

# Some Considerations Before You Pack Your Bags

by Greg Locke

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*The speaker emphasizes the importance of considering the consequences of sin before making a decision, using the story of the young man in Luke 15 as an example.*

**Duration:** 45:38

**Scripture:** Luke 15:11

**Topics:** "Prodigal Son", "Stewardship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of the prodigal son from the Bible. He begins by discussing the distance that the son traveled when he left his father's house. The son went to a far country, emphasizing the significant physical and emotional separation from his family and God. The preacher then moves on to the disposal of the son's inheritance, highlighting how the son wasted all his money on a reckless and sinful lifestyle. The sermon emphasizes the importance of using the gifts and talents that God has given us wisely, rather than squandering them.

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## Transcript

Luke chapter number 15 of the Bible tonight, please. The Gospel of Luke and chapter number 15. Luke chapter number 15.

Good to see you tonight. I appreciate so much you being here on this Tuesday night of our Revival meeting. And not just any Revival meeting, but the second week of our Revival meeting.

And we just allow the Lord to get in this thing and kick out both the front doors and the back doors and the side windows. And I believe God's given us a wonderful, wonderful time. And I believe if we keep praying and keep speaking and keep looking to Him and keep turning from our wicked ways, as the Bible commands us in 2 Chronicles 7, 14, I believe God will continue to pour out His richest blessings and His Holy Spirit upon His people here at the Great Baptist Temple.

I will have to be on my best behavior tonight and for the rest of the week, as my wife is here now, so I can't preach near as mean as I've been preaching in the past. And of course, you know, I'm just kidding about that. I do appreciate my wife.

I could not do what I do in evangelism if it were not for her. And they say behind every good man is a good lady. And I say to that, hallelujah, amen, a million and one times, because my wife supports me.

And I'll tell you, if I didn't believe this Bible, I wouldn't drag her all over this country. I'll tell you that right now. But I've got a wife that loves me and I've got a wife that appreciates me.

I'll tell you what, I've got a very submissive wife as well. Last time we got in an argument, she came to me on her knees and she said, if you don't get out from that bed, I'll beat the devil out of you. But anyhow, but the truth of the matter is, but I appreciate my wife and I appreciate what God did for her as she was in Thailand for some time.

But I appreciate so much her being with me now. Luke chapter 15, let's all stand, please, out of respect for God's wonderful word. Luke 15, I'll begin my reading in just a moment in verse number 11.

I appreciate our brother here said he just got in from Florida and he said something interesting. He said he was tired, which I'm sure many of you are. And I appreciate you being here, although you are.

And he said it was either go to the house and sleep or come to the church. Well, a lot of Baptist I preach to get the best of both worlds. They come to church and go to sleep.

But I hope tonight that you'll listen up and you'll listen to what the message of the Bible is tonight. Luke 15, verse 11, please. The Bible says in he speaking of Jesus saying, a certain man had two sons and the younger of him said to his father, father, give me the portion of goods that fall to me.

And he divided under them is living. Not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country. And there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all their roles, a mighty famine in that land. And he began to be in one. He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country.

And he sent him into his field to feed swine. And he would have fain filled his belly with the husk that the swine did eat. And no man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare? And I perished with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.

And had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him and said unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son. The father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring him on the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be married. This, my son, was dead and is alive again.

He was lost and is found and they began to be married. And I want to bring you a simple message entitled Some Consideration Before You Pack Your Bag. Thank you very much.

You may be seated. Let's bow our heads and hearts and ask the Lord to bless our time together. Now, father, once again, I pray that the Holy Spirit of God would have complete reign and complete sway and control of the service tonight.

Father, I pray that I would preach in the next few minutes all of thee and none of me. Father, impact me at this time. Fill me with thy spirit.

Empower me, I pray. And Lord, just as much, I pray you would empower this congregation as they listen. Lord, no doubt perhaps there's even one in here tonight that has never genuinely been converted, never truly been born again, never really been become a Christian.

And Lord, tonight I pray the spirit of God would do his convincing and his convicting work in their heart and mind and show them their utter desperate need of Christ. And then for God's people who perhaps are like this young man in Luke 15, I pray tonight again that you would comfort with all God that you would convict. Have your will and way.

And may tonight you lead us in a Holy Spirit, heartfelt, old-fashioned Bible revival. And Lord, we'll give you all the praise, honor, and glory for everything that's said and done. For we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now, what I do not want to do tonight from Luke chapter number 15 is debate about the spiritual condition of this young man. There are many people in the day and age in which we live, and I suppose there's different categories of preachers.

There's different, obviously, categories of denominations. But there's been a great debate for years about the young man in this portion of Scripture. Was he saved? Was he lost? Was he saved? Was he lost? You can believe what you want to, but I believe tonight, and I'm going to preach this message as if this young man were a blood-bought, born-again child of God.

I am aware of one thing and one thing only. I'm aware of the fact that before he left home, he called the man in the story his father. I'm aware of the fact that when he went down the long, dusty road of sin with a knapsack of the devil on his back, I'm still aware, he still called the man in the story his father.

And when he got out of the slop and dropped it and went to his daddy's house, he still called the man in the story father. And so when he was doing good, when he was doing evil, and when he came home to repent, the man in the story was still this young man's father. And so I believe that is a picture that here is a child of God.

Here is a person that was a Christian. This is not somebody that was lost and came home and got saved. And by the way, I've also heard theologians, and they call themselves that, debate as to whether this young man had salvation and lost his salvation.

There's just one problem with that. You're eternally secure when you get saved by the grace of God. And friend, I'll tell you one thing.

I won't get a big head about it, but I could swing over hell in a rotten cornstalk, spit the devil in the eye and sing Amazing Grace, friend. I've got my salvation, and it ain't going anywhere. My Bible tells me in Ephesians 4.30, And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed under the day of redemption.

