is considered, that it has been an **immemorial custom** in the **east** for **sons** to **demand and receive** their portion of the inheritance during their father's lifetime; and the parent, however aware of the dissipated (devoted to pleasure and vice) inclinations of the child, **could not legally refuse to comply with the application**. It appears indeed that the spirit of this law was to provide for the child in case of ILL treatment by the father: yet the demand must first be acceded (complied) to, before the matter could be legally inquired into; and then, "if it was found that the father was **irreproachable** in his **character**, and had given no just cause for the son to separate from him, in that case, the civil magistrate **fined the son** in two hundred puns of cowries." See Code of Gentoo laws, pr. disc. p. 56; see also do. chap. 2: sec. 9, p. 81, 82; xxi. sec. 10, p. 301. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/luke-15.html>)

**NOTE:** The division of property among the Jews gave the **older son** **twice as much** as the **younger**. In this case it seems the younger son received **only money** or **movable** property, and the older chose to remain with his father and dwell on the paternal estate. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:13**, And **not many days after** the **younger son** gathered **all together**, and took his journey into a far country, and there **WASTED** his substance with **riotous** (licentious [unrestrained by law or morality; loose]) **living**.

**Thought 1.** This verse reveals why he's called the prodigal son. Prodigal means "wasteful."

**NOTE: Not many days after** - He probably hastened his departure for fear of the **FINE** which he must have PAID, and the reproach to which he must have been subjected, **had the matter come before** the **civil magistrate**. See above.

**Riotous living** - in a course of life that led him to SPEND ALL... And this we are informed, Luke 15:30, was among **harlots** (**strumpet** [prostitute]); the readiest way in the world to exhaust the body, debase the mind, ruin the soul, and destroy the substance. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:14-15**, And when he had **spent all**, there arose a **mighty famine** in that land; and he began to be in **want**. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to **feed swine**.

**NOTE:** The **basest** (lowest) and **vilest** (nastiest, disgusting) of all employments; and, to a Jew, peculiarly **degrading**. Shame, contempt, and distress are wedded to sin, and can never be divorced. No character could be meaner in the sight of a Jew than that of a **swineherd**: and Herodotus informs us, that in Egypt they were not permitted to mingle with civil society, nor to appear in the worship of the gods, nor would the very dregs of the people have any **matrimonial** connections with them. Herod. lib. ii. cap. 47.  
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:16**, And he **would fain (desire) have filled** his **belly** with the **husks (pod of the carob-tree)** that the swine did eat: and **NO MAN** GAVE unto HIM.

**NOTE:** ...rather, 'was **fain to fill**,' or **ate greedily** of the only food he could get. These husks, or **pulse-pods**, were in the East the food of cattle and swine, and in **times of distress** were the **nourishment** of the **very poorest people**, as Stier remarks.  
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jfu/luke-15.html>)

**NOTE:** ... this young Jew not only had to live among the pigs, he had to eat the food that they ate. It was the opposite of all that he had ever known. He was **homeless** and friendless and lacking in even the basic amenities. He had reached rock bottom. We do **not** have to **assume dishonesty**. Eating the pig food may well, in a time of famine, have been part of the agreement. And he may well also have received a small wage. But there was no charity for him. He was an outcast. His 'good time' friends had forgotten him. No one wanted to know him. The pig food was probably CAROB PODS, of which the **Rabbis** would say, '**when the Israelites are reduced to carob pods, then they repent**'. For carob pods were the worst possible type of food.

We must remember that Jesus is here describing the '**public servants and sinners**', people who had wandered away from God and had lived for themselves. They had lived their lives as though God did not exist and by it they had LOST everything that was truly worthwhile. Even the wealthy ones were **spiritually 'living among the pigs'**.  
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/luke-15.html>)

**Thought 1.** When scripture says no man, his father is also included who knew, by word of mouth, his son's situation. However, he knew the only way to truly HELP his son was to LOVE him by letting his son's own **sin** correct him: bringing him to repentance, if possible.

**Jeremiah 2:19**, Thine **OWN wickedness** shall correct thee, and thy **backslidings** shall REPROVE thee: know therefore and SEE that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken **the LORD** thy God, and that **my FEAR** (awe [profound {DEEP} reverence]) is NOT IN thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

**Luke 15:17**, And when he **came to himself**, he said, How many **hired servants** of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

**NOTE:** He said within himself, he **REASONED** with himself, when he recovered his right mind, *How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough!* Note, Consideration is the first step towards conversion, Ezekiel 18:28. *He considers, and turns.* To consider is to retire INTO ourselves, to **reflect** upon ourselves, to **compare** one thing with another, and determine accordingly.

**Ezekiel 18:28**, Because he **considereth (look upon)**, and **turneth away** from all his **transgressions** that he hath committed, he shall surely LIVE, he shall NOT DIE.

