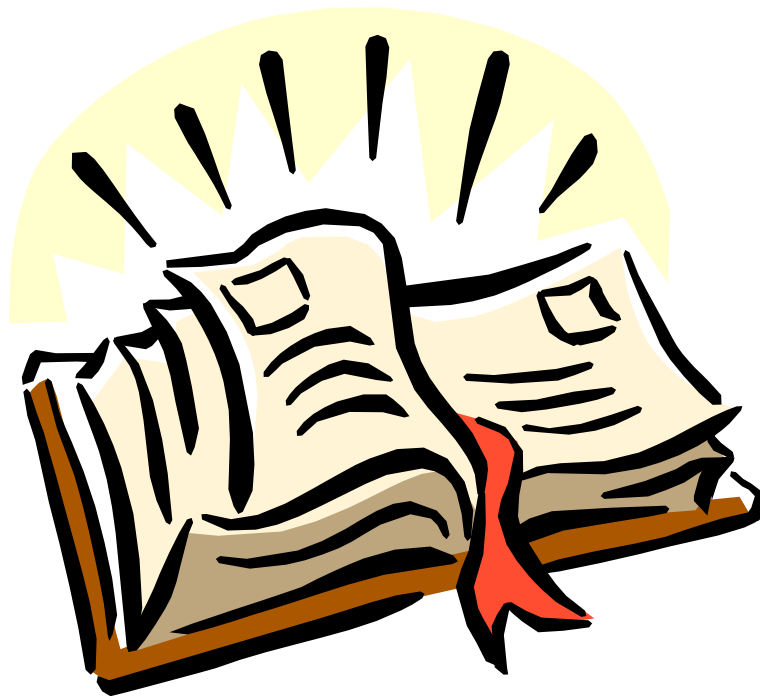


Bible Time for Kids!



CHILDREN'S DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF:

LESSON TITLE: The Prodigal Son

THEME: God is a loving Father!

SCRIPTURE: Luke 15:11-32



Dear Parents...

Welcome to Bible Time for Kids! Bible Time for Kids is a series of daily devotions for children and their families. Our purpose is to supplement our Sunday morning curriculum and give you an opportunity to encourage your children to develop a daily devotional life. We hope you and your family will be blessed as you study God's Word together.

This week in Children's Church we learned about **The Prodigal Son**. The theme was "**God is a loving Father.**" We learn so much from this parable that Jesus told. One of the greatest things we see is God's heart towards us. He is our heavenly Father and this story speaks so much about our relationship with Him. No matter what we may have done, the Father loves us very much and is willing to forgive.

This week we will look at different aspects of this parable. We will look at the father, the lost son and his brother; and learn valuable things from all of them. Our prayer is that the Lord will teach us all more and more from His wonderful word this week.

The section of scripture that we studied was **Luke 15:11-32**. The following five devotions are based on either the scripture and/or the theme for Sunday's lesson. As a starting point it would be good for you to review these verses with your children.

These devotions are designed to help you reinforce Sunday's lesson throughout the week with your children, provide some more ideas for the application of God's Word in your children's lives and provide a tool to help in family devotions.

Obviously children at various age levels will respond to the devotional in different ways. You may want to add your own ideas to these to make them more age appropriate.

May the Lord bless you as you study His Word together!

Day One

The "Prodigal" Life

Text: Luke 15:13 - "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

Also read Matthew 25:14-30

The younger son is said to have "wasted his possessions with prodigal living". What does it mean to live like a prodigal? Prodigal means reckless, wasteful, or wicked. So "prodigal" living means to live in such a way that you waste everything that God has given you. The younger son had taken all of the money that his father had given him and wasted it on parties and on his friends. He did not use it wisely and he ended up with nothing. He was so broke that he had to take a job feeding pigs. Pigs were not the most popular animals to the Jewish people. The question we need to answer is why does "prodigal" or wasteful living always seem to lead to bad things in our lives?