And since the day of redemption has not taken place, speaking of the rapture, I've still got the sealing of the Spirit of Almighty God. I had a charismatic lady come to me one night, and she tried to tell me what I believed. She said, I know what you believe.

She said, you're one of them Baptists, and you believe that you can make a profession and go out and live like the devil and live like you want to, and you're still saved. I said, no, ma'am, I do not believe that. I said, I sometimes think that was unfair of you saying it.

I said, I don't believe that whatsoever. I said, I believe if a man makes a profession and goes out and lives like the devil, that's all he got was a profession. Because when a man gets saved, he don't want to go out and live like the devil.

I believe when a man, woman, boy, and girl get saved, they will want to live right, and they will want to live godly. And yes, you might get upset, and yes, you might be rebellious every now and then and fall all over yourself, but you won't live a wicked life. Just like we said last night, you live like hell, and you'll die and go to hell, my dear friend.

That's not Greg, that's Almighty God. And so tonight we are dealing with a young man that was saved by the grace of God. Was not lost and got saved.

Was not saved and lost it. Another lady came to me one time, and I preached on eternal security one night, and she got all mad and hot in the face. And she said, I know one thing.

She said, one of us is wrong about this eternal security business. I said, yes, ma'am, I know more than that. I know which one of us it is, because I know what my Bible says.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to tell you, here was a young man in this portion of Scripture that was saved by grace, through faith, washed in the blood, but he backslid on his father. And I want you to see tonight the message, some considerations before you pack your bags. There's some things I want you to see in this portion of Scripture, in Luke chapter number 15, that is very dire and very necessary that we deal with tonight.

In case you're planning a trip away from God's house very soon, or in case you're planning a trip to get away from the presence of God, or if you're a backslider tonight, there's some things I want you to consider before you pack your bags. I want you to look, please, at verse number 14. In verse number 14, excuse me, back up to verse number 13, would you? The Bible says, and not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous, does not say righteous, but with riotous living.

The first consideration I want you to see tonight is, number one, what I call the distance. Here was a young man that went to his father one day, and he said, Father, he said, give me the portions of goods that falleth to me. Now, he had earned a living.

His father did owe him that, because he had been put in a store, and so he said, Father, I'm sick of your rules. He said, I'm sick of your mandates. I'm sick of your legalism.

I'm sick of your funny mentalism, and all this, that, and the other. He said, I'm ready to go out and sow my wild oats and have myself a good jolly time. He said, I think I'll take my money.

And the Bible says that the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country. Now, I want you to see, ladies and gentlemen, that the word far is the key word in that verse. It does not say he went to his neighbor's backyard.

It does not say he went 15 miles down the road. And no, it does not say that he went merely to a country. It uses that small little word, F-A-R, he went into a far country.

And I believe what the Spirit of God is trying to show His dear people tonight is simple. It is when you get away from God and when you get involved in sin, it will always take you a long and a lot farther down the road than you ever wanted to go, my dear friend. The very first song that our dear group sang tonight, sin will take you farther than you want to go, cost you longer than you want to pay, and keep you a whole lot longer than you ever want to stay.

And here was a man, you will never convince me in a million years, that he thought he would actually get that far from the Father's house. And the first thing you need to consider as a backslider is when you get your life involved in sin, it will always hold on to you longer, it will cost you more, and take you a long way from the Father's house, and you'll wake up sometimes thinking to yourself, how did I ever get in the mess that I'm in? Let me give you an illustration along these lines. By the grace of God, I preach all over this country, and here's the type of people I meet.

I go to a church one year, Pastor, and people are Sunday schoolers, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, Bible meeting, missions conference, soul winners. I mean, they're on fire for God. I mean, they'll charge hell with a squirt pistol.

I mean, they just want to live for God. They want to do everything they can. They can't get enough of the Bible.

And I go back the next year, and I begin to ask the pastor about them, and they're not there in the church anymore, and they have all these problems. And they come to me in a revival meeting, and then I begin to slowly but surely see what began to seize in their life. Here's what happened.

They were Sunday school, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, revival meeting. Every time the doors were open, all of a sudden they decided they'd drop Sunday school. After all, nobody will probably know.

And so they dropped out of Sunday school, and then they were Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and nobody really noticed, and if it was a larger church, perhaps the pastor didn't even pay much attention. And so all of a sudden, you know the very next thing that drops off, prayer meeting. Somebody said, by the way, not too long ago, that the Sunday morning crowd shows the popularity of the church.

The Sunday night crowd shows the popularity of the pastor, for those that come back to hear him preach. And the Wednesday night prayer meeting proves the popularity of Jesus. And might I just say, he's not real popular in a lot of independent Baptist churches that I preach in.

And so the first thing that takes off is Sunday school. The second thing that takes off is Wednesday night, and you've got the next one. The next thing that takes off is Sunday night.

They start thinking to themselves that God and everybody else in the church owes them a favor. And after all, it wouldn't do me too much harm just to go to Sunday morning, just to hear a little bit of red-hot fiery preaching, and amen a little bit on Sunday, and live like the cotton-picking devil on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and the following Sunday. And so they, all of a sudden, their Sunday school, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, then Sunday school goes, then Wednesday night goes, then Sunday evening goes, then guess what goes? All together, the church goes all together.

And they begin to forsake the assembly, they begin to make excuses. And Daddy gets a bigger boat, and they start going out fishing. And Mama gets a little bit of a later job, and starts working more on Wednesday nights, and she starts working more on Saturday nights, and she gets in so late in the evening that they don't want to come to church anymore.

And they allow Johnny and Junior just to kind of sleep in until the sun warms their feet and watch all the Pokemon and all the crazy cartoons on TV, instead of coming to the house of God. And then they come to me in a revival meeting, and they say, Bubba Long, my marriage is on the rocks, my kids are serving the devil, I'm so frustrated, I wake up every morning as empty as a burnt out volcano, what do I do? I'm so confused, what has happened? I'll tell you what happened. Sin hit you a lot farther than you ever intended to go.

