

Good Morning and welcome to the Berean Break. My name is George A. Sinkie and I am so glad to have you with me this morning. I hope that you have your Bible with you because I want you to check out what I say by the word of God. I encourage you to accept the Bible and the Bible alone as the standard by which you live and develop your relationship with God. This morning we are going to look at the prodigal son, but first let's go to God in prayer.

Great and Glorious God in Heaven, We thank You again for this day and for this new week. We ask for Your help as we study Your word today. And we thank You for Your guidance, That You give to us through Your word. We pray, that we will be pricked in our heart, By Your word today and that we will obey Your will. In Jesus' Name !! AMEN !!

As I mentioned we are going to looking at the prodigal son. Today we are going to look at six steps that he took away from God, and Lord willing next week we will look at six steps back to God. That makes a total of twelve steps. Now some of you, and perhaps many of you, when I mention "twelve steps" you think of programs like Alcoholic Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous or the many other programs like these. These programs are designed to alter a person's behavior and in some ways they are successful at doing that. But the real problem is that these programs cannot deal with the sin of these behaviors, because the only way to do that is to follow the teachings of God's will. The twelve steps that we are going to look at are the steps that we see in Luke 15. In the next two lessons I would like to look at twelve steps that this young man took. The term prodigal means to be wasteful and this young man was certainly that, with many more things than just the inheritance that he received from the Father. Each of these steps will begin with the letter "d."

The first step that this young man took in his departure was that he had **inappropriate desire**. Let's look at two of his desires that are shown here in the parable, Luke 15:12-13

and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.

The first desire that he had was that he wanted his inheritance and he wanted it now. The word for "give" is in the imperative, which means it is a command. Then after he had all this wealth he wanted to get away from the father and live his own life. James shows that this is the same thing that happens to us. Check out James 1:14-15

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Back in the book of Genesis, one of the things that it says of Eve, after she was deceived by Satan was that she saw the forbidden fruit as "desirable."

The second desire was that he wanted to get away from the father. Often, man wants to get away from God. We want to do our own thing just like this young man.

The second step this young man took was to **demand** his inheritance. We read this in Luke 15:12

and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them.

As we mentioned this is a command. Even though the son made an unreasonable demand, we should note that the father followed through with the request. In this parable the father is used to picture God, and we need to understand that sometimes God gives things that his people use in the wrong way. Listen to what is written in Psalm 106:13-15

They quickly forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel, But craved intensely in the wilderness, And tempted God in the desert. So He gave them their request, But sent a wasting disease among them.

This is why we need to seek the will of God. We should never try to command God to do anything, but when His people make requests of Him, we need to pray like Jesus prayed in Luke 22:42

saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done."

As the young man made each of these steps he was distancing himself from the father and step three took him away physically.

Step three is **departure** and we read about this in verse 13 again, Luke 15:13

"And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate

with loose living.

Even though the son feels free from the father and is his own boss, the father does not give up on him. In verse 20 we are going to see that the father seems to be looking down the road, waiting for the son's return. God will never force us away (in this realm), it is our choice to leave, and the Father will look longingly for our return.

The fourth step is also seen here in verse 13, and now it seems that the young man is going down a steep hill and each step causes him to go faster and faster and the steps come in rapid succession. Step four is **dissipation**. NASB translates it "loose living," while some other versions call it riotous. We are called by God to be stewards of the blessings of God. But just like this young man, many will waste the blessings of God on a life of lustful desires. This young man was playing with the devil because he offers fun, and pleasures and many other attractive things. But all this glitz and glamour is a mirage, because once the devil has ruined a person he laughs at his misery.

Very quickly after step four came step five which is, **destitution**. Read Luke 15:14

"Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need.

Now where were his friends - all gone. Now where was his inheritance - all gone. Now where was the glitz and glamour, the bright lights and the parties - all gone. Now where was Satan who deceitfully took his good home, his good wealth, his good name, he's laughing and saying things like, "What's the matter boy didn't you read the fine print where it said, 'it will cost you everything and deliver you nothing.'" Probably for the

first time in his entire life this young man has nothing. But he has not yet hit rock bottom. He's still racing down this steep hill - faster and faster.

Finally, his feet can't keep up and he takes that last step before falling into a pile. That final step is **degradation**. This once well off young man has lost everything, but now consider this final humiliation. Here is the Jewish lad and first he has to get a job with a gentile. Then as if that were not enough he had to work with pigs, which to the Jews were an unclean animal. And not only did he have to work with them but he had to feed them. Now we used to call that "slopping the hogs." And there was a good reason why it was called slop, but the pigs didn't care what it smelled or looked like. Then down in that gutter, deep down in that pit where the young man was he wanted to even eat what he was feeding to the pigs. Read it for yourself in Luke 15:15-16

"And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

Today we have looked at the six steps that this young man took that lead to his departure from the father. As I mentioned earlier the father in this parable is God and we have all departed from Him. No one forced us away, we left because we ourselves choose to sin. We followed basically these same six steps - we had inappropriate desires, unreasonable demands, we departed, and picked up speed as we lived a life of dissipation. One day, we were spiritually destitute and in degradation. Until we realize these things and quite denying the truth, in ways like blaming Adam for our sin or trying to come up with our own plan of salvation, we will never realize that we

can come back to God. The way back to God is very simple in the word of God. We must hear the word and based on that word develop faith in God. Then based on that faith we need to repent of the sin in our lives and confess Jesus. Then again based on that faith we need to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. This is the new birth or born again that Jesus speaks of with Nicodemus. As Paul writes in Romans 6, this is when we start the newness of Life that is in Christ.

As we conclude today's study let's read through the first part of this parable and as we read, I want you to consider each of the steps that we have seen today. Beginning in Luke 15:11-16

And He said, "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need. "And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

Next week we will consider the last six steps in this twelve step lesson. Picking up in verse 17 we are going to see that this young man "came to his senses," and took steps to improve his relationship with the father. What about you? Will you come to your senses today? Will you submit your life to the will of God? I hope and pray that you will.

This Berean Break is brought to you, in love, by the pre-denominational and non-denominational church of Christ that meets at 1600 East First Ave. in Mitchell SD. You are welcome to meet with us at 10:00 Sunday Mornings for our assembly followed by a time of Bible Study, also on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 for an additional time to study God's Word. If you have a comment or a sincere Bible question, please phone us at 605-770-5555. We want to remind you of the non-denominational TV program, "KNOW YOUR BIBLE" on KDLT-TV at 9:00 on Sunday mornings. This is George A. Sinkie for the Lord's church, here in Mitchell, good-bye for now, Remember that we care about you and may God bless you as you do His will.

All quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from the: New American Standard Bible. 1986 (electronic edition.) La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.