

Prodigal: The Limitless Love of a Gracious Father

A 5-Session Journey into the Heart of Redemption, Identity, and Grace
By Dr. Matthew Webster



■ **How to Use This Course: *Prodigal* — The Limitless Love of a Gracious Father**

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Welcome to *Prodigal*. This isn't just a study — it's a homecoming. If you've ever questioned your worth, felt distant from God, or struggled with self-righteousness or shame, this course is for you. Whether you've wandered far or never left the church pew, there's a Father running to meet you with open arms.

This course is rooted in the timeless parable of the lost son — but it's about far more than a wayward child. It's about the heart of a Father who doesn't give up on His children, a grace that redefines us, and a love that throws a party when we finally come home.

Each session is designed to walk with you through this transformative story and reveal your place in it — not as a servant, but as a fully loved, forever-restored child of God.

Here's how to make the most of each week:

📖 **1. Weekly Theme + Teaching**

Each session begins with a teaching focus that explores a different facet of the parable, from the younger son's rebellion to the father's compassion to the older brother's struggle.

👉 **What to do:**

- Read slowly and reflectively.
- Ask God what He wants to show you about your own story.
- Let the Spirit highlight the grace you've been missing.

👉 **Why it matters:**

These devotional truths aren't just lessons — they're lifelines. They shift your perspective, center your heart, and invite you into a deeper relationship with the Father.

2. Chapter Reading from the Book

Every week connects to a specific chapter from *Prodigal: Limitless Love of a Gracious Father*. Each chapter unpacks the biblical text with revelation, historical insight, and practical encouragement.

What to do:

- Read with an open heart and a pen in hand.
- Let Scripture speak louder than shame.
- Revisit any parts that stir something in you.

Why it matters:

This book was written with grace on every page — not from theory, but from real, Spirit-led discovery. It will help you see yourself, your Father, and your faith differently.

3. Learning Objectives

Each session offers clear focus points that highlight what you're learning and experiencing.

What to do:

- Preview these before reading.
- Let them guide your reflection and awareness.

Why it matters:

These help you track spiritual transformation, not in perfection, but in progress.

4. Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

You'll be invited to engage your own story in light of God's grace.

What to do:

- Be honest.
- Write freely — not to impress, but to express.
- Let this space be sacred.

Why it matters:

Healing comes when we bring our story into the light of God's truth. These questions are a gateway to clarity, peace, and deeper trust.

5. Prayer Prompt

Each week includes a prayer rooted in the themes of grace, restoration, and identity.

What to do:

- Read it aloud — even if it feels awkward.
- Use it as a starting place to talk with God.
- Return to it throughout your week.

Why it matters:

When you align your words with His heart, you shift from striving to receiving. These prayers are not rituals — they're real invitations into the arms of your Father.

6. Memory Verse

Each verse is selected to help anchor you in truth, especially when the enemy whispers lies.

What to do:

- Memorize it, post it, repeat it.
- Let it be your anchor on hard days.

Why it matters:

God's Word doesn't just inform you — it transforms you. These verses will ground your heart in grace.

7. Group Discussion Questions (Optional)

If you're doing this with others, these questions foster connection, honesty, and healing conversation.

What to do:

- Speak the truth in love.
- Listen deeply.
- Let grace be louder than judgment.

Why it matters:

This story was told in community, and we heal in community. As you share your story, someone else may find the courage to come home, too.

✂ 8. Practical Application (Optional)

Each week offers a simple step of action to embody what you've learned.

👉 What to do:

- Try the challenge.
- Let it stretch your faith, not your performance.
- Journal what happens.

👉 Why it matters:

Grace doesn't just change what you believe — it changes how you live. A single step of obedience can open the door to deep breakthroughs.

🌟 9. Weekly Reflection Prompts

Simple, deep questions to help you carry the week's message with you daily.

👉 What to do:

- Reflect during your quiet time, commute, or prayer walk.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through them.

👉 Why it matters:

These prompts keep your heart tuned to the rhythm of grace.

👉 Final Encouragement

You don't have to earn your way back. You were never disowned.
The Father hasn't stopped waiting, watching, and running toward you.

Take your time. Let the love of God restore what shame tried to steal.
There is room at the table for you. Always.

Welcome home. Grace has already made the way.

💖 **Session 1: Identity Reclaimed – Who Are You in This Parable?**

☀️ **Theme:** From Lost to Loved – Living in the Fullness of Grace

"Your story isn't stuck in the past. You're not the wayward one anymore — you're the Father's restored and beloved child."

