

"WWJD With People Who Have Lost Their Way?"

Steven Gullickson June 20, 2021

Luke 15:20-32

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.' ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

Dealing with those who lose their way requires the HEART OF THE FATHER.

"Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And He has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister." 1 John 4:20-21

1) The Heart of the Father is UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8

Love is not ignorant about the wrongs, but knowingly excludes them.

Love keeps no record of wrongs. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Unconditional love requires free will.

The Father allowed the son to choose. He didn't force him to stay and he didn't send someone to retrieve him. (Luke 15:12-16)

2) The Heart of the Father lives with ACTIVE PATIENCE.

Be patient in the waiting. But patience is not stagnant. Patience involves prayer, preparation, anticipation.

*"The **Lord is not slow in keeping His promise**, as some understand slowness. Instead **He is patient with you**, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* 2 Peter 3:9

3) The Heart of the Father shows CONSISTENCY NOT COMPROMISE.

Don't compromise your obedience to God to be more likeable or desirable.

Your consistency and obedience to Christ will speak louder than your words.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

4) The Heart of the Father has COMPASSION.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." (v. 20)

Compassion leads to action.

"Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?" Romans 2:4

5) The Heart of the Father has EXTRAVAGANT GRACE.

The Father didn't make the son prove his repentance. He didn't have to show life change. He accepted him the moment he returned. (v. 22)

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

We are called to live like Jesus.

"Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did." 1 John 2:6

Do you have the heart of the Father, loving unconditionally, waiting patiently, living consistently obedient to God, full of compassion and giving extravagant grace?