



Whenever Jesus shares a story, it always has spiritual and divine truth to it. Even though His stories deal with the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, they are natural stories that we can relate to.

Jesus never made up sci-fi stories nor did He make stories about worlds that didn't exist. He never had any stories that contained alien beings. He never had stories with talking animals or creatures with supernatural powers. All His stories were about real people, in real places, in real life, in common experiences that everybody at His time would fully understand.

It is perhaps important to note that false religions are almost all born out of myth and fantasy. Teachers of Scripture and Jesus Himself only speak of a real world. Therefore, The Bible is a real world book, stories about life, stories about people, things you can get a handle on and understand because they're part of your own experience.

Sometimes His stories have profound meaning. But it was comprehensible. The story was clear and simple. It could be easily understood and people can connect the stories to their everyday life.

However, there's a group of people who don't like Jesus. They are the Pharisees and the scribes. They had the influence because they used their religious system through the local synagogues of which there were many in every town and village. They saw Jesus as the enemy because Jesus came preaching forgiveness by grace. They saw Jesus as a threat to their system. They tried to convince the people that Jesus was of the devil since He mingled with the tax collectors and sinners.

The whole point of it is this: God is interested in recovering lost sinners and the Pharisees and scribes are not. This is why Jesus shared about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and then the Prodigal son. Well, the third story is really the main story.

### ***OLDER SON HAS RESPONSIBILITIES***

The people listening to the story of Jesus would be saying, "By the way, where is the older brother here?" In their culture the older brother, the one who had the right to inherit the big portion of the estate, the one who really stood alongside the father, he had one great responsibility in the family.

Luke 15:25 - "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing (NIV)." I want you to notice that the older son has been out in the field working that day as much as landowners work, sitting under a shade tree making sure everybody else does what they need to, overseeing is what they do.."

Supposedly, it is the firstborn son's responsibility to be the primary party planner of the family because there were no event planners in their time. That was the job of the firstborn son. He had the responsibility to carry off all the events of the family, particularly those that were designed to be in honor of the family. And the party was in honor of the family, not so much the son who came back, but the father who took him back, reconciled him.

And, the whole village came together to give honor to such a loving, gracious, merciful, forgiving, reconciling father, but nobody bothered to tell the older son.

### ***OLDER SON DOESN'T HAVE RELATIONSHIP***

Why didn't somebody go get him and bring him back? The answer is he has no relationship to the father. The father knows he has no interest in his brother, he proved that at the beginning of the story when he didn't even try to stop his brother from doing the terrible thing of leaving the family. It's proven when he didn't intervene between his brother and his father to stop his brother from such a dishonorable act toward his father. He has no relationship to anybody in the family. Being out in the field is sort of a metaphor for where he was in terms of that family. The younger son was in a far country, this guy's in a far field. But the symbolism there is they're both way off from the father.

Nevertheless, if you're truly busy or not, family should be your priority. Make relationship with your family your number one goal after your relationship with God.

### ***OLDER SON IS CONCERNED WITH HIS REPUTATION***

This father has a great estate where someone can actually be far enough away you don't even know when a huge celebration involving hundreds of people is going on at your house. The question is: Why wasn't he included in anything at all?

The father knows he has no interest in him. He knows he has no concern for his joy. He knows he doesn't care about his younger brother. The older son has no love for his father. He wants to appear religious. On the outside he upholds all the conventional modes of external honor. Sometimes we're so concerned about what other

people can see ON us than IN us. People often like to impress others. The older son is only concerned about his reputation that's why he stayed at home but he doesn't care about his father or brother.

### ***OLDER SON IS IN RAGE***

Let me tell you the kind of party they have in the Middle East during the time of Jesus. There's music and in those days the men danced in a circle, men only, and there was clapping and singing. It's a celebration. The fattened calf is cooked. The party is already full-blown when the older son arrives. He is stunned. He is shocked.

Luke 15:26-27 - “<sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound (NIV).’” This is shocking for the older son. I come in and you've got the biggest celebration ever. What is going on? And why wasn't I consulted? And how is it that I don't know about this?”

Luke 15:28 - “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him (NIV).” But this is what the older son doesn't understand. How can a rebellious son be the favored guest at the banquet? What he doesn't know is that the banquet is really in honor of the father. And a legalist who thinks you earn your way to heaven doesn't understand that God's joy is found in saving the ungodly, that God's joy is found in forgiving the sinner who is bankrupt and has nothing.

### ***OLDER SON IS A REBEL***

So the older son has the perfect opportunity, if he chose to, to honor his father. But the truth is, he's a rebel. He's not an outward rebel, he's an inward one and they're worse. He's a secret sinner. He feels all the same lusts that his brother felt, but he hides them because legalism never changes your flesh. He feels the same lusts, the

same longings, the same desires, but he caps them and never fulfills them because he has a stronger desire for prestige and honor and to gain his father's estate and to be well thought of. He's driven by pride. And now all of a sudden we know that he hates his father and hates his brother. We know that he's indifferent to the recovery of his brother and indifferent to the compassion of his father. He can't rejoice with either one. And that's exactly the way the Pharisees were.

What's a hypocrite? Hypocrite stays near the house of God. They hang around. They're religious. They show off their moral values. But they have no relationship to God. They have no desire to honor Him. Hypocrite is all about their own self-promotion, thinking somehow they can earn their way into the goodwill of people. Hypocrite is completely alienated from God. Religious hypocrites do what's expected on the outside. They follow the external religious and moral patterns. But inside they're just filled with secret sins. Under the surface they are filled with bitterness, hatred, jealousy, anger, lust. This is the problem with hypocrites: They feel that they're too good so they don't need to repent and change.



- 1.) Have you ever been jealous, bitter or angry? Share an experience and how does it feel?***
- 2.) What is the outcome?***
- 3.) What did you do to overcome ?***
- 4.) What did you learn from today's message?***