This week, we begin by confronting one of the most common misunderstandings in Christian living: continuing to identify with the *wayward son* even after being restored by grace. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus reveals not only the journey of repentance but more powerfully, the Father's radical restoration.

As believers, we've all had a moment when we "came to our senses" — when grace reached us in our mess and pulled us back into the arms of the Father. But many believers still live like outsiders, hoping to earn back what was already restored. This week is about reclaiming your identity: **you are not the lost one anymore — you are the beloved.**

You are fully accepted. You are clothed in righteousness. You are no longer trying to work your way into the Father's love — you live from it.

👉 **Here's the truth for you this week:**

You are not the wayward one. You are the restored child. Grace has changed everything.

👉 Say it aloud: **"I am not lost. I am loved. I am not working to be accepted — I live as the Father's fully restored child."**

📖 **Reading:** Chapter 1 – *Common Misconceptions: Who Are You in This Parable?* Read pages 4-35.

📖 *Luke 15:11-32*

📌 **Key Verses:**

- Luke 15:20
 - Galatians 2:20
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - Romans 8:15-17
 - 1 John 3:1
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 **Prayer Prompt:**

“Father, thank You that I am not defined by my past. I am not the wayward one — I am Your beloved child. Help me to believe this truth when I feel unworthy. Help me live each day in the joy and peace that come from knowing I am secure in You. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”

 **Memory Verse:**

2 Corinthians 5:17-

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

 **Group Discussion Questions:**

Chapter 1 Common Misconceptions: Who are you in this Parable?

1. What makes the Parable of the Prodigal Son unique compared to other parables told by Jesus?

2. Take a few moments to read and reflect on the Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32). What stands out to you in this story?

3. The text suggests that every person can identify with the wayward son at some point in their life. In your journey of faith, how did you come to your senses and receive God's grace?

4. How can Christians sometimes struggle with identifying themselves with their old lives before receiving God's grace? What does it mean to be a "new creation in Christ"?

5. In the parable, why do you think Jesus tells this story to tax collectors and Pharisees? What message is He trying to convey to them?

6. Between the wayward son and the older son, which do you think has the bigger struggle to "come to their senses" and receive God's grace?

✂ Practical Application:

📌 "Mirror Truth" Exercise

Take a sticky note or index card and write this declaration:

"I am not the wayward one. I am a beloved, restored child of God. My identity is secure in Jesus."

Place it on your mirror or somewhere you'll see it daily.

Each morning this week, speak this truth over yourself out loud — even if you don't feel it yet.

Then journal this one question daily:

- ◆ *"How did living in this truth shape my thoughts or actions today?"*

📌 Questions to Carry Into the Week:

- What difference does it make to live as a son or daughter rather than a slave or servant?
 - Where do you still feel the need to "earn" God's love or approval?
 - How would your daily choices change if you truly believed you are fully accepted by the Father?
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💜 **Session 2: The Wayward Journey – Grace in the Far Country**

☀️ **Theme:** No Place Too Far for Grace

"Even in the pigpen of our worst choices, the Father's heart still longs to restore us."

This week, we walk with the younger son into the "far country" — a place marked by rebellion, loss, and desperation. Jesus doesn't sugarcoat the prodigal's choices. He squanders his inheritance, hits rock bottom, and ends up feeding pigs — a detail shocking to Jewish ears. But that's exactly the point.

The far country isn't just about physical distance — it's about spiritual disconnection. It's what happens when we live apart from the Father's presence and try to define life on our own terms. And yet, even there — in the filth, hunger, and regret—grace begins to stir our hearts.

The turning point? "He came to his senses." That moment when truth breaks through the fog of failure and we remember who we are, and whose we are.

👉 **Here's the truth for you this week:**

No matter how far you've gone, grace is already running to meet you. The Father never lost sight of you — even when you lost sight of Him.

👉 Say it aloud:

"There's no place too far for grace. I can always come home."

📖 **Reading:** Chapter 2 – *The Wayward Journey* Read pages 36-63.

📖 *Luke 15:11-16*

📌 **Key Verses:**

- Luke 15:13-16
- Romans 5:8
- Ephesians 2:1-5
- Isaiah 53:6
- Psalm 139:7-10

🧠 **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this week, you will:

 **Prayer Prompt:**

"Lord, thank You that no matter how far I've gone or how lost I've felt, You never gave up on me. Remind me that I can always come home to You. Draw me deeper into Your grace, and let my heart never grow numb to the goodness of Your love. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen."

