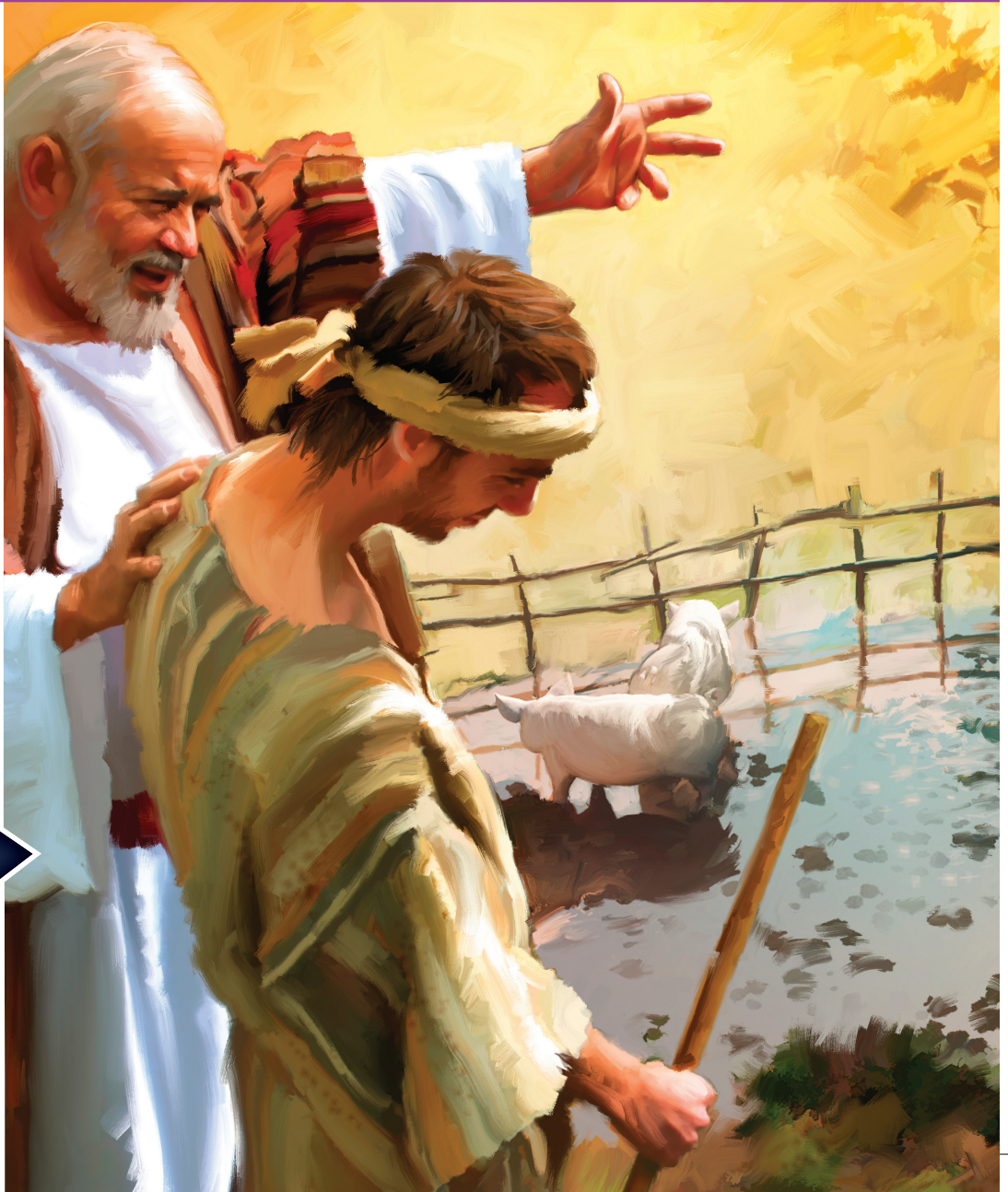


# 10

## The Real Prodigal

Key References: Luke 15:11-32; 1 John 3:1; Ephesians 3:8, 9; *Christ's Object Lessons*, chap. 16, pp. 198-211; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 116-120; *Our Beliefs* nos. 3, 10, 11





## powertext

"I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:18, 19).

*Think of the latest news you have heard that reported some natural calamity, or epidemic, or crime. How do you feel about all the pain, suffering, and heartache in our world? How do you think God feels about these?*

**G**ot any work, sir?" the unemployed laborer asked the farmer. "I can do anything."

*Sure you can!* thought the farmer.

"I see you eyeing my clothes, sir. They are a bit shabby; I've been down on my luck."

*Sure you have! Aren't we all? This famine is hard on all of us. But you don't look like you've been starving long,* mused the farmer.

"OK, boy! I do have work. You start at the bottom and work up. See down there; it's the hog pen! Muck it out. Take this shovel.



