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## THE PRODIGAL'S BROTHER

In Luke chapter 15 we see the story of the wayward son, the prodigal as we call him. He was one of two sons of a wealthy father. He was young and not on the right path and was given his inheritance and left home. He squandered his inheritance on riotous sinful living. One day he came to himself and realized what a mess he had made of his life. He realized that he had sinned against his earthly father and also the Father in heaven. He goes back home very humbled, to be greeted by a father that had been waiting for him. The father put on a clean robe on this wayward son, and a ring, and prepared a banquet for him. His son had come home! What a time of rejoicing that was for his father and for him.

Meanwhile, there was his older brother that had not left home. He worked the field for his father and did his "duty" while his brother was away. He refused to celebrate his brother's return. He was angry with his father for welcoming the wayward son with love. He knew what his brother was doing because in Luke 15:29-30 we see his attitude. His father entreated him to celebrate his brother's return, but he responded to his father, ***"And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years [his brother was gone a long time] do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as soon as this thy son [no mention of being his brother] was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."***

His attitude of anger came from self-righteousness. He saw himself as being righteous while he saw his brother as less than the least. He did not feel his brother deserved anything. After all, he had done "everything right." This self-righteous attitude showed his heart. Both brothers had been given their share of the inheritance. What each did was their own choice.

How often do we look down on others that we think do not deserve God's mercy, but feel we are okay with God? Is there hatred toward those bound in sin? Do we believe they deserve the mercy of the "father" like the wayward son received? Do we think we deserve more because we walked the straight line, but had a heart of self-righteousness instead of a heart of mercy?

Who truly was this story about? The one son came to repentance, while the other did works to be seen. Works do not bring us peace. They drive us and often cause bitterness as it did with this older son. Was he angry because he did the work for the father while his brother didn't? Are we often found in that same place? Perhaps we have even said in our minds, "Why did they receive, and I didn't?"

If we find ourselves in that type of situation, we are worse than the son that squandered his father's inheritance. Remember, he "came to himself" and repented. There is no evidence that the older brother ever did that. He was bound up in hatred and anger against his own brother. The father waited daily for the younger son's return, while the older son got bitter.

We must never let our lives be controlled by this kind of attitude. It will destroy us. We must be thankful for those that get their lives right with God and receive the Father's "welcome home" son. Let us be more forgiving and pray for those that have gone off the right path. We must celebrate when they come back!