 **Memory Verse:**

Romans 5:8-

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

 **Group Discussion Questions:**

Chapter 2: The Wayward Journey- Luke 15:11-16

1. Jesus tells the Parable of the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Coin, and then introduces the Parable of the Lost Son. Who do you think Jesus is addressing in these parables, and why is the Parable of the Prodigal Son especially crucial for them to understand?

2. The younger son in the Parable of the Lost Son asks his father for his share of the inheritance. What does this request signify about the son's attitude and relationship with his father?

3. How does the younger son's longing to eat the food meant for the pigs serve as a pivotal moment in the story? What does feeding pigs signify in terms of his journey and realization of where he is currently at in his life?

4. Why do you think no one helped the younger son during his time of need? How might being brought low enable a person to receive grace?

5. How does the younger son's realization that he can only find true help from his father relate to our understanding of seeking God's help in our lives?

✂ Practical Application:

📍 "Spiritual GPS" Mapping Exercise

Take a sheet of paper and draw a "spiritual map" of your journey. Include:

- A place/season that felt like a "far country"

♥ **Session 3: The Homecoming – Welcomed, Robed, and Restored**

☀️ **Theme:** Grace Runs to Meet You

"God doesn't wait for you to earn your way back — He runs to restore what only His grace can give."

This week, we arrive at the turning point of the parable — the homecoming. The younger son, broken and rehearsing his apology, begins the long walk home. What he expects is shame and distance. What he gets is a Father who runs.

In Jewish culture, a dignified man didn't run. But grace throws dignity aside for love. The Father doesn't just accept the son back — He restores him completely: robe, ring, sandals, feast. These aren't pity gifts; they are declarations of sonship.

So often, we come back to God thinking we'll be lucky just to be tolerated. But the truth is, God celebrates your return. Restoration isn't about earning a second chance — it's about walking in your true identity again.

👉 **Here's the truth for you this week:**

God doesn't just forgive you — He restores you. You are not tolerated, you are treasured.

👉 Say it aloud:

"I am welcomed. I am clothed in righteousness. I am fully restored by grace."

📖 **Reading:** Chapter 3 – *The Homecoming* Read pages 64-94.

📖 *Luke 15:17-24*

📌 **Key Verses:**

- Luke 15:20-24
 - Isaiah 61:10
 - Romans 8:1
 - John 1:12
 - Ephesians 1:7
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 **Prayer Prompt:**

“Father, thank You for running toward me with compassion. Thank You for covering me in righteousness, adopting me as Your child, and celebrating my return. Help me to embrace what You’ve freely given, and never again settle for shame. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”

 **Memory Verse:**

Isaiah 61:10-

“He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of His righteousness.”

 **Group Discussion Questions:**

Chapter 3: The Homecoming- Luke 15:17-24

1) What does the phrase “they had food to spare” signify about the father’s household? How does it relate to the concept of abundance and grace?

2) What do you think it means for the younger son to “come to his senses”? How does this moment lead to his decision to return to his father?

3) Why does the son not complete his rehearsed speech about becoming a hired servant?

4) Reflect on the five actions of the father when he sees his son returning. How do these actions symbolize grace?

5) What is the cultural significance of the father running towards his son? How does it challenge traditional expectations of a father's behavior in that cultural context?

6) How does the interruption in the son's speech emphasize the concept of sonship we have in Jesus and the unconditional love of the Father?

7) What do each of the five gifts of grace represent, and what does that mean for you in Christ?

8) Reflect on the significance of the fatted calf being sacrificed. How does it symbolize the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross?

9) What is the connection between the celebration in the Parable of the Lost Son and communion? Think in terms of the sacrifice of Jesus and what it offers to us.

✂ **Practical Application:**

“Celebrate Your Restoration” Challenge

Plan a small, joyful act to celebrate your identity as God’s restored child. Options might include:

- Hosting a gratitude meal (even solo) with a prayer of thanks.
- Writing a letter to yourself from the Father’s perspective.
- Creating a “Grace Keepsake” box with symbols (a ring, robe, or sandals image) that remind you of your restoration.

Choose one and do it this week. Let it mark the truth that your homecoming is worth celebrating.

Questions to Carry Into the Week:

- What does God’s eagerness to restore you say about how He sees you?
- What symbolic “robe” do you need to put on again this week?
- How can your story of coming home inspire someone still far off?