God's lavish love for us inspires us to serve Him.

Sabbath

**DO** Do the activity on page 75.

# 10

## Sunday

**READ** Read Luke 15:11-17 and this week's lesson, "The Real Prodigal."

**THINK** What did the prodigal son recognize when he served someone who did not care much about him? What happens when we turn away from serving God?

**REVIEW** Review the power text, Luke 15:18, 19.

**PRAY** Ask God to teach you how to best serve Him.

## Monday

**READ** Read Luke 15:18, 19.

**THINK** What realization made the prodigal son decide to serve his father wholeheartedly?

**APPLY** In the end the prodigal son realized his need to ask for his father's forgiveness and make things right. For what do you need to ask God to forgive you? Be specific.

**REVIEW** Review the power text.

**PRAY** Ask God to forgive you.

## Tuesday

**READ** Read Luke 15:20-24.

**THINK** How does the father's reaction to the son's return help you better understand God's lavish love? What are the benefits of serving God in contrast with pursuing your selfish desires?

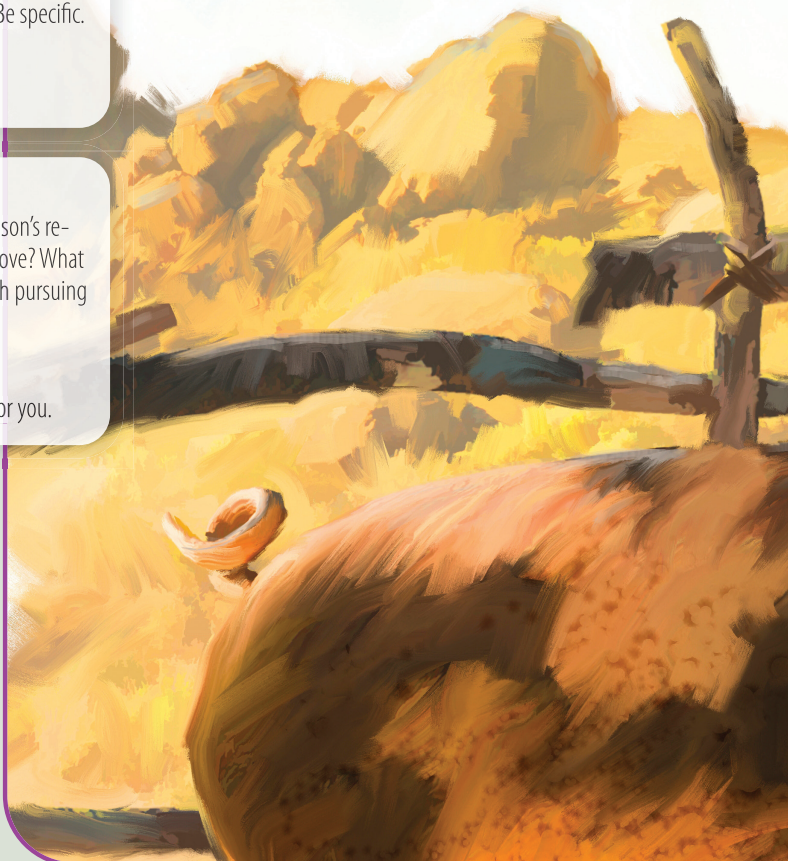
**REVIEW** Review the power text.

**PRAY** Thank God for His never-ending love for you.

"And when you are done, stay down there. You can shake the pods from the trees and feed the hogs with them. Take it or leave it."

"I'll take it, sir." So the laborer, proud shoulders slumped, plodded down to the hog pen.

As the young man shoveled the muck from the hog pen, he tried to forget the awful stench by remembering better times. He remembered the fine apartment he once had in the city. And all the friends. He had once been the toast of the town. His lavish parties had been famous. Expensive too. Had he really run through his entire inheritance?





With a pang of conscience that nearly doubled him over with pain, the young man remembered the day his dad had handed over the money. The old man had aged overnight, it seemed.

“Now, there’s a thought!” the laborer croaked to the hogs. “Dad knew it would probably come to this! That’s what he was trying to tell me!” The shoveling complete, the laborer climbed a tree that overhung the hog pen. By rocking back and forth, he hoped to shake down more than enough pods for the animals and some extra for himself. But by the time his stiff legs got him down, the hogs had snuffled up everything.

That’s when memories about home burned into his consciousness.





# 10

## Wednesday

**READ** Read Luke 15:25-32.

**THINK** How was the older son's service different from the way the prodigal son decided to serve their father? What motivated each son's service?

