

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.

CHAPTER 4: REDEFINING LOSTNESS

Read Luke 15:25-32

1. What makes you angry in life?

2. In one or two words summarise the signs of elder brother lost-ness?

a. *'The older brother became angry and refused to go in.'* v. 28 (cf. p. 49)

i. Why would elder-brotherishness lead to you being angry:

1. with God?

2. with yourself? (p. 50)

ii. What are the differences between duty and delight?

iii. Search your heart for times when your service and obedience is *for* yourself? (p. 52)

iv. How does this lead to resentment in your life?

b. *"But when **this son of yours** who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!"* v. 30 (cf. p. 53)

i. What do younger brothers types and older brother types base their identity on? (p. 53)

1. Younger

2. Older

Who are you more like?

- ii. Richard Loveless says, “[People] who are no longer sure that God loves and accepts them in Jesus apart from their present spiritual achievements are subconsciously, radically insecure persons... Their insecurity shows itself in pride, a fierce defense of assertion of their own righteousness, and defensive criticism of others. They come naturally to hate other cultural styles and other races in order to bolster their own security and discharge their suppressed anger.” What is the connection between unbelief and insecurity?
 - iii. Why, if you truly believe the gospel, will you not be defensive when criticised?
- c. *“Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders.”* v. 29 (p. 57)

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- i. What should motivate obedience? (p. 59-60)
 - 1. How is this different from ‘fear-based’ motivation?
 - 2. How is this different from ‘thankfulness’ as a motivation. [This might be a new idea for you. I.e. Jonathan Edwards says, *‘Those whose affection to God is founded first on his profitableness to them only regard God to the limit of the good things he does to meet their desires. But in gracious gratitude, Christians are affected by God’s goodness and free grace, not only as it benefits them but as infinitely glorious in itself...’*]
 - ii. How does the Spurgeon’s parable of the king and the carrot illustrate how we sometimes treat God? Can you identify the selfishness below even your seemingly selfless acts?

- d. *"Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends."* (v. 29; cf. p. 63)
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- i. How is a dry prayer life a sign that you don't have assurance?
 - ii. Is your prayer life more like a relationship with a 'business associate', a '*friend*,' or a 'lover'?
 - iii. How is a preoccupation with petition a sign that you want to 'control your environment.' (p. 65)
3. If younger brothers heard this kind of teaching about older brothers, why might they understand the gospel for the first time? (pp. 66-69)