♥ Session 4: The Older Brother – When Grace Offends

☀️ **Theme:** From Earning to Embracing

"Grace is not fair — it's better. And it invites even the self-righteous to come in and dance."

This week, we shift our focus to a character often overlooked — the older brother. While the prodigal wandered into sin, the older son wandered into pride. He stayed close to his father's house but far from his father's heart.

When the younger son returns and is celebrated, the older brother grows bitter. His mindset reveals a performance-based faith: "I've slaved for you... yet you never gave me..." He saw himself more as a servant than a son. The tragedy isn't just his anger — it's that he refuses to join the celebration.

This part of the parable reveals a different kind of lostness: one that hides behind religion, resentment, and rule-keeping. Jesus told this story not just for the prodigals, but for the Pharisees listening, and for us when we forget that grace levels the playing field.

👉 **Here's the truth for you this week:**

Grace is not earned by good behavior or lost by bad decisions — it's received as a gift. And there's room at the table for everyone.

👉 Say it aloud:

"I don't have to earn what God already gave me. I choose grace over resentment."

📖 **Reading:** Chapter 4 – *The Older Brother's Struggle* Read pages 95-118.

📖 *Luke 15:25-30*

📌 **Key Verses:**

- Luke 15:28-30
 - Matthew 23:27
 - Romans 3:23-24
 - Galatians 3:3
 - Hebrews 12:15
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 **Prayer Prompt:**

"Father, thank You for forgiving me for the times I've tried to earn what You already gave freely. Help me let go of comparison and embrace the joy of Your grace, not just for me, but for others. Teach me to celebrate restoration, not resist it. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen."

 **Memory Verse:**

Romans 3:24 -

"...and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

 **Group Discussion Questions:**

Chapter 4: The Older Brother's Struggle- Luke 15:25-30

1) Why do you think Jesus included both the younger and the older son in this parable?

2) Why were the tax collectors often called sinners in first-century Jewish society? Who represented the tax collectors in this parable and why?

3) Why do you think the older son is found working in the fields when the younger son returns?

4) In what ways is the relationship between the older son and the father strained, and what does this reveal about the son's attitude?

5) What is the significance of killing the fattened calf in the context of the parable?

6) What should the older son's attitude be towards a sinner responding to the Gospel, especially if it's his brother?

7) Why do self-righteous individuals struggle to accept grace, and how does this relate to the older son's reaction?

8) In what ways does the older son's attitude reflect the Pharisees' perspective?

9) How does the older son's focus on the younger son's past contrast with the father's perspective of redemption and restoration?

10) How can the concept of undeserved favor (grace) impact our daily lives and the way we treat others?

✂ Practical Application:

 **"Grace Audit" Activity**

Make two columns:

Column A: "I feel I need to earn..."

Column B: "God has already given me..."

Be honest in Column A — list anything you feel you need to achieve to be loved, accepted, blessed, etc.

Then, in Column B, write corresponding truths from Scripture that contradict those lies with grace.

Example:

A. I need to serve more to earn God's approval.

B. I already have God's full approval in Christ (Romans 5:1).

Post this audit somewhere private and revisit it when self-righteousness sneaks in.

 **Questions to Carry Into the Week:**

- Where has religion tried to convince you that you're not enough?

- How would your life change if you stopped comparing your journey to someone else's?

- Who in your life do you need to celebrate rather than judge?

💜 **Session 5: Living in Grace – Walking as the Father’s Child**

☀️ **Theme:** Fully Home, Fully His

"You're not a guest in God's house — you're His beloved child, forever welcomed, always wanted."

This week, we shift our focus to the Father's final words in the parable — a grace-filled reminder spoken not just to the older son, but to all who forget who they truly are.

The Father says, "My son... you are always with me, and everything I have is yours." These are not words of rebuke but of reassurance. The older son didn't need to fight for favor — he already had it. He just didn't realize it.

This scene teaches us that grace is not just what brings the wayward home — it's what empowers the faithful to live as heirs, not as hired hands. The tragedy is not that the older brother served — it's that he served without knowing he was a son. His misunderstanding of his identity robbed him of joy, intimacy, and celebration.

The parable closes with the Father's open invitation: "We had to celebrate... your brother was lost and is found." The story doesn't tell us whether the older brother ever went in. Why? Because Jesus is inviting us to finish the story ourselves.

Will we stay outside in self-righteousness, or will we walk in, clothed in grace, and sit at the table as sons and daughters?

