

# Messy People

## Session 2: The Prodigal Son -Restoring Messy Relationships

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*“A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.” Luke 15:11*

How many times does worrying about bad relationships keep you up at night, and gets in the way of your joy?

What makes relationships messy?

### **Read Luke 15:11-24**

What was messy about the relationships in this story?

**Main Point:** Rather than run away and rebel like the prodigal son, we can be the ones who run to restore what was broken in our relationships.

### **Five steps in restoring messy relationships**

#### **1. Come to your senses!**

*“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!’” Luke 15:17*

*“Come to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning.” I Corinthians 15:34*

*“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23*

No one is exempt from sin. Recognizing our own sins is essentially ‘coming to our senses’ and taking the first step to restoration of your relationship(s).

*“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.”  
I Peter 4:8*

How have you known this to be true in your own relationships?

#### **2. Take responsibility!**

*“I will go home to my father and say, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.’” Luke 15:18-19*

*“For we are each responsible for our own conduct.” Galatians 6:5*

Taking responsibility for our mistakes brings healing into messy relationships.

The Prodigal Son does just that and is prepared to do more:

- takes responsibility
- prepared to apologize and take the consequence of his behavior
- determined to do his best to move forward

It is easy to see where the blame lies in this parable. In real life, fault usually lies on both sides of a broken relationship.

Instead of taking responsibility, how often do we fix the blame on another?

What does pride have to do with this?

Please dig deep inside and answer these questions:

- Have you ever taken credit when it should have been shared with someone else?
- Do you find it hard to back down once you've said something, even when you know you may not be correct?
- Have you ever put someone down in a way that made yourself look good?
- Have you ever refused to say 'I'm sorry' because you didn't want to look weak?
- Do you become defensive when you realize you've made a mistake?

Answering yes to any of these questions is a symptom of pride.

The definition of pride lists synonyms such as arrogance, self-love, conceit and vanity.

The fruit of the Spirit (marks of a Christian) in contrast are: "...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control..." Galatians 5:22-23

### **3. Run to reconcile!**

*"So he returned to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him." Luke 15:20*

*"God show his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*  
*Romans 5:8*

Run to people. Love them with abandon. It doesn't matter who is watching. Run, because love matters. This is the truth we see in the parable.

The Father ran to his son!

Unheard of action by a man in the Middle East!

Why do you think the Father ran to his son?

Tradition of *kezazah* which means to be cut off!

One who lost his family's inheritance will be brought to justice. by the community. The community will surround him and break a pot at his feet, indicating that he was cut off from community—as though he had never been born.

The younger son deserved to be cut off

His father would not allow that to happen!

His father saved his son by intervening:

**unless he showed mercy; unless he disgraced himself by running in front of his servants, family and village – the punishment will get to his son before his grace does!**

Imagine you're one of the villagers. What do you feel as you see the father run?

Imagine you're the father. What do you feel as you run?

Imagine you're the son. What do you feel as you see your father running to you?

Also read Luke 15:1-10

What do these parables tell us about God's desire to be in a relationship with him?

Our heavenly Father has run to us! He did not wait on us to come to him but chose to run to us on a rescue mission by sending his Son, Jesus.

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:16-17*

No matter what you've done  
You can't erase His love  
Nothing can change it  
You're not separated  
No matter where you run  
He's always holding on  
You're still a daughter, you're still a son  
No matter what

**4. Allow for mistakes!** (We will save this step and the next step for next week when you look at the Elder Son – Pushing Through the Mess of Resentment)

**5. Seek peace!**