And friend, I'm telling you tonight, you better consider what I told you. I read a story not long ago about a young lady that was 18 years old. Her father told her, you will not date, you will not see a young man, you will not do any of that until you're 18 years old.

And so on her 18th birthday, she was all excited she was going to get to go out for the first time. She went to a large Christian high school, and she was going to be dating one of the so-called young Christian Don Juan Suave members in the school. And so man, she was excited, and he was excited.

Well, the day came. And it was her 18th birthday, and man, sure enough, about 6.30, 7 o'clock, knock came the door. Man, it wasn't the Jehovah's Witness, it wasn't the Avon lady, it was Mr. Don Juan Suave.

And here he was, he had 15 cans of Ray hairspray all in his hair, you know. He had a great big old dozen roses, and man, he was excited. His little heart was about to beat, slam out of his chest, and all of a sudden the door opened.

And you can imagine it was kind of a slow motion. And she came walking down, and she had her beautiful dress on, had her little bow in her hair. And he thought to himself, whoa, good giggly wiggly.

Look at her, man, I'm so excited. And so she came down the steps, and they came in. He sat on one side of the room, and she sat on the other side of the room.

And daddy set the full shotgun and said, you better be home by 10 o'clock, amen. And so they began to talk. And so he says, now you treat my daughter with respect.

And you love my daughter. You take care of my daughter. And don't you lay your hands on my daughter, because she's my property, not your property, to the day you say, I do.

And then some of you daddies say, amen, because if you don't, I will. So anyhow, here was this man, and he gave them all of these rules and regulations. And so man, he grabs her by the arm.

He gives her the roses. Boy, she gives. Oh, boy, she's just kind of, she's just swelling up like a watermelon inside.

Boy, she's so excited. Here she is, 18 years old, going on her first date with a boy. He opens the car door.

And there was already another couple. One man was driving. Young lady was sitting up front, so he opened the back door, set her there.

Went around the back, got in the car. Man, going on a double date, the best one, amen. And so they go down to get something to eat.

But before they got something to eat, they stopped by the little park. They fed the ducks, began to talk. And man, he was even nice and even led in prayer.

Oh, how noble of him. Even led in prayer before they pulled out to go to the area. And so finally, when they were through there in that park area, they decided they was going to go get themselves something to eat.

And so they pulled into this dimly lit restaurant. Man, people were standing around, sucking on their cigarettes. And the Bud Light and the Budweiser and the Michelob signs were blinking.

She could see the smoke just billowing out of there like it's some kind of rock concert. Every time the doors would swing in and out, it looked like some type of saloon. And she could hear the rock music, see people standing around with the pool.

Sticks in their hand, men having themselves a good time. The money was just a-flying. And she said within herself, I'm not going in.

All of a sudden, he said, let's go. And he noticed some hesitancy on her face. And he said, what do you mean, you're not going to go? And she said, no, I'm just not going to go.

She said, my daddy taught me how to go to places like that. And he said, come on. He said, this is a nice restaurant.

He said, your daddy's not going to go. Why don't you worry about it? He said, just get out of the car and come on. The other couple had already pulled out and started walking to the door.

She said, you do anything you want to. She said, call me a cab. She said, get mad, take me home.

We'll never take down another date. But she said, take me to the house. He said, I know what your problem is.

He said, you're a sissy. He said, you're scared your daddy's going to get in his little pickup truck and drive all over this town on your first date. And he's going to pass by Shoney's.

He's going to pass by Ponderosa. And he's going to pass by all the Chinese buffets. And pass by Crystal's and McDonald's and Burger King.

He's going to pass all the other places in town. And you're scared. You're just afraid, little girl, that your daddy's going to drive by here and see my car in the parking lot.

And when you get home, you're scared what your daddy's going to do to you because you came to this place. She began to cry and she said, that's not true whatsoever. She said, take me home.

She said, you've got it all wrong. She said, when I get home, I'm not scared of what my daddy's going to do to me. She said, but I am scared and I am afraid of what I might do to my daddy.

My dear friend, you hear me and you hear me well. The question to ask when you begin to prodicalize and walk away from God, the question to ask when you get your life involved in sin, is not what is God going to do to me, but what are you going to do to God, my dear friend? Because your sin grieves the heart of a holy God. And if He likes it, you should like it.

And if He hates it, you should hate it. If it bothers Him, then bless God Almighty, it ought to bother you and it ought to bother me. And did you know that your sin does not just affect you, it affects your spouse, it affects your kids, it affects people in this church, people in this community, and it affects your effectiveness and your testimony and your witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you better be careful, friend, because sin will take you a long way from the Father's house. And for number one, we see tonight what I call the distance. I want you to look at these words again, please, at verse number 14.

The Bible says in verse number 14, and when he had spent all, it does not say when he had spent some, it says when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in law, back up to verse number 13. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey to a far country and there wasted, you get that, and there in that far country, and there wasted his substance or his money, his inheritance, with riotous living. The first consideration is what I call the distance, but the second consideration is what I call the disposal.

Get the picture. Here's a young man that comes to his father. He puts the rake down, he puts the hoe down, he parks the John Deere tractor in the garage and says, Daddy, I'm sick and tired of your rules and I'm sick and tired of your work.

It's interesting to me, here was a young man that left home because he got tired of working, but he ended up working in a home theater. And so he said, Daddy, I'm sick of working, I'm sick of your rules and regulations, I'm sick of praying, I'm sick of family devotion, I'm sick of church three or four times a week, I'm tired of it, I'm going to go out on my own. And did you notice, my dear friend, did you notice that his father never tried to stop him? Did you notice that? His father did not stop him.

Now, he probably told him, I know best. He probably told him, listen son, I know what you're going through, and I felt this way when I was your age too, but son, I know best, but I'm not going to stop you. And might I tell you that God will give you a preacher to preach the living devil out of you, and God will give you the Holy Spirit to convict you, and God will give you a Bible and say, my way's best.