👉 **Here's the truth for you this week:**

You don't have to strive for what's already yours in Christ. Grace restores your identity and gives you full access to the Father's love and provision.

👉 **Say it aloud:**

"I am not a servant trying to earn approval — I am a child fully loved and completely accepted."

📖 **Reading:** Chapter 5 – *Living in Grace as a Restored Child of God* Read pages 119-139.

📖 *Luke 15:31-32*

4. What has God been inviting you to enjoy more fully as His child?

 **Prayer Prompt:**

“Father, thank You that I am no longer a stranger or servant — I am Your child. Let me live from that truth every day. Remind me of what is mine in Christ, and help me walk in joy, peace, and purpose, knowing I belong. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”

 **Memory Verse:**

Galatians 4:7-

“So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are His child, God has made you also an heir.”

 **Group Discussion Questions:**

Chapter 5: Living in Grace as a Restored Child of God- Luke 15:31-32

1. Reflecting on the Parable of the Lost Son, what is something new that you have learned? How might this parable be a catalyst for living in grace?

2. How does the emphasis on grace in Christianity distinguish it from other belief systems? What are some challenges and opportunities in communicating this distinction to people who have differing worldviews? How might this parable be the perfect way for someone to receive the grace God offers through Jesus Christ?

3. Discuss the misrepresentations of God throughout history. How has the character of the father in the parable challenged common misconceptions about God? In what ways can believers contribute to a more accurate representation of God's character?

4. How can believers embody grace in their relationships, daily activities, and decision-making processes? Why was this not possible for the elder son to do?

5. This chapter is full of deeper connections between the Parable of the Prodigal Son and other biblical parables or teachings. Which parable connection stood out to you the most, and how do these connections enrich our understanding of grace and redemption?

6. Explore the challenges of living humbly in a culture that often values performance and achievement. How can believers navigate a performance-driven society while maintaining a humble and grace-centered perspective?

✂ **Practical Application:**

📖 **“Inheritance Activation” Plan**

Create a simple 3-day action plan to live from your spiritual inheritance.

Choose 3 truths from Ephesians 1 or Romans 8 (such as: “I am forgiven,” “I am chosen,” “I am secure,” “I am filled with His Spirit”).

Then for each day:

- Meditate on one truth.
- Write a 1-sentence declaration of it.
- Take one intentional action that reflects that truth (ex: giving grace, praying boldly, setting boundaries, resting guilt-free).

Repeat the cycle weekly or customize it for longer activation.

🧠 **Questions to Carry Into the Week:**

- What would change if you lived every day like a beloved child instead of a spiritual orphan?

- How can you create space this week to enjoy your inheritance in Christ?

- Who around you needs to be reminded that grace is not earned — it's received?

Congratulations on Completing *Prodigal!*

What an incredible journey you've just finished! You've explored the depths of God's love, grace, and redemption — and discovered how priceless you are in His eyes. 🙌

As you close this course, remember: no matter where you've been, no matter what you've done, you have a Father who runs to meet you with open arms. In Jesus, you are clothed in His righteousness and have been restored with His abundant grace.

💡 **Your next step:** Keep walking in this truth daily. Let His love shape your heart, decisions, and relationships.

👏 We are so proud of you for completing *Prodigal!* You're living proof that God's grace transforms and restores.

👉 *Ready for more? Join us in the next course: Living in Victory—*

Stay encouraged, live victorious, and never stop beholding the beauty of your Savior!

Next Course: Living in Victory

Step into the abundant life that Christ has won for you and discover how to live each day in His victory.

Following *Prodigal*, this empowering course will guide you into the fullness of joy, peace, and triumph that are yours through Jesus. Drawing from biblical insights, practical tools, and inspiring examples, *Living in Victory* will help you rise above worry, sadness, and life's challenges by resting in God's grace and daily provision.

In this course, you will:

- Discover how God turns mourning into dancing and sadness into joy through His promises.
- Learn to overcome worry by transforming your concerns into prayers shaped by thanksgiving.
- Unlock the secret of contentment in every circumstance, whether in abundance or in need.
- Experience how God's grace lifts you above fear, doubt, and defeat.
- Recognize God's faithful supply for every need in your life through Christ's riches.
- Be equipped to live boldly, knowing that your victory flows from Jesus' finished work.

Whether you're longing for freedom from fear, contentment in all seasons, or a fresh revelation of God's grace, *Living in Victory* will strengthen your faith and empower you to walk in the fullness of Christ's triumph every day.

Pick up your copy on Amazon.

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