

# PRODIGAL GOD

prod·i·gal - adjective:  
1. wastefully or recklessly extravagant  
2. lavishly abundant

## THE TALE OF TWO BROTHERS & THEIR WASTEFULLY EXTRAVAGANT FATHER

The following questions are intended to help you reflect on your reading of the book, *The Prodigal God*. They are also intended to form the basis of discussion questions for use in our Gospel Communities. The leader should select which questions are most appropriate, and take the initiative to take the group in the direction they feel the Spirit is leading them.

### A NOTE ON WHAT A GOSPEL COMMUNITY IS

The reason our small groups are called a 'gospel community' and not a 'community group' or 'bible study' is because we want to be absolutely clear about their purpose. Our groups are to be places in which the gospel is brought to bare on the sins and situations of our life, so that the gospel would be believed and lived. As such, we are not just interested in studying the Bible, but seek to discover and being changed by the new layers and insights we find in the gospel. We are not just interested in talking in the abstract, but applying the gospel to each of our lives. Am I greedy? I need to know Christ's generosity in giving up his riches for me (2 Cor 8:9). Am I controlling? I need to know that Christ give up controlling his life to bring me life, and that therefore I can trust him to control my life (Phil 2:5-11). Am I anxious? I need to know that if God did the greater thing, in giving up his son for us, will he not do the lesser thing in giving us all things we need (Rom 8:32). Bringing the gospel to bare on our lives does not just happen in a 'classroom' or a 'discussion group,' but

happens the same as it happened for Jesus disciples: on the journey, over meals, during recreation, and after synagogue (i.e. church). Therefore we are a *gospel community*, and seek to do life together so that our brothers and sisters would see where we have stopped believing the gospel, and be able to bring it to bare on our life. Oh how we need this!

## CHAPTER 2: THE TWO LOST SONS

*Read Luke 15*

1. What was shocking about the younger brother's request to receive his inheritance now rather than latter? (p. 18)
  
2. What was shocking about the father's agreement to his younger son? How might the younger son's request 'tear his life apart'? (p. 19-20)
  - a. Do you think of your sin as breaking the rules and doing the wrong things or primarily in terms of breaking God's heart? How might your spirituality and repentance be different if you viewed sin like this?  
And/or,
  - b. Most people living in a post 911 world are acutely aware of the cost of sin upon the fabric of society but what about the cost of sin upon God the Father. Do you think we take the costliness of our sin upon Him seriously?
  
3. What bring the younger son to his senses (vv. 17)? If I cannot bring myself to my senses, what does this teach us about what kind of community we ought to be?
  
4. What are the elements to the younger son's repentant speech? Which parts should we imitate (vv. 18-19), which parts should we not (v. 19) when we repent?
  
5. How does Jesus describe the undignified-ness of the father as he receives his younger son back? (vv. 20; p. 22) Did God lose his dignity to receive us back? Meditate on what the following passages teach about this:
  - a. Hebrews 12:2
  - b. Psalm 22:6, 7
  - c. Psalm 69:19
  - d. Isaiah 53:3

6. How does the father 'contradict' the son's rehearsal speech? (vv. 21-22 [notice the difference between this speech and the one the son prepared in v.19]; p. 22-23)
  
7. Discuss whether God's love is free and unconditional. Did it cost anything? Does it depend on anything I do?
  
8. Do you ever feel as though your sins are too bad for God to pardon and forgive? Can you think of ways in which you try to atone (make up) for your sins? How might this story help you declare war on sin and yet accept the fact that you are a sinner?
  
9. Why might Jesus story be better named the 'Parable of the Two Lost Sons'? In what senses are both sons lost? What did both sons want more than anything else?
  
10. What makes the elder brother so angry? What are the signs of elderbrotherishness? Spend some time searching your heart for these signs, confess your struggles to the group and ask God for his forgiving grace and transforming grace?
  - a. V. 28
  - b. V. 29
  - c. V. 29
  - d. V. 30