



Small Group Leader Guide

"The Brother Who Stays"

Luke 15:25–31; Ephesians 2:8–9

SERMON SUMMARY

This week, we explored the perspective of the older brother in the story of the Prodigal Son. Often, we equate our worth with our actions, leading to feelings of exhaustion and resentment when we believe love is earned rather than given freely. Through reflecting on Ephesians 2:8–9, we learned that God's love is a gift that we don't have to strive for, and we're invited to experience the deep peace that comes from knowing we are loved just as we are.

KEY TEACHING POINTS

- Resentment often stems from believing that love is conditional and must be earned.
- God's grace is abundant and doesn't diminish when someone else receives love or forgiveness.
- Our identity should not be built on our performance but on the unconditional love of the Father.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What stood out to you in Bob's message about the older brother's experience?
- 2 In Luke 15:25–31, how do you think the older brother's feelings mirror our own experiences of striving?
- 3 Can you identify a time when you felt unseen despite your efforts? What was that like for you?
- 4 How do the ideas in Ephesians 2:8–9 change the way you view your worth and God's love?
- 5 Have you ever felt that your obedience felt heavy? How did that affect your relationship with God?
- 6 What does it look like in your life to live free from comparison and striving?
- 7 What's one step you can take this week to remind yourself of God's unconditional love?
- 8 How can we support one another in letting go of performance and embracing grace together?

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APPLICATION STEPS

1. Write a note to someone you feel you've been comparing yourself to; express your gratitude for them without comparing achievements.
2. Spend some time journaling about moments you've felt the need to earn love — how can you shift that mindset this week?
3. Choose one day this week to consciously rest from striving. Notice how you feel and write about that experience.

CLOSING PRAYER

"Lord, as we close our time today, we commit to embracing your grace in our lives. Help us release the weight of striving and comparison. May we be reminded this week that your love is a gift. Give us courage to take actionable steps towards resting in that truth. In Jesus' name, Amen."