



Life Principles Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God

WALKING AWAY FROM GOD

KEY PASSAGE: Luke 15:11-16 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 3:4-5 | Luke 15:17-20, 30 | James 1:15

SUMMARY:

Our heavenly Father always has our best interests at heart.

Sometimes even believers doubt that the Lord wants to bless us in every situation and circumstance. They start to experiment with disobedience. Before long, they have walked away from God.

Jesus' parable of the prodigal son shows what can happen when Christians rebel against the Lord's will. In it, the younger of two sons asked his father for his share of the inheritance. He then traveled to a distant land and "squandered his estate with loose living" (Luke 15:13). When the inheritance was gone, the young man was forced to hire himself out to feed pigs. Before long, he realized his father's servants lived better than he did. He planned to return home, beg forgiveness, and ask to work as a hired hand. But when he arrived, the father welcomed him as a son and celebrated his homecoming with an extravagant party.

I believe the story illustrates how God feels about believers who choose to walk away from Him. Although He allows them to experience adversity because of their rebellion, He longs for their return and generously offers forgiveness when they repent.

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES:

The Lord will allow you to walk away from Him.

The Lord has given each person limited free will. That means you and I have the ability to rebel

against His purposes for our lives. In response, God may put pressure on us, allow bad things to happen to us, and send adversity into our lives. Under certain conditions, He may prevent us from walking away from Him. At times, however, our heavenly Father lets us ruin our lives.

Why do people walk away from God?

■ **Deception:** Satan deceived Eve into thinking that God was lying to her (Gen. 3:4-5). One way today's believers are misled is through the media. For example, television often sends the message that we have to look a certain way, drive a particular car, make more money, and wear the right clothing to be happy in life.

■ **Fear of missing out:** People sometimes resist God's will because they doubt He has their best interests in mind. For instance, a believer may seek fun and excitement—but look for it in all the wrong places.

■ **A desire for total freedom:** God's laws are for our protection. But many seek complete freedom from exercising any self-control. When they do *what* they want, *when* they want it, to *whomever* they want, they will eventually find death (James 1:15).

■ **An unforgiving spirit:** Some people stop trusting the Lord because they were hurt in the past. Unless they deal with that pain, it will affect every area of their lives.

■ **Denying potential consequences:** People think that they will escape the effects of sin. But none of us can smoke, abuse drugs, or commit sexual immorality and expect to escape the consequences of those choices.

How does rebellion begin?

Walking away from God begins with our thoughts. You start to *desire* something sinful. Then, *deception* starts—Satan feeds you a lie, and you believe it. Next, you make a *decision* to rebel against the Lord. Finally, you *depart* from His perfect will for your life. Because sin starts in the mind, it's vitally important for you and I to read the Scriptures daily. The Word of God keeps us anchored in truth.

What are the consequences?

■ **Wandering and wondering:** The worldly things we thought would bring us pleasure aren't as satisfying as we expected. As we continue searching for fulfillment apart from the Father, we begin to wonder if the biblical teaching we've received is true or not. Soon, we begin to doubt our beliefs.

■ **Waste:** The Prodigal Son “squandered his estate with loose living” (Luke 15:13) and “devoured [his] wealth with prostitutes” (Luke 15:30). Rebellion against God always results in wasted time, talents, gifts, and/or health.

■ **Want:** At first, the young man in the parable was surrounded by “friends” who enjoyed his wealth. But when the money was gone, he was forced to work feeding pigs—the lowest job a Hebrew man could imagine. Moreover, no one cared enough to feed him (Luke 15:15-16). Walking away from God results in lack. You may not experience financial poverty. But without Christ, you will not have genuine, lasting peace.

■ **Weariness:** It's exhausting to live with guilt. Regret, unforgiveness, and sin will wear you out. The body was not created to live with constant depression, guilt, fear, or frustration. I believe this is a reason why some people develop chronic diseases early in life. Sin takes a toll on health.

How can you return to God?

Follow the example of the Prodigal Son. First, he “came to his senses” (Luke 15:17); he realized he could change and didn't have to live in poverty.

Then, he made a decision and took positive action based on it. He knew his father's servants were better off, so he decided to return home and beg to be a hired man (Luke 15:17-19). Finally, the young man repented for how he had been living and started acting differently.

How does God react when we return to Him? With forgiveness and unconditional love. Luke 15:20 says that “while [the son] was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” In those days, no dignified man ever ran in public, yet this father's love compelled him to race to his son. The broken, impoverished young man was greeted with a robe, a ring, new shoes, and a celebration. The parable illustrates that our heavenly Father willingly receives everyone who comes to Him in humility and brokenness.

CONCLUSION:

Many people believe the lie that they have sinned too much to be forgiven. But no one is beyond the reach of God's grace. Regardless of what you have done, the Lord will show mercy if you confess and repent. His forgiveness will not erase all the scars of sin—the emotional, financial, and physical consequences—but it will give you a clean heart before Him.

If you are not walking with God, turn from the life you have been living. Make a deliberate, willful decision to surrender your life and let Him guide you. My friend, sin will destroy you. But Christ can give you a new start. He will forgive you and change your life. What choice will you make today? ✨



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