

# THE SINS OF THE ELDER BROTHER

LUKE 15:11-32

24 Nov 2023

**INTRODUCTION:** In the story of the “prodigal son,” we commonly focus on the younger brother who went into a far country, fell into sin and despair, repented, and returned to his father. Today, our focus will be on the sins of his elder brother. **Read Luke 15:11-32**

## The outward, visible qualities of the elder brother:

1. **He was loyal** (v. 11-12): He stayed home with his father.
2. **He was industrious** (v. 25): He is working out in the field. He’s serving his father (vs 29).
3. **He is faithful** (v. 29): He said, “**These many years do I serve thee.**”
4. **He was righteous** (v. 29): “**neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.**”

**Rev. 2:1-3** The church at Ephesus had some good qualities mentioned by Jesus Christ:

- **They were loyal.** They put some false apostle on trial and found them guilty.
- **They were industrious.** Jesus said, “**I know thy works, and thy labour.**”
- **They were faithful.** “**I know your patience.**”
- **They were righteous.** They hated those that do evil.

**Rev. 2:4-5** The Lord had something against this church. They left their first love. They had forgotten the Love they had for the Lord before. The Lord said, “**Repent and do the first works.**”

## THE SINS OF THE ELDER BROTHER:

- I. **SPIRITUAL DULLNESS** (15:25-26) -- “**asked what these things meant.**” He was unaware of the revival and restoration that was taking place.
  - A. **He Was Not Spiritually Blind (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)**
  - B. **But He Was Spiritually Dull**
    1. **He did not recognize the revival when it came.**
    2. **Like Eli, he missed the spiritual significance of what was happening (1 Sam 1:9-15)**
    3. **Like the Galatians, he was trying to achieve perfection by the flesh (Galatians 3:3)**

Beware of spiritual dullness. When you start serving God, doing right, doing good works, actively ministering, and staying busy with the Lord’s work, it can cause you to lose contact with God. Don’t forget to spend time at Jesus’ feet (Luke 10:38-42, Martha and Mary with Jesus).
- II. **ANGER** (15:28) -- “**he was angry.**” He should have rejoiced with them that rejoice (Rom. 12:15).
  - A. **He Had Reserved His Anger For Many Years (v. 29).** “**Father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee...**” His anger blinded him to the true aspects of the situation and made him suspicious. Perhaps he assumed that his brother’s return meant less inheritance for him.
    1. **He had developed the root of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15)**
    2. **When a glass is tipped, nothing can come out that is not already in the glass.** What is inside of you that is going to spill out when you get angry?
    3. **He Was Sure of the Righteousness of His Anger**
      1. **He was not the one who had transgressed (v. 29)**
      2. **Like Jonah, he felt he did well to be angry (Jonah 4:5-11)**

III. **BROKEN FELLOWSHIP** (15:28) -- "would not go in"

- A. **In Breaking Fellowship With His Brother, He Lost Fellowship With the Father (1 John 1:3; 4:20-21)**
1. **His breaking of fellowship was a willful act. "he would not."**
    - Our relationship with God is connected with our relationship with other believers. See **First John 1:3** and **4:20-21**. If you break fellowship with a brother, you also mess up your fellowship with the Father.
  2. **The younger son broke away from the father's house; the elder brother broke fellowship in the father's house**
  3. **He made the father come to him**
  4. **Broken Fellowship Was the First Result of Man's Original Sin (Genesis 3:8); it is a sign that more is wrong in your life.** When God came to the garden, "*they hid themselves.*"

IV. **SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS** (15:29) -- "these many years do I serve thee"

- A. **He Saw Himself Righteous in Comparison to His Brother**
1. **This is the only way we can see ourselves righteous**
  2. **This is the sin of the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14)**
  3. **He Failed to See His Own Sinfulness; compare this with the Apostle Paul (Romans 7:18; 1 Timothy 1:15).** Paul always knew he was a sinner in need of God's grace.

V. **JEALOUSY** (15:29-30) -- "thou never gavest me a kid"

- A. **He Compared Lives (John 21:20-22; 2 Corinthians 10:12)**
- B. **He Compared Rewards (Matthew 20:1-15)**
- C. **He Found Reason to Complain**
1. **You never even gave me a kid**
  2. **You gave my brother the fatted calf**

VI. **UNTHANKFULNESS** (15:31) -- "all that I have is thine"

- A. **He Lost the Joy of Being With the Father**
- B. **He Discounted the Blessings That Were His (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)**

VII. **SELFISHNESS** (15:32) -- "this thy brother was dead, and is alive again"

- A. **He Had No Joy in His Brother's Return; consider the joy over the found sheep (v. 3-7)**
- B. **His Thoughts Were Only of Himself. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."** (Philippians 2:21)

**CONCLUSION:**

1. **REMEMBER.** Were you once closer to God than you are today? Have you lost the joy of serving Him like you once had?
2. **REPENT.** Talk to God and ask Him to help you get back to where you were before.
3. **RETURN.** You can start all over again with God.