Now observe what it was that he considered. [1.] He **considered how bad** his condition was: *I perish with hunger*. Not only, "I am hungry," but, "*I perish with hunger*, for I see not what way to expect relief." Note, **Sinners** will not come to the service of Christ till they are brought to **SEE themselves** just ready to perish in the service of sin and the consideration of that should drive us to Christ. [2.] He **considered how much better** it might be made if he would but return...

(Source: <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/mhm/luke-15.html>)

**Thought 1.** What comes to mind is when a person is in sin, and really craves/WANTS their situation to get better, as they LOOK for the solution, God will REVEAL the answer to them. This is where "SELF LOVE" comes into play. You do remember, even under the New Covenant, the righteousness of "love thy neighbor as (like) THYSELF" is still being fulfilled?

**James 2:8**, If ye **FULFIL** the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt LOVE thy neighbor as **thyself**, ye DO WELL...

If not for loving SELF, a person in sin, like so many who LOSE hope of things getting better, will either accept where they are or, in the worst case scenario, take their own lives.

**Luke 15:18**, *I will arise and GO to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee...*

**NOTE:** When he says, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, means, that God was, (speaking after the manner of men) injured or **insulted** by his **sins**; and injured also in the person of his earthly father; and certainly the common sentiment of mankind teaches this, that whoever is **insolent** (insulting, abusive) or **disrespectful to his parents, rebels against God**, who, by making them the instruments of communicating life to their children, has imparted to them some of his own paternal honour. Dr. Goodman observes, This was an acknowledgement, that his **father's yoke had been so easy**, that his throwing it off had been an **act of rebellion** against God; and it shewed also, that his heart was touched with a sense, not only of the folly, but of the guilt of his conduct; and that the **FEAR** (reverence) of God **began to take hold of him**.

Reverence, **1.** deep RESPECT and esteem (HIGH VALUE) mingled with **FEAR** and affection (LOVE). **2.** The FEAR acceptable to God, is a filial [CHILD in relation to his parents] fear, an awful reverence of the divine nature, proceeding FROM a just esteem [high value] of his PERFECTIONS [infinite POWER, holiness, justice, benevolence and wisdom], which produces IN us an inclination (leaning of the MIND or WILL) TO his service and an UNWILLINGNESS to offend him.).

**Proverbs 16:6**, By **MERCY (good deed, pity)** and **TRUTH** iniquity is **PURGED**: and by the **FEAR** of the LORD men DEPART from evil.

**Thought 1.** To learn why the son departed FROM sin, is to also know how he got IN it.

**Psalms 36:1**, The transgression of the **wicked** saith within my heart (MIND), that there is **NO FEAR** of God **before** his eyes.

**Proverbs 14:2**, He that walketh in his uprightness, **FEARETH** (reverence) the Lord: but he that is **perverse (to turn aside)** in his ways **DESPISETH** him.

**Despiseth defined 959, to disesteem** (to slight [to neglect: **1.** to omit by carelessness or DESIGN {a scheme or plan in the mind} **2.** to forbear {stop, **PAUSE**, refuse} to treat with attention or **RESPECT** ]).

Having the idea of his **undutiful behaviour** strongly impressed on **his MIND**, he was sensible that he had no title to be treated at home as a Son: at the same time he knew,

that it would never be well with him, till he was in his father's family again; so **with joy** he **entertained the thought** of occupying the meanest (LOWEST) station in it...  
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tcc/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:19**, And am no more **worthy** to be called **thy son**: make me as one of thy **hired** servants.

**NOTE:** ...this is said not from a servile (slavish) spirit, but to express the mean (HUMBLE, lowly) thoughts he had of himself, and the great DESIRE he had to be fed from his father's table, in the meanest (most HUMBLE) way; and what an happiness and honour it would be to him, could he be the meanest (most HUMBLE) in his family, a **doorkeeper in his house**; which was more eligible to him, than to dwell in the tents of sin, or continue in this hungry and starving condition.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:20**, And he **arose**, and **came** to his father. But when **he was yet a great way off**, his father SAW him, and **had compassion**, and **RAN**, and **fell on** his neck, and **KISSED** him.

**NOTE:** And he arose, and came to his father. Many a one says, "I will arise," yet sits still. But this is the story of a **real conversion**, in which **purpose** is presently tuned into **practice**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jfu/luke-15.html>)

**NOTE:** We have here his reception and entertainment with his father: *He came to his father* but was he welcome? Yes, heartily welcome. And, by the way, it is an **example to parents whose children** have **been foolish** and **disobedient**, IF they REPENT, and SUBMIT themselves, NOT to be harsh and severe with them, but to be governed in such a case by the **wisdom that is from above**, which is *gentle and easy to be entreated* herein let them be followers (IMATATORS) of God, and merciful, as he is. But it is chiefly designed to set forth the grace (graciousness [KIND manner]) and mercy (PITY) of God to poor sinners that **repent** and **return** to him, and his readiness to forgive them. Now here observe, (1.) The great LOVE and affection wherewith the father received the son: *When he was yet a great way off his father saw him*, Luke 15:20. He expressed **his kindness** before the son expressed **his repentance** for God prevents (go before) us with the blessings of his goodness. Even *before we call he answers for he knows* what is in our hearts. *I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest*. How lively are the images presented here! [1.] Here were *eyes of mercy*, and those eyes quick-sighted: *When he was yet a great way off his father saw him*, before any other of the family were aware of him, as if from the top of some high tower he had been looking that way which his son was gone, with such a thought as this, "O that I could see yonder wretched son of mine coming home!" This intimates God's desire of the conversion of sinners, and his readiness to meet them that are coming towards him.