But he won't stop you if you're ready to go. If you want to go, friend, you will go, and if you want to stay, you will stay. I don't believe in that business about God preordained some to heaven and preordained some to hell, and God knows that God puts you in sin, and God pulls you out of sin.

Bless God, you'll get your life in sin, and you'll get your life out of sin, my dear friend. And here was a man that considered not the distance and considered not the disposal, and he lost everything. It doesn't say he spent \$15.

He lost everything. And the Bible says, out there appealing to his flesh, out there serving the old slew foot, the devil, out there in the wicked, bow up. How he wasted it, we don't know, but we do know it was riotous misery.

I mean, he wasted his life and wasted his substance when he could be living, loving, and working for his Father. Might I say something tonight without apology? If you tonight are a blood-born, born-again child of God, and you live your life outside the dictates of the will of God, and you live your life outside the dictates of the ways and the word of God, and you live your life tonight as a Christian, any way you jolly well please, might I just say, friend, you are wasting your life away. You are wasting your time.

You are wasting God's time. You are wasting God's people's time. And if you are a child of God that lived your life, my dear friend, you are wasting your substance.

And I meet people all over this country, all over this country that, oh yes, every now and then they knock on the door of a church. Every now and then they even crack the Bible. Every now and then they pray.

Every now and then they give. Every now and then they come forward and they make some type of decision, my dear friend. But for the most part, they are wasting their life.

And they're taking up space in the work of God. And they're causing other people to fall by the wayside. You can be one of two things tonight, and one of two things only.

You can be a stumbling block, or you can be a stepping stone. And because of the life of many independent Baptists that my wife and I meet all over this country, many people are stumbling over other people's lives when your life should be used as a stepping stone to bring that person closer to Jesus Christ. And here was a man that did not consider the distance, but it still happened.

Here was a man that did not consider the disposal, but it still happened, and he wasted his life. My Bible tells me, redeeming the time for the days of evil. Friend, we don't have time to float around with life.

We don't have time to float around with sin and to mess around with ungodliness because we are in a warfare. This is not a Goldman Bailey circus. This is not a game.

This is not playtime, my dear friend. This is a time of warfare when God's people are to fight, not disposing and wasting of their life, but using the assets, the abilities, the gifts, and the talents that God has given to us. And tonight, here was a young man that had to face the distance of being in a poor country, and he had to face the fact that he was flat-busted.

He was flat-broke and had absolutely nothing whatsoever to show for his wayward lifestyle. But I want you to look at what now plays at verse number 14 again. The Bible says in verse 14, And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land.

Please get this. And he, the young prodigal, began to be in war. Number one, the distance.

Number two, the disposal. But number three, what I call the desire. You know, here's a young man that had everything handed to him on a silver platter.

Here's a young man that had a nice bed to sleep in, had a nice, leaky-free roof over his head at night. Here's a man that no doubt probably had some silver pillows or something. I mean, he had a nice soft mattress.

He had a nice table to put his feet under. He had a nice family. I don't know if he had sisters.

We do know that he had brothers because one of them got mad at him for coming home. And so, we do know that he had a father. No doubt then he had a mother.

He had servants that served his father. And since he was the next of kin, since he was the son, no doubt the servants would serve him as well. And so, I mean, he was high living, friend.

I'm talking about high class. He had everything handed to him on a silver platter. But one day he said, Daddy, I think I'm going to go my own way.

And when he went his own way, when he finally got out of the wicked, wily ways of the world, he wished in himself that he would have never left him again. And I meet people all over this country, they say, I wish I'd have never done it not even one time. I wish I'd have never left.

Hey, you ask David. You ask David, friend. The Bible says in 2 Samuel 11, in verse number 1, that it was a time when kings go forth to battle.

I do not know what all that means, but I do know that David was supposed to be there. And the Bible says that David stayed at home and he walked on the roof of his house. And the Bible says in verse number 3, he saw a woman bathing herself and she was very beautiful to look upon.

I'm going to tell you something right now. You know what that word, that phrase, look upon, means? It does not mean that he saw her and said, Oh God, please forgive me for what I've seen. And Lord, blot that out of my memory.

Take that away from my heart. The word look upon means that he took a casual stare. It'll bite you too.

And David wished in himself that he would have never committed such an immoral, adulterous vow on occasion. Because it cost him and his family. It cost him and his body.

It cost him a child. And it cost him even in the kingdom. And so don't you tell me, my dear friend, that you won't one day wish, Oh, I wish to God I never would have done it.

Let's use David as an illustration again. It's amazing to me how God said David was a man after his own heart. But David fouled up a lot in the Bible.

I'm glad God's got forgiveness. But here was a man named David, the Bible says, in 2 Samuel, nearing to the end, it says that he went out and numbered the people against the word of the Lord. God said, Don't you go out and number the people.

Don't you go out and think you're some kind of big shot because you've got a bunch of people out there. Don't you think you're something because you've got the biggest Sunday school, Mr. David. The Bible says that he had Joab go out and count them anyhow.

And God said, Because you've done this, there's going to be three great cataclysmic judgments that are going to come upon the Israelites. And he finally threw himself on the mercy of God rather than on the wrath of man. And the Bible says that thousands and thousands and thousands of the Israelites died in one day.

And don't you think the desire of David in his mind when he laid his head on his pillow that night was, Oh, God, I wish I'd have never numbered the crazy people. And here was a young man, the Bible says, and he began to be in want. You know what he wanted? He wanted his father back.

He wanted his bed back. He wanted his inheritance back. Hey, he wanted his old sweaty, mule-infested job back.

He wanted his old dirty dog back. He just wanted to get out of the mess that he had dug for himself, friend. The Bible says he began to be in want.

