



EWTN

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WAITING FOR THE PRODIGAL SON

FOR THOSE LONGING FOR A
LOVED ONE TO RETURN TO THE FATHER



WAITING FOR THE PRODIGAL SON



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Introduction

“But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”

– Luke 15:20

How the heart of the Father longs to have His children with Him!

We see this in the example of the well-known Parable of the Prodigal Son (see Luke 15:11–32). Maybe at one point in time, you may have found yourself in the place of the prodigal son and have experienced the merciful love of God the Father.

Once one encounters the goodness of God the Father, one cannot help but desire for their loved ones to come to know Him as well. When someone chooses not to have a relationship with Christ or has strayed from their relationship with Him, it can be very difficult for those who love them. Feelings of sadness, anger, or even despair could arise, leading to the false belief that they are a lost cause. In these moments, it is important to remember that the Lord, in His infinite mercy, can transform even the hardest of hearts and perform miracles in people’s lives.

We see an example of God the Father’s love in the prodigal son’s father, who waited for his son to come home and, when he did, welcomed him with loving arms.

This eBook is a resource for parents, spiritual fathers and mothers, or anybody waiting for a loved one to come to know the merciful love of God.

*“Faith is what gets you started. Hope is what keeps you going.
Love is what brings you to the end.”*

– Mother Angelica



The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Many are familiar with the Parable of the Prodigal Son (see Luke 15:11–32). It tells the story of a father and his two sons. Though receiving the father’s inheritance at the end of his life was customary, one son asked for it ahead of time and then spent it all on worldly pleasures, bringing dishonor on himself and his father. He was repentant for his actions and returned home, not expecting to receive anything good from his father. To his surprise, his father received him with open arms and even threw a party out of joy for his son’s return.

Christ often used parables to help His listeners understand what He was trying to teach them more easily. In this parable, He teaches us about God the Father’s merciful love for us.

For many in their youth, there is a time when they stray from the Faith. Like the prodigal son, having chosen to do what they want, they begin to suffer the natural consequences of their choices. Like him, they see the effect of their poor decisions on their life and long for their father’s goodness.

We, too, like the prodigal son, have free will and will make bad choices at times, suffering the consequences of our actions. Despite our choices, God the Father, like the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, always waits for us with open arms. If we are repentant, our Heavenly Father cares more about our returning home to Him than He cares about what we did while away. We find this loving care of the Father, of Christ, and of the Church in the sacrament of Confession, for there the merciful love of God the Father is poured out on us, as in the welcome of the father of the Parable.

“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”
– Luke 15:7



The Father's Role

It is essential to note the example in this parable of God the Father's love.

In our Faith, we are invited to beautiful devotions, such as for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the Divine Mercy, in Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary, and many more.

As previously mentioned, Christ often used parables to help people understand what He was trying to teach them. This parable teaches us about God the Father and His love.

When the prodigal son chose to do what he wanted with his share of the inheritance, he was left with nothing. Embarrassed, regretful, and finally full of remorse, he wanted nothing more than to run to his father's embrace.

When we think of human fathers, our first thought may not be the expectation of such mercy. After such a shameful time away from home, one might expect to be greeted by something more resembling to "I told you so!" than to be clothed in a robe and given a feast. In this parable, Christ taught His followers, as He wants to teach us today, that God the Father does not respond in this way.

The father of the prodigal son didn't shame or condemn his son. He was kind and merciful. He was forgiving. The love he had for his son was noticeably unconditional, just like God the Father's love is for us.

Like the prodigal son, when we sin, we fall short of what our Heavenly Father wants for us. When we do, the wisest decision we can make is to run to Him seeking His merciful love.

"This love is able to reach down to every prodigal son, to every human misery, and above all to every form of moral misery, to sin. When this happens, the person who is the object of mercy does not feel humiliated, but rather found again and 'restored to value.'"

– Pope St. John Paul II, encyclical *Rich in Mercy*



Loving Like God the Father

When we receive God's forgiveness and allow His love to penetrate our lives completely, we learn to extend that love and mercy to others. We are called to love others the same way as Christ loves us. This is especially important when we are in the position of the prodigal son's father, waiting for our loved one to return to the home that is our Faith.

1. Be kind

Someone who has done wrong is often afraid of being forsaken by those whom they love most and those who most love them. Being kind to a loved one in this situation does not mean you agree with their choices or condone their behavior. Your kindness and your openness to receive them back will show that you love them.

2. Be merciful

God's love for us does not depend on what we do or don't do, but on *who we are*: His children made in His image. His mercy, therefore, is His love reaching down to us in order to restore whatever in us is disfigured by sin. Be quick to acknowledge all steps toward the Good and slow to judge the inevitable failures we all have as we grow in virtue.

3. Be patient

It is noble to pray that God's will be done and humbling when we realize things aren't done *on our time*. When we love someone and trust in the Lord, we are to abandon that person, and God's will for their life, to Him. Only God knows what He is doing in their life and the stirrings of their heart. God is patient with us. We must be patient with Him (and the person we'd love to change overnight). Always remember, God loves them and wants them back even more than you do.

4. Respect freedom

This might be one of the most challenging things for someone to learn how to do. God the Father created us with free will and doesn't retract His gift, even when we sin. Yet, even so, He made laws for our own good, limits to freedom that also must be set in the family and other communities for the good of all. Such boundaries must be respected by those who are sincere in returning.

(continued)



5. Persevere

Anybody who has tried to achieve a challenging goal knows the secret is perseverance. This virtue comes from hope, and hope is nourished by prayer. Persevere in the ways of acting (kindness, mercy, patience, respect for freedom), but even more so, persevere in prayer! The secret to the peace and joy that only Christ can give is perseverance, especially when it is most difficult. Continue praying for your loved ones, surrendering them to Christ, talking to God more about them than you talk to them about God.



St. Padre Pio's Prayer of Trust and Confidence

O Lord, we ask for a boundless confidence and trust in Your divine mercy, and the courage to accept the crosses and sufferings which bring immense goodness to our souls and that of Your Church.

Help us to love You with a pure and contrite heart, and to humble ourselves beneath Your Cross, as we climb the mountain of holiness, carrying our cross that leads to heavenly glory.

May we receive You with great faith and love in Holy Communion, and allow You to act in us, as You desire, for Your greater glory.

O Jesus, most adorable heart and eternal fountain of Divine Love, may our prayer find favor before the Divine Majesty of Your Heavenly Father.

Amen.



About Us

Founded more than 40 years ago by a Poor Clare Nun of Perpetual Adoration, Mother Mary Angelica of the Annunciation, PCPA, EWTN is the largest religious media network in the world. EWTN's 11 global TV channels are broadcast in multiple languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week to over 400 million television households in more than 160 countries and territories. EWTN platforms also include radio services transmitted through SIRIUS/XM, iHeart Radio, and over 600 domestic and international AM & FM radio affiliates; a worldwide shortwave radio service; one of the largest Catholic websites in the U.S. and second only to the Vatican worldwide; electronic and print news services, including Catholic News Agency, *National Catholic Register* newspaper, and several global news wire services; as well as EWTN Publishing, its book publishing division.

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