To help us understand this concept, let's look at another parable Jesus told in Matthew 25:14-30. In this story we are told that there was a man who entrusted his money to his servants. Two of the servants did something with the money and one just buried the amount he was given. When the man returned to see how things were going, the servants who had invested their resources were given more, but the lazy man who did nothing had his resources taken away from him.

The lesson here is that God gives each of us all of our time, treasure and talents; all that we have is entrusted to us by God. He wants us to invest them in good things that will please Him and further His kingdom. But when we neglect to use those things that God has given us for His kingdom, we are being wasteful. Another way to look at this is spiritually. God has made us to serve Him and give our lives to Him. But when we refuse to give our lives to Him and we spend our lives on things that do not please Him, we always lose. Why? Because to give our time, treasure and talent to anyone else but God is to be wasteful and to be guilty of living a prodigal life.

- What is "prodigal" living?
- What happens when we live a "prodigal" life?
- What are some ways that we can keep from living a prodigal life?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Prodigal: Wasteful, reckless or wicked.

The Loving, Gracious Father

Text: Luke 15:20 - "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

Also read Isaiah 64:8

When we read this parable, it is easy to put the spotlight on the younger son. But the quiet hero of this story is really the father. Maybe we should rename the parable to "The Loving, Gracious Father" instead of "The Prodigal Son". There are millions of prodigal sons (those who are lost) living in our world today, but very few loving, gracious fathers to reach out to them. Actually, there is only one true father like the one in our story. Let's take a closer look.

The father in our story represents our heavenly Father, God. It is His loving heart that comes out in this story. Just as the father forgave and restored his lost son, so too God is the one who desires to forgive and restore anyone who is a sinner (not perfect) and therefore lost. The sinner should not be the center of attention, but the savior should. Let's take a quick look at the story again, this time with our eyes on the father.

First we see the son demanding his inheritance. This was like telling your father that you want to leave and don't want to have anything to do with him. How do you think the father felt when his son did that to him? Did the father get angry with his son? No. He let his son have his inheritance and go off to spend it as he wished. When the son left to go to a far-off county, all alone - possibly never to return again - how do you think the father felt? The father waited and watched every day for his son to come home. Every day he was hoping that his son would not die in that far-off country. And then what did the father do when his son finally came home? Did he scold him? Did he refuse to forgive him? NO! He wrapped his arms around him and called him son.

The father in this story pictures our Father in heaven. If you are a lost son, you know that he longs to wrap his arms around you and forgive you and save you. Will you come home to the Father today?

- How does the lost son's father show God's heart toward us?
- What did the father do when his son returned?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Heavenly Father: Another name for God, our Father who is in heaven.

"Tony and the White Ribbons"

Text: Luke 15:22 - "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.'"

Also read Galatians 4:4-7

Today we are going to hear the story of "Tony and the White Ribbons". It is the story of a father's love. The story begins with a young man named Tony. Tony lived in a small, quiet town. One day he decided that he was not going to be trapped in that little boring town all his life, he was going to run away from home and go to the big city miles away. There he could experience all of the excitement that life could offer. That afternoon he told his father he was going to the store and he took off for the big city instead.

When Tony got to the big city he began to live a wild life. He made it a special point to do all of the things that his father always tried to teach him were wrong and would lead to problems and destruction in his life. He did some pretty bad things and eventually had to spend time in jail. While Tony was in jail he had a lot of time to think about what he had done with his life. All of a sudden home sounded so good. He had made a complete mess of his life because he disobeyed. As he sat there in jail he broke down sobbing. He decided to write his father a letter asking if he could come home when he was released from jail. He asked his father to tie a white ribbon on the tree in front of their house if he was forgiven and welcome to return home. As the train approached his hometown neighborhood, he would check for the ribbon on the tree and know if he were welcome.

Tony was nervous as he rode the train toward his home. He was even afraid to look for the ribbon on the tree, so he asked the man next to him to look for him. Was there any chance his father would allow him to return home, or even ever forgive him for bringing shame to the family? As the train passed through the town, Tony asked the man if he could see the ribbon on the tree. The man told Tony he didn't see one ribbon on the tree. Tony's heart sank. Then the man said, "I do not see one but many. In fact the whole tree is covered with white ribbons." Tony looked up and saw the tree completely white with ribbons and his father beneath it waving his arms and running toward the train to greet him.

