

Name: _____ Date: _____ Favorite Sports Team: _____

The Prodigal Sons Questions:

Source Text: Luke 15.

Details, Motifs and Themes:

1. This parable begins (15:11) with the phrase: “A certain man had two sons.” Where have we seen this before? What is this phrase supposed to remind the reader of?
2. There is a conflict between the brothers regarding inheritance. Sound familiar? What connections can you make between other stories we’ve read? How is this one similar and how is it different?
3. 15:17 describes the younger brother as “coming to his senses.” Other versions translate this as “he came to himself.” How do these differences in translation alter the meaning and depth of the younger brother’s revelation?

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4. The story ends (15:28-32) with the older brother refusing to go into the party his father is throwing for the younger brother. What is the significance of this type of ending?

5. This story is sandwiched between parables. Before it, are two parables—one about a lost sheep and one about a lost coin. Directly after it, Jesus takes a parable about an “unrighteous steward”. How does the order of WHEN this parable is told in the context of the others help draw out a deeper meaning?

Literary Criticism/Literary Theory Practice:

6. It was considered undignified and shameful for the head of the household (The Father) to run or exert himself in upper-class Hebrew culture. What is the significance of the father “running” to the younger brother? (15:20-Cultural Criticism).

7. How do The father, the older brother and the younger brother function as archetypes? (Archetypal Criticism). In other words, what can they tell us about human nature and ourselves as individuals?

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8. How does the understanding that this is not a story about two sons, but about a really good father change your experience as a reader? (Reader-Response Criticism).