

## This Is Too Good to Be True!

We often use phrases such as “this is too good to be true” when we react to something wonderful that happens in our lives. In the following passage in Luke, we have an episode that is also too good to be true. Let’s have a look!

### Luke 15 (parable—episode 3)

*Tension: A waiting father.*

<sup>20</sup>While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled with tender love for his son. He ran to him. He threw his arms around him and kissed him.

*Relief of Tension: The prodigal (lost) son shows remorse.*

<sup>21</sup>The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.’

*Result: His father forgives him.*

<sup>22</sup>But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>Bring the fattest calf and kill it. Let’s have a big dinner and celebrate.

<sup>24</sup>This son of mine was dead. And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found.’

’So they began to celebrate. (NIRV)

The youngest son must have returned home with a fearful heart, wondering: *What will my father say?* Yet it is interesting to note that the father did five things before he even said *anything* to him. According to verse 20, these five reactions were:

1. He saw his son while he was still a long way off—which means that he had waited for him all the time!
2. He pitied him deeply—his eyes were not filled with anger but with tears.
3. He ran to meet him—he took the initiative.
4. He embraced him—the prodigal son experienced unconditional love.
5. He kissed him—this was considered undignified conduct for an Oriental father, but it did not bother him to act in this way because the news about his son’s return was overwhelming.

In this manner, the father eased his son’s final steps on his return. When his son expressed remorse (v. 21), the father did not answer directly but arranged a feast for him. The father’s actions indicated that he had forgiven his son. In this parable, the prodigal son represents the sinners and tax collectors. The father is God. God is the father who always rejoices when someone who went astray returns home, shows remorse and confesses. The prodigal son’s fear was unnecessary, because he was greeted with a feast instead of rejection. This seems too good to be true. But fortunately this is true, because God always shows mercy toward repentant sinners. Hallelujah!



Lord, I want to praise and glorify You for showing me so much mercy. Thank You that I can know that You always wait to receive me with open arms.

*Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.*  
—Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), *Irish poet and dramatist*