



"Look! All these years I've been slaving for you..."

- Luke 15:29

Elder Brother (1959) | Colored Woodblock Print | Jan Shoger



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## Go Deeper . . .

*Use these questions for further study individually or in a small group*

**Read Luke 15:11-32** paying special attention to the story of the older son.

Luke 18:9 refers to people who were “confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else.” This is a fitting description for the older brother and for Jesus’ audience. Ironically, a life focused on obedience and service can sometimes lead to such attitudes.

Consider your own heart, is there anywhere a life of faithfulness has led to pride? Has it led you to view others with contempt? Has it bred a sense of bitterness toward God? - Humbly confess any of these areas and ask for forgiveness knowing that God is gracious and generous.

The older brother was upset by the welcome given to the younger son.

Have you ever resented someone else when they received forgiveness, restoration, welcome, or blessing from God?

Why do we sometimes view other people’s gain as our loss?

How do such behaviors and attitudes affect God?

The older brother is the only one in the story who isn’t part of the celebration:

Who is keeping him from participation in the gifts of the father?

What is necessary for him to be able to join the party?

The “righteous” people in Luke 15:1 are upset by seeing all the “wrong” people welcomed by Jesus. Who might you be upset to see welcomed into the church? Why? (be honest with yourself) What sort of “wrong” people can you begin building bridges toward and sharing Jesus’ Gospel love with?

### **Engaging the Story through Art and Prayer:**

Use the print on the other side to enter into Jesus’ parable in a new way. Begin in prayer and dedicate this time to Jesus, asking for his Holy Spirit to be present and to guide your heart, soul, and mind.

Spend a few minutes sitting with the picture. What do you notice? What do you see in the face and eyes of the older brother? What about his hands and body? Has the father turned his back on the brother, or the brother on the father? What stands between the father and older brother?

Sit in prayer and listen. What, if anything, might God be inviting you to notice about yourself or about God? Is there any other invitation from the Spirit?

Close your time by thanking God for his great love and compassion.

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