

## Luke 15: The Other Lost Son

Read Luke 15:25-32

In the context of Luke 15, instead of referring to this as “The Parable of the Lost Son”, we might more accurately call it “The Parable of the Lost Sons”.

Notice that the father has another son, an older son, and the entire last section of the parable deals with him. Unlike his younger brother, he has stayed physically with his father, sharing his presence, his home, and his duties. But when the younger son reappears, we see the difference between the father and his older son. When the father celebrates the return of the younger son, his brother is not glad but angry. He refuses to join the party. Why?

- He doesn't share his father's loving heart.
- The lost one is not precious to him. “Good riddance!” is closer to the truth.
- He has a narrow sense of fairness that centers purely on himself.
- He is jealous of his father's love and attention.
- Perhaps he is afraid. Perhaps his heart is like his younger brother's was when it comes to his father's possessions. Perhaps he is thinking, “All this would have been mine, but now what might happen?”
- He proudly sees himself as above his lost brother.

In some ways, the older brother is a lost son as well. He is physically near, but his heart is far from his father's.

In Jesus' situation, the older brother represented the Jewish religious leaders. They refused to share the Father's joy at his lost children coming home to Him (Luke 15:2).

But in our day, with the Father's lost children all around us, who is playing the role of the older brother?

Look at it this way. If Jesus were here, what discomfiting, unsavory, morally disreputable people would He befriend and associate with? Are we, the Father's other children, sharing the Father's heart toward them? If not, why not? Look again at the bullet points above, describing the older brother's attitudes. Do any of them apply to us believers?

We are always in danger of slipping into the older brother's attitudes until we fully share the Father's selfless, all-consuming passion for His precious lost children.

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