But I want you to go on in your reading, if you would, please, and look at verse number 16. Oh, what sad verses these are. Verse number 16, my Bible says, and he would have fainted, filled his belly with the hush that the swine or the pigs did eat, and no man gave unto him.

This is what I call the desertion. Everybody deserted him. Everybody left him.

It's interesting to me, Dr. LeBond, when this young man had a lot of money, he had a lot of friends. When this young man had the dope, when this young man had all the booze, when this young man had all the young ladies, he had all of the friends. But it's interesting to me, when he was flat busted, he didn't have a friend one.

The Bible says, and no man gave unto him. That doesn't mean that every now and then somebody dropped a penny in his little cup. No, that means that no man gave unto him, and everybody left him.

I'm not giving my full testimony here at this church, and I probably will not unless the Lord leads me to do that on Friday night. But let me just say this. I was in trouble a lot with the law before I got saved by God's grace.

I was in court six different times. They put me on probation five different times. They got tired of seeing my face, and I was just about on a first-name basis with the judge.

He locked my father up about 20 years before I got there the first time, and he told me the last time I was there, if you ever stand before me again, son, I'm going to lock your cell up in a jail cell until you're 21, 22 years old, and you will not see the light of day, and you'll rot in the same jail cell your daddy did for five or six years. So he said, you better straighten up your life. But you know what it's interesting to me? Every time I stole a gun, every time I stole a go-kart, every time I got in trouble for vandalism, every time I got in trouble for fighting, no matter what it was for, every single time, even if it wasn't a court sentence, if I was just maybe brought home after a curfew at 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, something like that, you know what's interesting to me? There was never a time, I emphasize the word never, there was never a time that I ever got in trouble with the law that I did it by myself.

I wasn't that stupid. I wasn't dumb enough to steal something by myself. I wanted somebody to fall down with me, you know.

I was one of them thieves, you know. I wanted a little help. I wanted a little encouragement, you know.

I wanted somebody to prod me along, drive the getaway car, something I didn't want to do by myself. Because if I got caught, I wasn't the only one who was going to take the rap. I wasn't the only one who was going to take the blame, if you will.

And so I wanted some help in this thing. Every time I ever did anything stupid, it was always, always with somebody else. Let me tell you what's interesting about that.

All six times I stood before that judge in Lebanon, Tennessee, I was by myself every time. Every single time. You know what? Not one time did I have one of my friends jump up and say, oh judge, judge, it wasn't Gregory Wayne Love's fault.

It was my fault. I did it. I cooked up the idea.

Man, it was my concoction. It was my program. It was my problem.

It was my plan. Hey, sentence me. Put me on probation.

Hey, don't make him pay all that money, that lawyer. Not one single time in all of those years did one of my friends stand up and tell me that it was their fault. Not, not, no.

When the problems came, they all scattered like a bunch of cockroaches when you turn the lights on. They were gone and not to be found. But it's interesting to me when the trouble kind of settled and when the heat was turned down, they were right back with me.

Getting in trouble again. Getting in trouble again. Sirens start blaring.

The ghost, raptured friend, out of there. And I'm left to take the blame. Now, there's a couple of reasons for that, but I'd say the first one's the biggest one.

I had the wrong kind of friend. Now, you get mad at me if you want to. I'm leaving on Friday night, but I'm going to tell you something right now.

I don't care if it's your family. I don't care if you call them your best friend. I don't care if they're sitting in the pew with you.

I don't care if you talk to them on the phone for 15 hours a week. If they call you their friend, but they take you farther from God and do not bring you closer to God, they are not your friendless God. They are your enemy.

My Bible tells me in Amos 3, verse number 3, can two walk together except they be agreed? And as I learned in Mexico, no way, Jose. It just don't work that way, friend. And God says, come out from among them.

Don't you be unequally yoked together. Hey, God said, mark the fornicators. Mark the heretics.

Mark those people that don't live right. We have no company whatsoever with evildoers, the Bible says. And friend, I'm telling you, if you got the wrong kind of friend, you'll never have the right kind of relationship with God.

Did you hear me? If you have the wrong kind of friend, you will never have the right relationship with Almighty God. We think this idea of friend just deals with teenagers. Hey, I've met a lot of middle-aged people and a lot of adults and a lot of elderly people that had messed up, ruined lives because of their friend.

And no man gave unto him because his friends were kind of the money talker. His friends were only there for the good times. His friends were only there for the high life, if you will.

But when he got out to what he considered the high life, he figured out he turned out to be a low life. And I want to show you that. If you'd please look in your Bibles now, please, at verse number 17.

In verse number 17 of Luke 15, the Bible says, And when he, this young man, came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and despair, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.

We'll get to verse 20 in just a moment, but this is what I call the disappointment. The Bible says right there in verse number 17, And when he came to himself. Plot version.

Let me tell you what I think that verse means. I think he just got to the place where he realized what a fool he was for ever leaving home. He came to himself.

You see, for a while, man, he had this big vision of what it was going to be like in the world. I guess probably one of the best illustrations of this is about two and a half, three weeks ago when I was preaching in Los Angeles, California, and I told you some of the crazy gruesome stories, some of the gurus and spooks and boogers and kooks that I met out there. I mean, some crazy folks.

But they took me to the most famous corner in the world, Hollywood and Vine. You know what was at Hollywood and Vine? Nothing. A bunch of drunks and winos, a bunch of harlots and whore mongers walking around.

I didn't see one cotton-picking movie star walking around. If I would, I probably wouldn't know who it was. I definitely wasn't going to jump out.

Well, you signed my Bible. I didn't see one thing at Hollywood and Vine. You know, I thought it was going to be something to see those... I thought I was going to walk in front of that big Chinese theater and see all those handprints and all those names.

I said, I want to go see all the names of the stars. You know what it is? It's all the way down the sidewalk, all the way through New York. It's not just one little place.

It's just all over the place. Bubblegum sticking on it here. Some drunk guy's vomit laying on it here.