...**He had compassion**. Misery is the object of PITY, even the misery of a sinner though he has brought it upon himself, yet God compassionates. His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel, Hosea 11:8; Judges 10:16. [3.] Here were feet of mercy, and those feet quick-paced: **He ran**. This denotes **how swift God is to show mercy**.

...He kissed him. This kiss not only assured him of his welcome, but sealed his pardon...  
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:21**, And the son said unto him, **Father, I have sinned** against heaven, and in thy sight, and am **no more worthy** to be CALLED thy son.

**NOTE:** This humiliating (HUMBLING) confession he might have spared, if his object had been mere **re-admission to the advantages of the parental roof**. But the case depicted is one in which such heartless selfishness has NO PLACE, and in which such a thought would be abhorred. No, this confession was uttered, as Trench well remarks, after the kiss of reconciliation. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jfu/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:22-24**, But the **father said** to his servants, Bring forth the **best robe**, and put it on him; and put **a ring on his hand**, and **shoes on his feet**: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us **EAT**, and **BE MERRY**: For this my son **was dead**, and is **alive again**; he **was lost**, and **is found**. And they began to **BE MERRY**.

**NOTE**: ...chief garment, the garment which was laid by, to be used only on **birth-days** or **festival times**. Such as that which Rebecca had laid by for Esau, and which she put on Jacob when she made him personate his brother. See the notes on Genesis 27:15.

...**a ring on his hand** - Giving a ring was in ancient times a mark of **honor** and **dignity**. See Genesis 41:42; 1 Kings 21:8; Esther 8:2; Daniel 6:17; James 2:2.

**Shoes on his feet** - Formerly those who were captivated (made prisoner) had their shoes taken off, Isaiah 20:1; and when they were **restored to liberty** their **shoes were restored**. See 2 Chron. 28:15. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/luke-15.html>)

**NOTE**: And bring hither the fatted calf (kept for festive occasions), and kill it; and let us eat, and **BE MERRY** - denoting the exultation (lively **JOY** at success or victory) of the whole household: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is **JOY** in the **presence** of the **angels** of God **over ONE sinner** that **repenteth**" (Luke 15:10). But though the joy ran through the whole household, it was properly the father's matter. Accordingly it is added, For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. Now, twice his son. "**He was lost**" - both to his Father and to himself, lost to his Father's service and satisfaction, lost to his own dignity, peace, profit. But **he "is alive again" - to all these**.

But **what of the older brother** all this time? That we are now about to see. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jfu/luke-15.html>)

**Luke 15:25-28**, Now his **elder son** was in **the field**: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, **Thy brother** is come; and **thy father** hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him **SAFE** and **SOUND**. And he was **ANGRY**, and **would NOT go in**: therefore **came his father out**, and **intreated** (invite) him.

**NOTE**: As it is the older brother who now **errs**, so it is the same **paternal compassion** which had fallen on the neck of the younger that comes forth and pleads with the older. "Like as a father **pitieth** his children, so **the Lord pitieth** them that **FEAR him**" (Psalms 103:13). (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jfu/luke-15.html>)

**Thought 1**. The father had taught the elder son a lot. But here, what he doesn't know is the source of what he believes is righteous anger. Anger is: a violent passion of the mind excited by a **REAL** or **SUPPOSED** injury. Since the father knows his elder son has always been teachable, he goes out to invite him in and give him the understanding he lacks.

**Luke 15:29-31**, And he answering said to his **father**, Lo, these **many years do I serve thee**, **NEITHER transgressed I at any time** thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might **make merry** with my friends: But as soon as this **thy son** was come, which hath **devoured** thy living with **harlots** (**strumpet** [prostitute]), thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever **WITH** me, and **ALL that I have is thine**.

**Thought 1**. Notice the father didn't say, "You're lying." So, he agreed he'd been a good son. But, he also **TAUGHT HIM**, that he could've made merry with friends whenever **HE CHOSE**. Then, he taught it was necessary to **MAKE MERRY** since "thy brother" is alive and found.

**Luke 15:32**, It was **meet** (**necessary, needful**) that we should **MAKE merry**, and **be glad**: for this **THY brother** was **DEAD**, and is alive again; and was LOST, and is found.

**Thought 1**. After hearing his father's words, and because of reverence for him, we know he accepted them and complied with his father's desire. Now, would those listening **DO** so?

