

## Coming Home: The Invitation

Scripture used: [Luke 15:11-31 \(NLT\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon concluded the Coming Home series this week. The story of the Prodigal Son continues to take on added significance with this final message tying together the major points from the last five weeks. We have learned about toxic relationships, and toxic expectations of healthy relationships. We have learned about rebuilding relationships when people return into our lives. We have learned to recognize destructive selfishness in our lives. We have learned about God the Father's house of grace. And we have learned about toxic guilt and shame. Now we learn about three invitations that help us move beyond the mistakes of both sons in the parable. The older son represents self-righteous perfectionism and all the consequences of that attitude when it takes hold of our lives. The younger son represents the person with "obvious" sins and then accepts the need to turn from that path. For both, their deepest need is met by God's invitation to come home into His house of grace.

### KEY POINTS

- 1. Invitation #1, Give grace to yourself and others.** This is where the older son struggles. He shows all the signs of perfectionism, including being hard on himself and others. He allows no room for any mistakes, and acts as if he can actually achieve perfection in this world. This is the attitude of the religious leaders and scholars, who try to earn their way into God's Kingdom. In [James 2:10 \(NIV\)](#) we are reminded that breaking even one law is basically the same as breaking all the laws. None of us can avoid sin, and that is okay, because God's grace is there to cover our shortcomings. The father in the story sees that his older son is upset and goes out to the field to plead with him, and he invites him into the house to celebrate the return of his younger brother, but perfectionism gets in the way. The older son is hard on himself but also his brother and his father. He won't relax his standards. He is struggling to accept grace.
- 2. Invitation #2, Accept God's amazing grace.** In [Luke 15:20-24 \(NLT\)](#), the father runs out to his younger son as soon as he sees him coming towards the house. That is how eager God (the Father) is to welcome each of us home any time we stray from Him. The father calls for a robe, a ring, sandals, and even a fatted calf. He doesn't even wait for his son to take a bath! This is the unconditional grace that God extends toward us, but it isn't the whole story. We need to accept the grace that's been offered. The son had to put on the robe, ring, and sandals, and then go to the party to eat the fatted calf. That was a difficult choice, because the son knew how much he had sinned. We are all tempted to try to prove ourselves or earn the grace that God freely gives us.
- 3. Invitation #3, Be a dispenser of God's grace in the world.** Pastor Hurmon created an acronym to help us remember a set of steps we can follow. It is based on the word GRACE, and it illustrates a path to become an instrument of Jesus.
  - a. G = Gratitude** for everything we've received from God. There are many blessings in our lives.
  - b. R = Releasing** resentment and other negative emotions, creating space for the positive.
  - c. A = Accepting** imperfection and the process of growing by making mistakes.
  - d. C = Cultivating** kindness both for ourselves and for others.
  - e. E = Extending** compassion in the way we behave.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - Is there a part of your life where you struggle with perfectionism? God has equipped us spiritually to handle every kind of difficult situation. Every relationship can be blessed if we allow ourselves to be guided spiritually through the scriptures. This whole series has shown us concrete ways to handle difficult situations, in this case perfectionism.
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - Jesus told this parable knowing that most people would focus on one of the brothers as "good" and the other as "bad" but that is not the point. Both sons needed to hear and accept the invitation from their father to enter his house of grace. We may identify more with the perfectionist older brother or the prodigal brother, but neither one is better than the other. In fact, we may identify with both of them at different times. When in your life do you identify with each son? What were the obstacles for each of them to say yes to God's grace? What are the obstacles for you to say yes to God's grace?
- 3) DO** - For more practical teaching on how to be an instrument of grace, watch [Acts of Kindness](#) and [Made For This](#) and let these messages help you transform your life. Join us next Sunday!