Trash and all kinds of junk laying on it here. Cigarette butts laying all over the place. I mean, it was nothing.

And this young man had the idea that, hey, when I get out there, man, it's going to be something. When he got out there, he was greatly disappointed. And let me tell you something, friends.

You will be too. Here's a young man that more than likely laid in his bed at night and said, you know what? My mom and daddy won't let me watch HBO, Hell's Box Office, and Cinemax, and Send to the Max, and David Lettermouth, and Orphan Windbag, and the rest of that mess on TV. So I'll tell you what.

I'll get out of here, and I'll go watch it myself. And so he laid there. He got to the place where his thoughts completely induced his mind.

And the more he thought about it, and the more he thought about it, the more dominating impact it had upon his heart and his life. And, friends, if you're not careful, you'll think about something so much that you'll end up doing it. Now, you please hear me tonight.

It is not a sin to be tempted. But when opportunity and temptation meet on the road of life, you better look out. And the devil's always going to make dead sure that Mr. Temptation and Mr. Opportunity come around the same bin at the same time.

And here was a young man that thought about it. And he said, man, mom and daddy won't let me do it, but bless God, I'll just go out and sow my wild oath, and I will do it myself. The Bible says that when he got out there, he found out it wasn't all that it was cracked up to be.

It wasn't all the newspapers made it sound to be, young people. It wasn't all that the Hollywood stars and the people on TV and MTV and all this kind of stuff. It wasn't at all what they had portrayed it.

It was real out there. You see, what comes on the screen is not real. It's kind of proliferated.

It's made up. It's made to do. And I'm going to tell you something, friend.

When he got out there, he found out, hey, this ain't a sitcom. This ain't a sitcom. This is a mess.

This is a cesspool. And the Bible says he was greatly, greatly disappointed that he ever left his father's house to begin with. Now, I would do you tonight a great injustice if I said, all right, heads bowed, eyes closed, we're going to the house.

Because we've painted a pretty dismal picture about this young man. I mean, we've made him out to look pretty wicked, pretty vile. And can I remind you, I'm not going to let you off the hook.

If you are a backslider, now, as a God, you are being wicked. You are being vile. You are being ungodly.

But I'm glad the story doesn't stop there. I'm glad, thank God, we got verse number 24. Verse number 20 through 24.

Look at verse number 20, would you please? My Bible says in verse number 20, and he arose. Now, wait a minute. Who put him down there? Did his daddy drag him out of the house and say, son, you are out of here.

Go to a hog pen. No, he found himself in the hog pen and he had to find himself out of the hog pen. And so the Bible says in verse number 20, and he arose and came to his father.

But when he, the young man, was yet a great way off, his father saw him. Huh, he must have been looking, huh? And had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven in thy sight.

Had him no more words to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe and put it on him. And put a ring in his hand and shoes on his feet and bring his with a fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry.

But as my son was dead and his alive again, he was lost and is found, and they, the people of the household, they began to be merry. This is in closing, and which is the moment we go to the house, what I

call the delight. Oh, he had to consider the distance.

Oh, it took him a long ways. He had to experience friendly disposal. Wasted all of his substance on riotous living.

When he had spent all, every dime that he had in his pocket, all of it. And then he had to consider the fact that now he desired, he began to be in want. Oh, he was a beggar.

He wanted something. Somebody that had everything and lost everything because of his wicked lifestyle. Then he had that time of disappointment when he realized what a foolish, foolish young man he really was.

He had that time of desertion when everybody left him. But I'm glad we also got this time of delight. Because one day he was laying in that hog pen.

And by the way, let me show you just how far sin will take you. Can I remind you who's giving this story? It's Jesus. Can I remind you who he's giving it to? He's giving it to Jews.

Now, you read your Bible, my dear friend. You're going to find out something. That Jews and swine did not mix.

They didn't eat swine. They didn't feed swine. They didn't touch swine.

They didn't talk about pigs. And here's a young Jewish boy, not only talking about them, he's living with them and eating what they eat. Now, don't you tell me sin won't take you a long ways from God, friend, because it will.

And so one day he stood up. Maybe he got himself a little mirror that he found somewhere. He spit on that mirror and he dusted off and he looked himself in the face, realized what a fool that he really was.

And he said, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. Bless God, I'm going to dust off my dirty duds, I'm going to fix my tennis shoes, and I'm going back to the house. He said, I'm sick of this mess.

I know my daddy will take me. Hey, he must have known that his daddy would take him back since he knew he was going to go back to the house. He didn't go farther into the world.

No, he thought to himself, it might be a bad situation. I might get my tail tore up when I get back, but I'm going back because I know daddy will take me back. And so he got up and the Bible says that he began to rehearse a little speech.

I don't know, maybe he pulled out a little piece of paper, maybe he started writing it down. And so he memorized that thing. And all day long he rehearsed that thing and rehearsed that thing until he got it just down just right like he wanted.

Every syllable, every vowel. I mean, just perfect. And so he made his long trip home.

So how did he know it was long? The Bible says he was in a park up there. He wasn't next door. And so he made his long, dusty road trip all the way back to the house.

And before he even got home... Boy, I like this. The Bible says that while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him. And I'm going to tell you something, friends.

I'm not going to take liberties with the Bible. I'll let the text and the Word of God speak for itself. But you'll never convince me as a preacher in a million years that his father did not sit on that porch every day just waiting for his son to come home.

My Bible tells me in Hebrews 13, God will get tired of your mess. He'll cut off your day of grace and kill you and take you to heaven because he can get a whole lot more glory from you up there than he can down here. You say, well, I just don't believe God will do that.

Hey, friend, visit the hospital sometime. And you visit some places where some of God's people got involved in sin and you'll see that they would not get right. They would not get right.

They would not get right. And so God just went ahead and killed them and took them to heaven. You say, whew.

