

Lessons of Life (The Prodigal Son)

There are three ways of learning in the school of life: **Education, Examples, and Experience.**

- **Education** involves teachers and different forms of media.
 - **Examples** involves learning from other's experiences.
 - **Experience** involves gaining knowledge by doing for one's self.
- * The two stories of the prodigal son are learning about the sinful life and a lesson in the importance of his relationship with his father.
- * The healthiest way to learn about sin is through education (IE. teaching and reading the Bible) or examples (seeing other's failures).
- * The saddest way to learn about sin (personal experience). We do not need to experience sin in order to learn about it.
- * The prodigal son learned three lessons that centered around the misery of, and the deceitfulness of, sin.

(Heb.3:13) But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

1. Lesson 1: Sin promises life but brings death.

It starts by promising pleasure, but soon turns to pain. Heb. 11:24-25

- Sin promises life but brings death. Vs.24 For this son of mine was dead ...
- Sin kills everything in us. The conscience, intelligence, the will (it paralyzes us). James 1:15

2. Lesson 2: Sin promises freedom but brings slavery.

The prodigal son was sick and tired of being at home under another's authority. His attitude was don't fence me in; don't tie me down.

- Everyone has a master. Mt.6:24
- Sin promises freedom but brings slavery of the worst kind.
- Sin says do what you want to do, enjoy what you want to enjoy.
- Sin ignores being what God wants you to be.

3. Lesson 3: Sin promises success and brings failure.

Here is God's success formula.

(Mt.25:21) His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

Sin says go find yourself and live all experiences until you do. You will become more enlightened. Gen.3:7.

In yielding yourself to Christ, you find yourself, your purpose, your destiny. When yielding yourself to sin, you become everybody else. Sin conforms. Rm.12:2

So, what did the Prodigal Son learn? **Sin does not keep its promises.**

In this lesson we see both immaturity and maturity at work. The prodigal claimed he was mature all the while he was choosing immaturity.

4. False marks of maturity:

- **Indifference** I don't care what my father thinks. Mature people care what others think.
- **Independent** Father, give me my inheritance.
- **Impatience** He gathered all his belongings and left. (Vs 12-13)
- **Indulgence** He wasted his belongings.

The prodigal confused popularity with success.

The prodigal son's immaturity didn't allow him to see the difference between price and value. There are those that know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Notice the two requests of the prodigal son.

- Vs.12 Father give me (immature)
- Vs.19 Father make me (mature)

This prayer asks the father to fulfill in me what YOU want.

The prodigal son learned the meaning of misery (about sin),

- A lesson of maturity (about himself)
- A lesson of grace (about his father).

For the carnal believer, restoration involves confession of sin and a repentance which involves "drawing to God" and coming home.

- Vs 18 "I will get up and go **to my Father**. **Rm.2:4** Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"