

21 June 2020 Tyler Ferguson Dad's Response to Prodigal Son

Let's look at three areas as dads from the parable of the prodigal son but also notice that these apply to all men and women – so that we can be better tomorrow than we are today.

Luke 15:11-24 Parable of the Prodigal Son

After asking his dad for his inheritance, the son left home, lost his inheritance, and became hungry. He talks to God and decides to go back home.

Luke 15:20 *So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*

Let's be challenged by the dad in this parable and how he treated his son.

1) SEE THEM. Luke 15:20 ...But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him...

The father likely saw his son coming back home from far away because he was constantly watching for him. It doesn't seem to be coincidence or that he just happened to notice. How much today do we focus on our phones or other things instead of looking for our children? The way to notice something from a distance is by giving our undivided attention. What are children thinking when we don't focus on them? It is one thing to say we are paying attention but another to actually pay attention. Show our kids that we see them by:

- Enter their world and do things they like.
- Notice the good things they do and call it out.
- Honor our kids. *"His father saw him"* - the word for "saw" is the same word used in **1 Thessalonians 5:12** for honor...*Honor those who labor among you.*

2) FEEL FOR THEM. Luke 15:20 ...and felt compassion for him...

This *"felt"* is a deep, heart connection with what his son was feeling. This is a step deeper than just seeing. Not only did the father notice his son, he felt for him. This word implies the deepest of feelings and being overwhelmed with feeling emotionally connected with him.

How often do we simply sit with our kids in their emotions and not try to fix a problem? Ways to show that we feel compassion for them:

- Comfort them when they are down. **2 Corinthians 1**
- Resist trying to always fix a sadness or emotion as God could be using it to do something bigger in their soul.
- Refrain from dismissing their feelings.

3. RESPOND TO THEM AND FOR THEM. Luke 15:20 ...He ran...

This response is significant as it shows that he was not just talk but that he acted on what he saw and on what he felt. Likely, people don't know what you see, or know how you feel, until they see what you do. The same can be said of the Gospel - people need to see it in our responses. Have you heard another say that they had based their definition of a Christian by seeing one that is mean-spirited and judgmental? Kids feel our love, adoration, and respect for them based mainly on what we do. Taken a step further...our children's theology comes more from watching us as parents than it comes from reading this book.

How can we improve our responses to our kids?

- Grace upon grace. The dad in this parable had every reason to be upset with the son but chose grace.
- Show a biblical response to cultural problems.
- Model a response of humility.

CONCLUSION: The point of this parable is not first to teach us to be better dads but to show us our Father in Heaven. Our Father is the one who sees us, feels for us, responds to us far more than any other.

He has SEEN us since before we were created. He never turns His back on us. He is never sidetracked. We have His complete attention.

He FEELS for us. He hurts when we hurt. He is with us in pain that is unbearable.

He RESPONDS to us. He responded by sending Jesus so that we wouldn't have to face the penalty for our actions. He responded by raising Jesus from the grave. He responded by sending the Holy Spirit to ensure that we would never be alone again.

We can make these practical changes in all these areas and they will last eternally when we are a child of God. God will see us, feel for us, and respond to us. Become His child today...

Prayer for salvation: Dear Lord Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I believe that on that cross You took my guilt, my sin, and my shame and You died for it. You faced hell for me, so I wouldn't have to. And You rose again to give me a place in Heaven, a purpose on Earth, and a relationship with Your Father. Today, Lord Jesus, I turn from my sins to be born again. And now, God is my father, Jesus is my Savior, The Holy Spirit is my helper. And Heaven is my home. Amen.

How are you challenged by the dad in this story of the prodigal son?

In what ways do you show your kids that you "see" them?

How can we develop compassion when we don't have it for our children? for racism? for prisoners? For the unloving?