

READING

The Prodigal Son



LEVEL K

The Prodigal Son



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Once there was a man who had two sons. The older son worked hard helping his father on the farm. But the younger son didn't like farm work. He wanted to leave the farm.

The young man knew that when his father died, he would inherit a lot of money, but he didn't want to wait. He wanted the money now.

"Father," he said, "I would like my share of your estate. I want to leave home now."

His father was sad because he loved the young man very much. He didn't want him to leave home. But he gave the money to him anyway. It was a lot of money.





The young man packed enough clothes and food for a long journey. Then he set off for a country far away.

He walked and walked. He slept under the stars at night. He ate the food he had packed. He hurried to get far away from home.

Soon the young man was so far away that he knew no one could find him. His father wouldn't know where he was. His brother wouldn't know where he was. His friends and neighbors wouldn't know where he was.

The young man was happy that he was far from home. "Now, I can do as I please," he said. "I don't have to listen to my father anymore!"

Because of his long journey, all his food was gone. He needed new clothes and new sandals, too.

So the young man began to spend the money his father had given him. He bought new clothes. He bought new sandals. He ate whatever he wanted, even if he knew it wasn't good for him.

The young man had so much money that he didn't think he needed to work. He thought the money from his father would last forever.





The young man began to go to parties where he met many new people. He would stay up late, eating and drinking. Soon he began to spend all his time and money on his new friends. They would go from party to party and he would buy them whatever they wanted.

But one day, the young man realized his money was nearly gone. He stopped buying things for his friends. He stopped spending money on their food and drinks. When they found that he had no more money to spend, his new friends deserted him. The young man was left all alone.

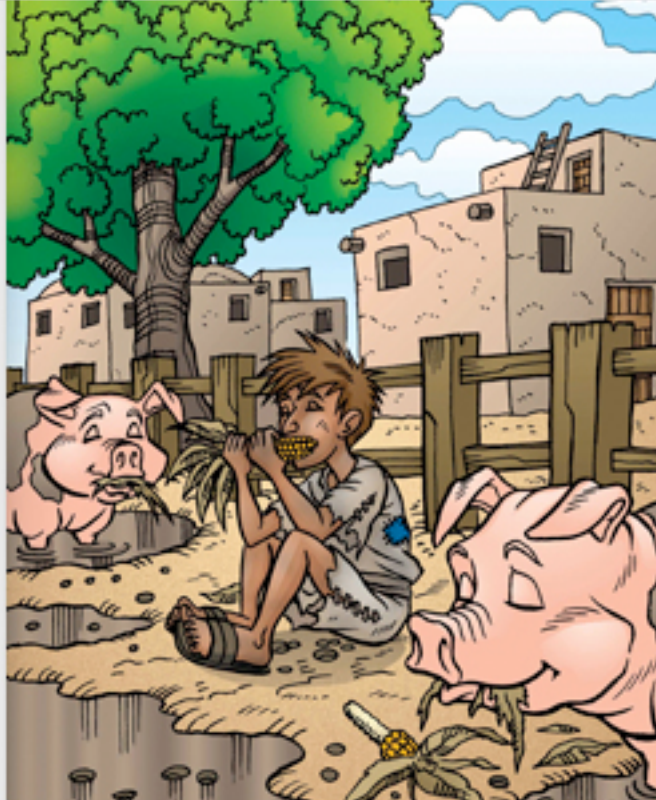
Then one morning, the money from his father was all gone. The young man had no more friends. His clothes were ragged and his sandals were worn. He had nowhere to sleep. He had nothing to eat. And there was no one around to help him.

The young man had to find something to eat. He walked out of town and down the road. Stopping at a farm, the young man knocked on the door. "Do you need a helper?" he asked. The farmer looked at the young man. "Yes," he said, "I guess you can take care of my pigs."

So the young man began taking care of the pigs. He took them into the fields. He watched them eat husks of corn. It was hot, dirty work. The young man was so hungry that he ate some of the husks himself.

One day, he asked himself, "What am I doing here?" He remembered what it was like in his father's house. He remembered the good food and the fine clothes. He remembered the beautiful house.

Most of all, he remembered his loving father. He began to miss his father very much.





Then the young man thought, "My father's servants have enough to eat. They have a place to sleep. They have nice clothes to wear. The servants in my father's house have a much better life than this!"

So the young man decided to go home. He would tell his father about the wasted money. He would ask his father to treat him as one of the servants.

The young man started the long journey home. He walked and he walked. He was very tired and very hungry. As he walked, he wondered if his father still cared about him. He wondered if his father would let him stay.

Finally, the young man saw his father's house in the distance. He began to walk slower and slower. What would his father think? Would his father be angry and send him away?

But the young man's father saw him coming down the road. He had been watching that road every day! The father jumped to his feet and ran out to meet his son. He threw his arms around him and hugged him.

"Father," said the young man, "I have sinned. I don't deserve to be called your son."

But the father was too happy to listen. "My son, my son," he cried, "you have come home! You were lost and now you are found. You were dead and now you are alive!"





The father gave his son new clothes and good food to eat. He held a great feast. He invited all his friends and neighbors to come and help him celebrate. They were happy for the father, for his lost son had come home!