

BACK TO FATHER'S HOUSE

LESSON 179 → Luke 15:11-24

Stories of three young men who finally turned from their sin and rebellion.

Are the stories we read in the Bible only about things that happened long ago? No, they're not! The very same kinds of things happen in our day. I'm going to tell you three stories that are a lot like the one we read in the Bible text for this lesson.

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There was a knock at the door of the ramshackle garage that Peter called "home." He climbed off his little cot and made his way to the door.

It was his dad.

"How did you find me?" Peter asked. He had known that his father would invite him to come back to church if he located him, so he had been hiding away.

The drugs had seemed so much fun at first. He had tattoos on his shoulder to show that he really was a "man." It wasn't until his friends

turned on him and he felt his very life was in danger that he realized just how far in the wrong direction he had gone.

This teenager had been brought up to attend church and Sunday school. But now, when he looked in a mirror, he saw a skinny face with a scraggly beard, long hair, and a safety pin stuck through his ear so everybody would know how tough he was. The mirror didn't show the aching despair in his heart, though.

Was he ready to return home with his father?

"Take me to the county drug clinic. Maybe they can help me," was his answer. But even that didn't help Peter.

He had reached the end of his own resources, and just a short time later Peter did what he had always known he should do. He knelt and asked the Lord to save him.



OUR HEAVENLY FATHER LOVES US.

Come, and let us return unto the LORD. — Hosea 6:1

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Cliff knew exactly what he wanted to be—a rock star. His goal was to be famous, with lots of friends and more money than he could ever spend. So, he left the church and home. He put everything he had into his new career. He spent hours practicing chords on his guitar, and made up his own rock songs.

It was strange, then, that he should end up playing in a greasy bar and shooting his veins full of drugs to keep going. Little by little, the money he was earning just seemed to disappear through his fingers.

After a while, even the people he thought were his buddies, the members of his rock band, told him to get lost. They didn't want him around anymore.

He found himself on the road with a suitcase, a guitar, a drug habit (which he didn't even have the money to support), and memories! Memories of where he could turn when there was no other way to go. He headed back home to Dad and Mom—and to the God of his childhood!

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Ron's mother tried to keep him from going out that evening. So he knocked her down and stepped over her as he headed out the door. The world out there looked so much more exciting than going to church and Sunday school all the time.

It was great for a while. He ended up thousands of miles away from home, with a good job and friends who thought he was wonderful. There were parties, liquor, and always the drugs.

How was it, then, that he ended up finding himself down and out, pushing drugs to school kids to keep up his own habit? Moving around didn't help, he just couldn't get that "fresh start" he wanted—not until one night when he looked up into the starry sky and asked Jesus if He would please do something for him.

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Made-up stories? No, they are all true. Something I got out of a book or the newspapers? No, these are all people I know personally, and I could tell you about more.

These are happy stories. Why? Because Peter, Cliff, and Ron each finally realized the mistakes they had made and returned to the God they had turned their backs on, over and over again.

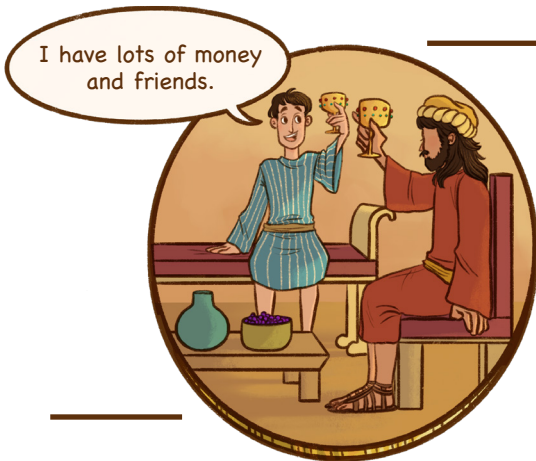
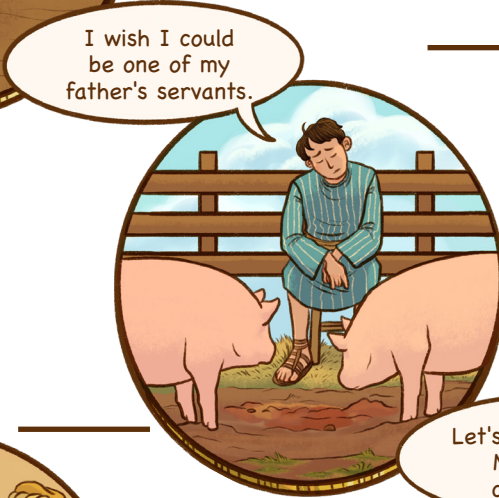
On the streets of major cities across our nation, you can find hundreds of runaway children who have no good direction in life. There are many different reasons young people can end up on the streets, but in every case, they desperately need help. I also know that Jesus offers hope for each of those young people, for you, for anyone who will turn to Him.

Jesus didn't tell the parable of the Prodigal Son just for the few people listening to Him that day, centuries ago in Jerusalem. He knew that in our day, too, the devil would still be telling boys and girls, "You don't know what you are missing! Forget about church and Sunday school. Go out and see what the real world is all about. Have some fun!"

If you could talk to Peter, Cliff, or Ron, they would tell you that was the same lie they fell for. It could have cost them their lives.

WE NEED JESUS

The coins below show the story of the Prodigal Son but they are not in the correct order. Read the Bible text (Luke 15:11-24), then number the pictures in the order they happened. There is a line beside each coin for you to write the number on.



“AND HE SPAKE
A PARABLE . . .”