

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.

We all know the story of the Prodigal son. If you don't then I would encourage you to read it here in Luke chapter 15, or read it again as a reminder of the story that Jesus told.

But when you read the story, there is one thing we may overlook. Read the verse again and see if you can see it. I'll give you a hint, it's two words, and they are mentioned twice.

† *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.*

Don't see it? Well the two words are "*his father*". What? You don't get it yet?

Well, those two words together are very important, because it reminds us that the prodigal son never stopped being the son of his father. And the same is true of any believer who has backslidden. I know this personally, because, years ago, I was a prodigal son myself and had backslidden, but even though I did, I never stopped knowing who God was, or never doubted that He was my Father. I just willfully didn't do what I knew I should be doing, but I was still a child of God.

Also, just like the prodigal son had to deal with his disobedience by feeding pigs and eating pig slop, so it is with those who have strayed away from the Lord, and have become prodigals. Because it's not all fun and games and even when you come back, there are consequences you have to face for some of the things you had done.

Now this is not a teaching to tell you to go for it and stray away, or go commit that sin, because you are a child of God and you can easily come back to the Lord. But rather it's a warning, because you are a child of God, and not all who stray return to the Lord. Even the prodigal struggled with the thought of, can he really come back home, and will his relationship with his father be the same. Or will his father treat him like a slave or a hired servant and no longer like a son.

† *Luke 15:17-19 But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'*

But we know that the father did accept him back as a son, and the relationship continued on as father and son.

The same can be for you as well, if you are reading this and have strayed away from the faith and have been a prodigal son or daughter. Like the father of the prodigal son, God, our Father is waiting for you to repent and return to Him, and when you do, He will not cast you away, or treat you any different, because God's love does not change, and it goes beyond human love. Yes, He will take you back and you can have a relationship with our God and Father, Yahweh again. Sure you still may have to deal with some of the stupid things you did when you strayed away, but know that you will also be in the Father's Hands once again, and He will help you through those things, simply because He loves you and you are His child.

† **Luke 15:22-24** *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. And bring the fatted calf here 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.*

† **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*