And I'll tell you what, brother, that lets me off the hook because man alive, God don't spank me. God don't bother me. That's because God don't spank the devil's children.

God spans one group of people, friend, and that's saved people. He don't bother with the devil's crowd. Oh, he'll convict you and try to get you right with God, but if you want to consist in your reprobation and consist in your wickedness and your violence, hey, that's fine.

God is not going to correct the lost person, but you better believe he'll take your tail to the woodshed if you're a child of God. And if God never wears you out, I definitely need to know what kind of pills you're on because he wears me out all of the time. I mean, I've got trap marks all over me where God beats me upside the head.

I mean, he takes me to the woodshed, friend, and wears me out sometimes. But he gets me home. And here was a man that knew his son was going to come home.

Didn't know how long it would be, but knew he would be there. And the Bible says, while it was yet a great way off, his father saw him. The Bible says that he ran, had compassion on him, and he fell on his neck and kissed him.

You know what's interesting? That boy started quoting that speech and didn't even get to finish it. He said, Father, I've sinned against heaven and thy sight and no more will I be called thy son. He said, Stop right there.

I don't want to hear another word. He said, Hey, servant, bring forth a bestrobe and put it on him. Put shoes on his feet.

Kill a fatted calf. Hey, don't just go get some chicken or some goat or some turkey. Man, you kill a fatted calf, we're going to have ourselves a feast.

For this my son was dead, and is alive again. He was lost and is found. The Bible says, they began to be merry.

Everybody in the house was excited except one person, his brother. And there's always going to be somebody that gets mad, rolls their eyes, and blows that when you come back to God, but that don't make any difference, friend. You need to come back anyhow in spite of the crowd.

And there was somebody that got mad, but oh, the father was rejoicing. And the father was excited. And you know what I'm glad about? I'm glad his father didn't just stop him right there and pitch him up by his holsters and say, Son, I'm going to ask you a question right now.

You give me the name of every harlot you've ever been in. You tell me every place you've ever bought cigarettes. You better tell me every liquor store, every Bud Light, Michelob, Miller Light, High Life, Low Life, whatever it was.

You better tell me every place you drank, and you're going to work that money off for 15 years, and bless God, you're grounded until you are 38 years old. You daddies heard that before. You're grounded until you're 38 years old, and you're going to walk around the house, and you're not going to remember what you did to your dad.

So it was enough that he just came home. It was enough that he just came home. He didn't hoard it over him.

He didn't lord it over him and put it up in his face and say, Hey, everybody, look here. Look at this public spectacle. Look what my son's done to my family now.

No, he didn't do that at all. He had compassion on him. Kissed him.

He was just glad his son ever came back to this world. Let me give you this illustration I'm through. My mother, every now and then when I was a kid, did discipline me somewhat.

But I wasn't disciplined because I would not call my mother a disciplinarian. She's just that way. But my grandfather, he was a disciplinarian.

He was in World War II. And my granddaddy was the kind of fella, he wouldn't worry about a belt. He wouldn't worry about a whole lot of things.

His favorite thing was to use with a switch, and I'll tell you about that in a minute. But my granddaddy was one of those fellas, if it was in reaching distance, he'd beat the devil out of you with it. I don't care if it was a 2x4.

I don't care if it was a tire iron. I don't care if it was a tire. I mean, if he could get it and you kicked him off, he'd bust your tail with that thing, and friend, you wouldn't know that my granddaddy got the whole thing.

And so, I remember one day, I was probably, I don't remember how old I was. I was young. I was anywhere from 6 to 8 years old, all right, somewhere in that time frame.

I'll never forget, my granddaddy was staring in the mirror in Mountain View, Tennessee, and I was living with him for some time when I was a little child. And I used to go to all the weekends, but I remember he's shaving in the mirror. Had one of them little plastic towel racks, you know, that was stuck to the wall and had the towels on it.

And I was in there just swinging around like a little monkey, you know, just having myself a good time. I'll never forget, my granddaddy just kept on shaving. He just kept looking in the mirror.

I'll never forget. He said, boy, if you break it, I'm going to wear you out. That's all he said.

That's all he had to say. He said, boy, if you break it, I'm going to wear you out. And he just kept on shaving.

He walked out of the room. He wasn't gone 30 seconds until that thing came out of the wall. Now immediately, I thought to myself, here I am, 6, 7, and 8. I'll never live.

I'll never live to be 9, 10, or 11. I knew he was going to kill me. I didn't know what I was going to do.

I did know this much. I did know that where it came out, it left some holes. And I did know that it was kind of kind of gluey and kind of sticky.

And so, I got some wash rags out of the closet. I was trying to be as quiet as I could, you know, mission impossible, you know, and I shut the door and I grabbed these rags and I started getting them all wet and I started soaking the wall. I mean, the water was dripping down in an old white paint.

I started soaking it, trying to get that stuff sticky again. I picked up that thing, stuck it to the wall, back to the ground. I thought, all right, let's go to plan 2 here.

Leave it in the floor, shut the door, turn out the light, and sit down and pretend like you don't know one thing going on. So I did. I walked in the living room.

I sat down in the chair. I started watching TV. My heart was about to beat out of my chair.

I thought to myself, I thought my toenails were going to curl up and come out of my tennis shoes. I started getting sweaty. I couldn't hardly talk and all of a sudden, my granddaddy stood up.

Now, my granddaddy very rarely, ever, ever went to the restroom for anything consecutively. I mean, usually it's 2 or 3 hours, 2 or 3 days, whatever it was. And all of a sudden, he stood up and I thought to myself, I know, I know he's not going to the bathroom.

Man, out of the providence of God, he started walking down that hall. I heard him turn right. I heard him flip on the light and I heard him shut the door.

Now, for about 5 minutes, he didn't say a word. And I thought, man alive, he's going backwards. What in the world's going on? He couldn't even see a thing land right there on the floor.

