

1. The Father Gives Us Freedom to Choose

- First characteristic of the father is that he gives his children freedom to choose.
- Both the son and father know his demand for his portion early is not right; nevertheless the father freely gives the son.
- The attitudes of the son are mirrored in much of society's attitudes today.
- We, too, often demand and waste what God gives us of time, of resources, of talents, and gifts, and yet God lets us choose.

2. The Father Suffers

- Second characteristic—the father clearly suffers because of his son's selfish choice.
- This father's suffering shows us that contrary to what many today believe about God, our heavenly Father is not cold, uncaring, or distant.
- For those, especially parents, who are grieving the distance and broken relationships of rebellious children or loved ones, He understands and has compassion for you.

Matthew 23:37-38

Hosea 11:8

The Son also Suffers

- Though it is his choice, the freedom and "big living" the younger son enjoys soon ends.
- **His suffering begins when he reaches the end of his resources.**
- **He has spent his father's resources without his father.**
- Whenever we use the resources and provisions of the Father independent of the Father, we will always run out.

3. The Father Waits

- The good news is that the father has not forgotten or disowned his rebellious, selfish son. He waits for him.
- He not only waits passively, but he is actively looking and hoping because he sees his son while he is still far away.
- **How long does the father wait? As long as it takes.**
- When the younger son comes to himself, he sees clearly himself and his father.
- He knows he is unworthy—as we are. This makes us grateful and thankful children.
- When he comes to himself in his awful circumstances, he determines to get up, go back to the father, repent, and humble himself.
- He not only determines to do this—he follows through!

1 John 3:1

Romans 5:6-9

2 Corinthians 9:15

4. The Father Forgives

- The best news is—the father forgives.
- He doesn't ask for inventory, make the son feel guilty, or put him on probation. He forgives.
- **As he forgives, he immediately accepts, restores, and rejoices.**
- This is a picture of our heavenly Father to us and should reassure us and fill us with gladness!
- Jesus, the storyteller, chooses to introduce one of the most unlovely characters in the Bible, the older brother.
- **The older brother is the reverse image of his father.**
- He has as wrong a view of his father as the younger son did when he left home.
- The older son has lived in the father's house, but he does not have the father's heart.

The Older Son

- If we're honest, we're sometimes the same way when we think about living the Christian life as hard, following commands, and that our Father is reluctant to forgive our failures.

CONCLUSION:

- Contrast what The Father really like vs what your family background or society says a father is like.
- Jesus the Son, reveals to us, God the Father.
- Application and prayer