

The Stranger at Home

Scripture Reading — Luke 15:25-32

The older brother became angry and refused to go in. . . . He answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. — Luke 15:28-29

The older brother was upset! Of course he was. Ever since he was young, he had worked on his father's farm, without ever asking for any kind of recognition. But when his good-for-nothing brother came home penniless after squandering his inheritance, his father not only welcomed him with open arms but even put on a banquet to celebrate. It was too much.

No matter how much the father pleaded with him, the older son refused to join the celebration. Like the Pharisees who served God out of a sense of duty, the older son had served his father—not out of devotion but because he felt he had to. The Pharisees had complained that Jesus welcomed sinners and ate with them (Luke 15:2). Similarly, the older son griped about his father's welcome of his decadent younger brother.

The response of the older son forces us to look at ourselves. Do we serve the Lord with gladness? Do we come to worship because we love the Lord, or out of a sense of duty? Do we give cheerfully or because it is expected of us? Are we willing, like God the Father, to forgive people in our lives who have hurt us? Do we understand that we are as much in need of forgiveness as the younger son, even though we may not have left for a distant country?

Prayer

Lord, our God, help us to search our hearts, to serve you with gladness, and to truly rejoice when a sinner comes back to you—because of Jesus. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Doctrine](#), [Forgiveness](#), [Life](#), [Emotions](#), [Joy](#), [Christian Life](#), [Seeking God](#)

Written by Arthur Schoonveld — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/arthur-j-schoonveld>

<https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/the-stranger-at-home>

Printed on August 8, 2020

