



## LESSON 8: THE PRODIGAL SON

### DEEPER BIBLE: WHAT IF I FEEL LIKE THE OLDER BROTHER?

#### Give Applause

We're going to play a game. You'll take turns saying your name, and I may or may not cheer for you. Your goal is to figure out why I'm cheering for the people I'm cheering for and not others.

*Start by saying your own name and either cheering or not cheering for yourself. Cheer only for those who are wearing blue. Anyone who's not wearing blue won't get applause.*

What are your guesses as to why I cheered for the people I did? How did it feel if you **didn't** get cheered for? What things have I done for you in the past to let you know I care about you?

Maybe you didn't get cheered for, and that hurt a little. But we care about you because we prepare lessons to teach you. We play games, we welcome you, and we pray for you. Even if you didn't get cheered for, you can be sure that we care about you!

You know, this game reminds us of the older brother in the Bible story. When the runaway son came home, it was clear he was deeply loved. His dad welcomed him with a big hug, a fine robe, and a major party! The older brother seemed to feel like you did if I didn't applaud for you, wondering where **his** party was.

Maybe you feel God's love all the time. But maybe sometimes you wonder about God's love. Maybe it doesn't feel like a big celebration. So, what if you feel like the older brother? Let's dig in to that.

#### Dig Deeper

When the older brother was jealous, his father said two things about him. First he said, "Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me." That reminds me of a way we can see God's love.

*Second half of Hebrews 13:5*

*For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."*

How do you know God is always with you and won't leave you? The younger son in the story was far away from his father. But the older son got to be with his father all the time! And God invites **us** to be with him all the time. In fact, he promises never to leave us. That's an incredible sign that we are deeply loved.

The other thing the father said to his older son is this: "Everything I have is yours." Is that true of God's love for us, too? Has God given us anything? Absolutely! I'm about to read some Bible verses that tell us God has blessed us with "every spiritual blessing." There's that word, **every**, just like the father in the story said **everything**. So let's see what all those spiritual blessings are.

*Ephesians 1:3-8*

*3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. 7He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.*

What are some spiritual blessings you heard in this passage? Some ideas could include being united with Christ, God loved us, God chose us, God adopted us, glorious grace, kindness and grace, wisdom and understanding.

Wow! The older son in the story didn't get applause or a big party...but he was deeply loved. Instead of a party, he received love through the constant presence of his father and having access to everything his father had. And we are deeply loved. Even if God's love doesn't feel like a big party, it's steady and it's always there. God is always with us, and he's blessed us with every spiritual blessing!