

Every House Has Its Trials!

There's no such thing as a perfect family, which is why we have the saying that "every house has its trials." In the following parable of the prodigal (lost) son told in Luke 15 (which is generally regarded as the best short story ever written), tension existed between the father and his two sons. This short story can be divided into four sections, so we will pause here over the next few days. Enjoy!

Luke 15 (parable—episode 1)

¹¹Jesus continued, 'There was a man who had two sons.

Tension: Tension between father and son.

¹²The younger son spoke to his father. He said, 'Father, give me my share of the family property.' So the father divided his property between his two sons.

Relief of Tension: Looking for 'greener' pastures.

¹³Not long after that, the younger son packed up all he had. Then he left for a country far away. *There he wasted his money on wild living.*

Result: Misfortune and disillusionment

¹⁴He spent everything he had.

'Then the whole country ran low on food. So the son didn't have what he needed. (NIRV)

The opening sentence of this wonderful short story is short and sweet: "There was a man who had two sons." The youngest of these sons yearned for excitement in his life. He wanted to have a bit of fun. He was a real party animal. However, to do this, he needed money, so he approached his dad with a strange and surprising request: "Father, give me my share of the family property" (v. 12). By making this request, the young man revealed that he wished his father were dead. The father's reaction was just as strange and surprising: "So the father divided his property between his two sons" (v. 12).

In other words, the father allowed his young son to go. He knew that there was only one way that he would learn his lesson—the hard way! Sadly enough, the younger son went looking for things that were already present in his father's house. He went looking for joy, security, love and his place in life. To put it bluntly, he went looking for a home away from home! Nor did he keep the backdoor open so that he could return.

Misfortune and disillusionment awaited the young man in the foreign places he visited. Two disasters hit him simultaneously: first he ran out of money (which, of course, was his own fault), and then famine hit the land (which was beyond his control but nevertheless aggravated his situation). This young man lacked wisdom. Wisdom will help us to not become totally disillusioned.