If the story sounds familiar, it is. It is the story about a father's love. It is a story that gives us a beautiful picture of God's heart of love towards each one of us. He loves all the lost sons and daughters of the world. He is the great Father full of love and forgiveness.

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Forgive: To pardon, release, or free from obligation; cancel a debt; let go.

Big Brother

Text: Luke 15:32 - "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."

Also read Ephesians 2:1-10

The story of the lost prodigal son has an interesting side story that we do not want to miss. It is the lesson of the lost son's brother. The prodigal son is not the only son in the story. The parable Jesus told speaks of a second son that did not leave home but stayed in his father's house the entire time. Let's see what we can learn from him.

We first see the brother when the lost son returns home. This son was not as happy as his father to see his lost brother come home. In fact, he was jealous and angry at the attention that the father was paying to his brother. He could not accept that his father would allow his brother back into the house. He was also angry that his father never threw a party for his friends and him.

What differences do we see between the younger son and his brother at this time? The son who had been lost was now humbled and repentant, but his brother was proud and arrogant. The younger son wanted to see his father and be with him, but his brother was angry and jealous of his father's attention to his brother.

Both sons are very different. They could represent two different kinds of people. Jesus told this story to explain the Father's heart of love and forgiveness for lost people. He may have added the story of the brother as an example of religious, self-righteous people. Both kinds of people need to repent and ask the father's forgiveness. Sometimes people go to church and live good lives and try to keep all the rules, but do not love God. They think that they're okay because they are religious; but it is not enough to be a good person. We need a relationship with the Father. When we have a relationship with the Father we begin to think like He does and love and forgive as He does.

- What was the brother's attitude about forgiving the lost son?
- What did the father tell the brother?
- What do you learn from this story?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Self Righteous: To try to "be right" before God through good things that you do (works).

Day Five

Pig Pen Repentance

Text: Luke 15:15 - "Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine."

Also read Judges 16:4-21

The lost son did not realize just how lost he was until he found himself in the pig pen eating from their trough. Why is it that our eyes are not opened until we find ourselves in the pig pen of life? And where do we go from the bottom? This parable of Jesus gives us all the answers.

The first question to answer is how did the lost son find himself in the pig pen? The path to the pig pen is a wide one. Many people find themselves way down the path without realizing it. The lost son began his journey to the pig pen when he left his father. He thought he could do better on his own. He thought he knew better how to live than his father did. God's way is the best way. To obey God's word is wisdom. But the pig pens are full of people who thought their way was better than God's way. The lost son wasted his inheritance on reckless and wicked living. The love of sin is a pleasurable and exciting life, for a short time. The path to the pig pen is fun until you fall into the pen.

Samson is a good example of the pleasure and heartache of sin. He was having so much fun with Delilah until she finally destroyed him. The sad part of the story is that she told him she wanted to destroy him and he still would not leave her. Sin is fun for a season and then it grabs hold of you and can destroy you. The pig pen is full of people who played around with sin and it finally destroyed them.

The path to the pig pen is clear to us. But, the most important thing we learn about the pig pen in this story is the way out. There is only one way out. It is a narrow path. The path is straight toward the father, with a heart that is willing to turn from its own way (repentant). Jesus came to die on the cross for all of our sins. He will pull anyone out of the pen of sin as long as we are willing to let Him do it.

- What did the lost son do when he realized he was in a pig pen?

Kid's Prayer Time



This week as you pray remember this parable of the "prodigal son". Ask the Lord to search your heart to see if you have drifted from His heart in any way. He loves us all so very much. Let's ask Him to continually help us to remain close to Him.

Memory Verse...

First and Second Grade

"...for this my
son...was lost and is
found."

Third Grade and Above

"for this my son was
dead and is alive
again; he was lost
and is found."

Luke 15:24