

# THE ELDEST BROTHER

## MAIN TAKEAWAY

God is like a father who seeks lost sons—the rebellious and the religious. Jesus seeks and saves the lost, providing redemption for sin and self-righteousness.

## INTRODUCTION

Regarding the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Charles Dickens commented, “It is the finest short story ever written.” Why is this so? How has this parable impacted you?

Coming after the lost sheep and lost coin, how is this a story about lost sons (plural)? How does a focus on the eldest brother provide greater insight?

**READ LUKE 15:11-32**

## UNDERSTANDING

*The Rebellious Brother* (v.11-24). How does the younger brother illustrate the way people often relate to God? Why is it better to seek the Giver, rather than only a gift?

How does the father’s response illustrate love and agony? At the son’s return, what was significant about the robe, ring, sandals, and feast, and what spiritual truths do they illustrate?

*The Religious Brother* (v.25-32). How does the eldest brother illustrate why Jesus shared the three “lost and found” parables (Luke 15:1-3)?

**How does the eldest brother also try to control his father? How do self-righteousness and pride blind you from seeing the needs of others?**

***The Redemptive Brother* (Romans 8:29). In what way is Jesus the “third brother” in this story? How does He redeem both the rebellious and the religious?**

**How does this parable reinforce Luke’s purpose statement (Luke 1:4) and Jesus’ mission (Luke 2:10; 19:10)?**

## **APPLICATION**

**How have you experienced the way Jesus saves from rebellion and religion? How can you guard against both persistent guilt and self-righteousness?**

**Pastor Jonathan explained, “The religious leaders that Jesus spoke to looked down on the people Jesus came to redeem.” In reflection of the lost sheep, coin, and sons, how should you have greater compassion and urgency for those who are spiritually lost? What will you do in response?**

**Pastor Jonathan shared the life-altering question that his brother, Christopher, asked him: “What’s it going to take?” In response to this message, what is it going to take for you to make necessary changes in your life (big or small)? Like the two sons in this story, what do you need to say to the Father?**

## **PRAYER**

Thank God that He finds the lost and gives spiritual life to the dead. Pray for the rebellious and religious in your life (including yourself), and for prodigals to return home. Rejoice in the Father’s forgiveness and embrace.