And so, I started feeling pretty good about myself. I started sweating up a bit. Started standing up and stretching, saying, all right, man, he didn't say a thing, you know.

All of a sudden, I heard the most vile curse word that could ever come from a man's mouth. I'm talking about worse than any 4-letter word you've ever heard in your life. I mean worse than any swear word, any vow that you could ever give.

I mean, I will never forget the wicked, ungodly words that fell from my granddaddy's lips. I will never forget it until the day I die. And if you will allow me very reverently tonight, I'm going to share it with you.

With his lungs uplifted, he simply let out the big curse word, boy. And I knew when he said, boy, I was in a whole heap of trouble for him. My granddaddy came walking out there.

He did something I could not stand. He would reach in his pocket and pull out his pocket knife. I said, oh, I didn't mean to do it that bad, you know.

But he'd pull out his pocket knife and open up and he'd say, son, go down to the oak tree and get me a switch. Now, does he really think I'm going to go cut a switch that's going to hurt? I'm a six-year-old kid. Give me a branch.

So he gives me a pocket knife. I get all started, you know. I go down there and cut some little old switch about as long as a pinch, you know.

I come bring it back to him. I'd make him so mad, he'd go out and get a saw and cut the cotton-picking branch off the tree, friend. I'm talking about a baseball bat with legs.

He'd come in there. He'd chase me all over the house. I'd jump on the bed.

He'd beat me on the bed. I'd get under the bed. He'd beat me under the bed.

I'd jump in the shower, beat me in the shower. He'd run me outside. He'd run me inside.

I thought I'd jump in the deep freeze. He'd have jumped in there and beat my tail too, friend. I mean, he wore me slam out.

And I got the marks on my legs. The group just did it. But I mean, he wore me out, friend.

I mean, oh, but you know what? I learned two things from that. The first reason I know, the first reason I know he did it was because he loved me. He didn't want me to grow up and have ill character.

He didn't want me to grow up and be an N-grade and just break stuff and walk off and be a liar and a cannibal, a thief. And so he did it because he loved me. And by the way, the Bible says that God chastens those whom he loves and scourges every son that he receives.

But the second thing that I gleaned from that is this, I never forgot it. I never one time forgot it. And you know what? That's been a long time ago and I never broke a tower rack fence.

Not one. I've not cut a switch out of a tree leather. I've had bad dreams about it but I've never cut one.

And I'm going to tell you something, friends. When God Almighty chastens you, you won't forget it any time soon. But the reason he does it is because he loves you.

If he don't do it, I'd be real concerned and real worried about my genuine salvation experience. Because God chastens those whom he loves. And tonight, in light of all these things we looked at, friends, you better make some real concrete solutions and considerations before you start packing your bags and walking away from the Father's house.

Because you might be on a day's journey and find yourself a thousand miles from where you ever wanted to be. And tonight, my dear friend, I beg you in God's dear name, do not be a prodigal. Your heads are bowed.

Your eyes are closed, please. There's no... Your heads are bowed. Your eyes are closed.

Our instruments are coming. I'm going to ask you tonight to play Lord, I'm Coming Home. I've wandered far away from home but Lord, I'm Coming Home.

I want them to play that and sing that in just a moment. But tonight, in the solemnness of this moment, allow the Spirit of God just begin to speak to your heart. Let me talk right first to our dear sinner friends, meaning those that have never genuinely been saved by the grace of God.

Can I ask you this tonight? You'd say, Brother Locke, in light of this message, to be honest with you, I never left the Father's house and I was never a prodigal because I've never been a member of the Father's house. I've never been made a child of God. I'm not in God's family.

I'm not part of the church that the Bible talks about. I've never been saved. I've never been born again.

And tonight, the Spirit of God has shown me my utter desperate need for the Savior. Oh, Brother Locke, I don't want to die and go to hell. I don't want to live a life of misery and sin and regret.

Tonight, I'd like to repent of my sins, ask Jesus Christ to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior. And tonight, Brother Locke, I'm a man, a woman, a boy, a girl, a teenager. Front to back, to left to the right.

And you'd say tonight, Brother Locke, would you please pray for me? That's all I'll do for you and I won't call you out. I won't make you stand up and say anything, but I do want to pray for you. We do want to help you.

You'd say tonight, Brother Locke, I really don't know that I'm part of the family of God. I've never really in my life ever truly believed on Jesus Christ, who by the way, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life and no man cometh unto the Father but by me. Would there be one simply here tonight, before I deal with God's people, would there be one who would slip up their hand and say, Brother Locke, tonight, tonight, I need to be saved.

Right now. Very quickly, right this very moment, quickly and quietly. You just slip up your hand high enough for me to see it.

You can put it up and put it right back down. You can put it up and put it right back down. Is there one, is there any tonight who would say, Brother Locke, tonight, I need to be converted.

I need to be born again. Oh dear friend, don't play games with God. Don't roll the dice on God because no doubt one day you'll hit the wrong numbers and you'll wake up in hell.

Oh dear friend, please. Would there be one tonight, Brother Locke, you pray for me, I need to be saved. Let me ask this, by the non-uplifting of anyone's hand, that tells me that you're saying you're all saved.

I hope that's true. You can lie to me, you can lie to the preacher, but you can't lie to God for he knows everything about you. But you'd say tonight, Brother Locke, I am saved by the grace of God, but in one of the points, and I'm not going to rehearse them, in one of the points of the message tonight, the Spirit of God indelibly laid something upon my heart and preacher, would you pray for me? I'm a child of God, but I'm not as close to God as I should be.

I'm not close to the Father's house like I know I should be. And tonight, the Spirit of God spoke to my heart and Brother Locke, in my life, there's a need, would you pray for me as a child of God? Right now I want you to put up your hand and the Spirit of God spoke to your heart. God bless you.

God bless you many. Put them up and put them down. Everyone standing please.

No one's looking, no one's talking, but everyone's standing.

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