

The Parable Of The Two Sons

Matthew 21:28-32

MEMORY VERSE

COLOSSIANS 3:20

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Several different kinds of ripe fruit (an apple, banana, lemon, orange, grapes, pineapple, etc.), and a blindfold.

Some small, deep boxes with pictures of meals pasted on the outside, a pole with a magnet attached by a string, pictures of ingredients to each meal with a paper clip attached, and pictures of things not found in the meals posted on the boxes.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The Matching Game

Bring several different kinds of ripe fruit to class. Line them up on a table. Pick volunteer students to come up blindfolded in front of the class and determine which fruit is which with only their sense of smell.

Explain to the class that each fruit has its own special aroma. A repentant life does as well. The characteristic aroma or “fruit” of a repentant life is obedience. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

LESSON TIME!

What do you think is more important? What you say or what you do, your words or your actions? Jesus is going to answer that question for us today. And as He answers this for us we will learn some valuable lessons about living for Him. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

MATTHEW 21:28-30

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'

"He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.

"Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.

Remember that a parable is a story that throws down a spiritual truth alongside an earthy reality. Here is another of Jesus' wonderful parables. How many people did you notice in this parable?

The father spoke to the first son and said, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." This first son was rebellious and wanted his own way. He said, "I will not."

After the father walked away the rebellious son thought about things and then he changed his mind. He didn't just think that he might go and work anyway; he actually repented to the very core of his heart. The Bible says that he "regretted" it. He saw his way as being wrong. He saw that he should not rule his own life. He needed to give up his will and turn toward the will of his father.

Something big and important happened in this man's heart. His heart changed. He gave himself over to his father's will and pleasure. He changed on the inside and then his outside actions changed. He changed in his very heart, his thoughts, his inner being. When he changed on the inside, it showed on the outside by what he did after that change.

He repented and so he moved from rebellion to obedience. His change of mind, his repentance, showed in his obedience to his father. He went out and obeyed his father by working in the field. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

We can learn from the first son. If we do something wrong and later think about it and are sorry for what we have done we can ask for forgiveness and make it right. God is loving and forgiving. He desires obedience, but when we fail and are truly sorry He will always forgive us. But we need to learn from our mistakes and be obedient the next time.

The second son said, "I go, sir." He was saying with his words that he could be counted on. That was a good thing to say. He was saying "yes" to his father with his mouth. His words sounded so good. He declared with his lips that he would obey his father, do as his father asked and choose his father's will over his own. But then he didn't go!

What good were his words without actions to back them up? Words without actions, saying without doing, are worthless! He professed with his mouth to be faithful to his father, but his lack of action showed that profession to be false. His lack of "doing" made him a liar. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

Fishing for Supper

Make several "fishing ponds" by using small, deep boxes (these could be made out of milk cartons). Make a couple of fishing poles with wooden dowels, string, and a magnet. Paste to the outside of the box a picture of a finished meal. Inside the box place paper clipped pictures of the ingredients for the meal posted on the outside. Include some ingredients that would not be a part of the meal as well, like pictures of old shoes, empty cans, or general refuse.

Have your students try to fish for the ingredients to their supper. When they fish out an ingredient, they must determine if it goes to the making of that supper or not. Continue until all of the ingredients for the meal are found.

Explain to your class that the ingredient to a repentant life is always obedience. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

Jesus was telling this parable to some men who considered themselves to be in very good favor with God. They seemed to say all the right things. They said with their lips that they were faithful to God, but the Bible tells us that their hearts were far from Him. Jesus, out of great love for these men, was trying to get them to see themselves as they really were with the hope that they would repent and draw close to Him.

MATTHEW 21:31-32

"Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you."

"For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

Jesus asked these men to answer His question about the two sons. He was actually getting them to judge their own lives. Jesus hopes to open all of our eyes to the truth that we need to repent of our own will. Our repentance will show in obedience! **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

What a privilege to get to repent, to change our minds, to have sorrow over what we have done in sin, and turn toward God! He loves to receive us when we repent. He forgives and then guides us into all truth.

The men Jesus was speaking to were like the second son. They said they were loyal to God, but they weren't willing to see that Jesus was the Messiah. They refused to believe. They had heard John the Baptist talk about Jesus and they knew perfectly well that John spoke that truth in his ministry, yet they did not obey God's call though that ministry.

Even the rebellious people of the day, the tax collectors and harlots, repented and turned to God. They also turned away from sin through simple faith in the message of Jesus. They became doers of God's will. They didn't just say, "yes" to God with their lips. They allowed God to work in their hearts and change them from the inside out. They obeyed God and He changed them into loyal men and women who did His mighty work. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

What Am I?

Describe for your students the characteristics of several different kinds of fruit. If you're going to describe an apple, you might say that it has seeds, a stem, and a skin, is sweet, red, grows on a tree, etc.

Have the children raise their hands to guess what you are describing. When a child guesses right, go on to another fruit and let the class guess what it is. Some fruits you may want to try are grapes, oranges, pineapples, kiwis, lemons, watermelon, grapefruit, etc.

Explain to your class that they could identify the fruit based upon the descriptions of its characteristics. The characteristic or "fruit" of a repentant life is obedience. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

This lovely story is one way Jesus used to help us look at our own lives. Am I just a "talker"? A person like the second son who said, "You can count on me, God" without obedience? Or am I a "doer"? Does my heart's response to Jesus show in my actions and obedience to Jesus? **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

People who just give God lip service might say, "Oh, yes! I love God and I want to please Him!" but they keep on lying, or bullying, or cheating, or being rebellious to parents and teachers. That kind of person doesn't repent and turn away from sin; their words are worthless. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

A person who says, "Oh, I want to please God" and then turns away from lying, cheating, bullying, and things like that, and turns to God's way is a person that shows a true and pleasing faithfulness to God. God knows that our true hearts will come out in our actions.

A heart toward Him will obey Him. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

Invite your children to turn toward God today and repent. Be ready to pray with your children to settle the matter once and for all.

Parable of the Two Sons

Select three children to act out the parable of the two sons. One child will be the father; the other two will be the sons. Instruct your actors to re-enact the scenes of the father requesting the sons to work in the vineyard.

After the scenes where the father makes his requests of his sons (one will answer in rebellion the other with submission), have the two sons reveal their true hearts. The repentant son, who answers in the negative, will have a change of heart, repent and go out into the field to work. The son who seemingly submits to his father may come up with many excuses as to why obedience is not currently convenient.

Explain to your class the importance of obedience; it is a reflection of our hearts. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of repentance from self-will. If any children have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.