**FIND** What did the older son not understand? (See Ephesians 2:8, 9.)

**REVIEW** Review the power text.

**PRAY** Ask God for the right attitude to serve Him.

## Thursday

**READ** Read 1 John 3:1.

**SERVE** Allow God to love someone lavishly through you. Do something meaningful to serve someone today.

**REVIEW** Review the power text.

**PRAY** Ask God to make you a channel for His lavish love to flow to others.

## Friday

**READ** Read 1 John 3:16.

**ASK** Ask an adult to tell you about a time they experienced God's lavish love and decided to share His love through service to those in need.

**TELL** At worship, tell your family the parable of the prodigal family. Ask them to tell how the story ends.

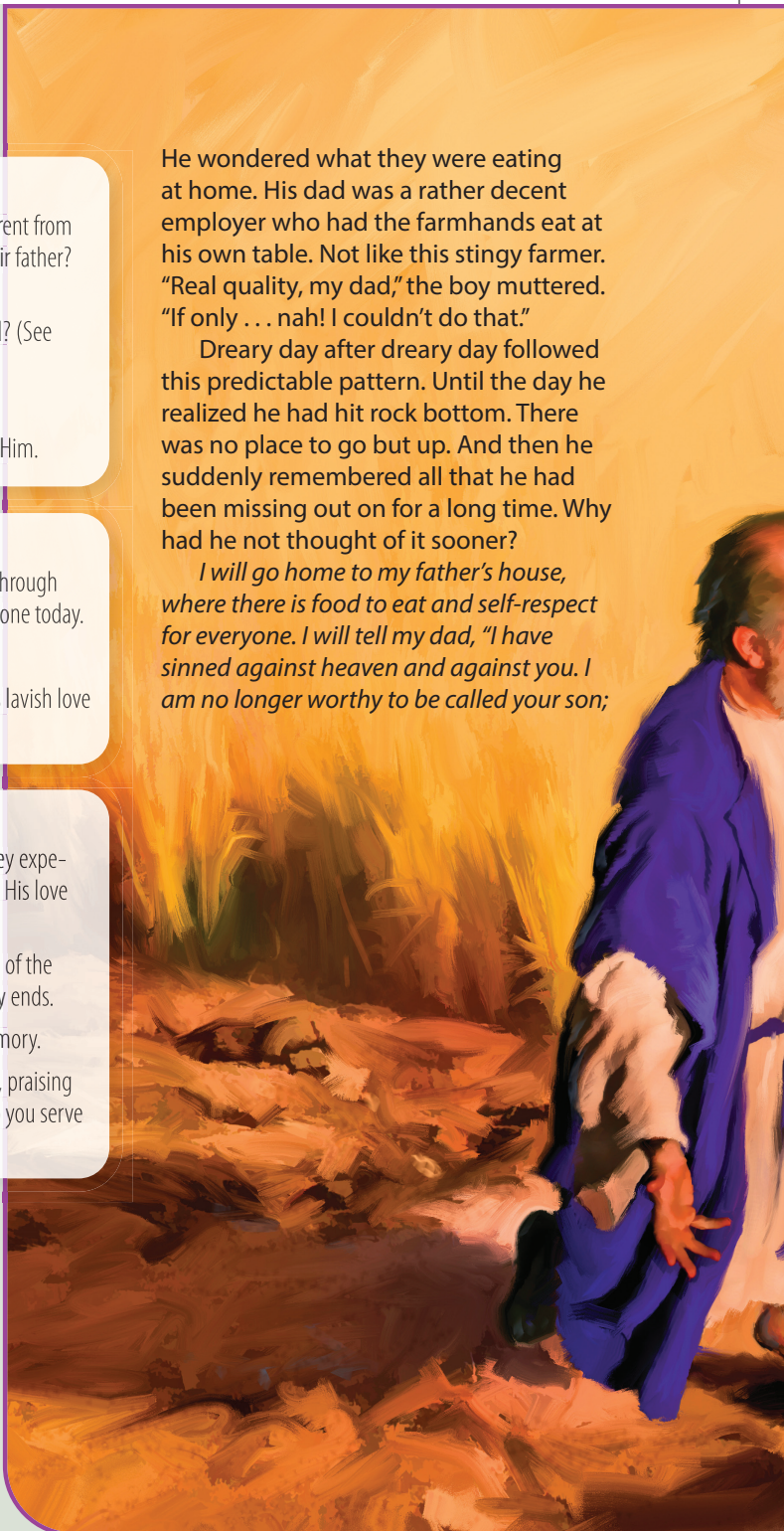
**REPEAT** Say your power text aloud from memory.

**PRAY** With your family, say sentence prayers, praising God for His lavish love and asking Him to help you serve others out of love.

He wondered what they were eating at home. His dad was a rather decent employer who had the farmhands eat at his own table. Not like this stingy farmer. "Real quality, my dad," the boy muttered. "If only . . . nah! I couldn't do that."

Dreary day after dreary day followed this predictable pattern. Until the day he realized he had hit rock bottom. There was no place to go but up. And then he suddenly remembered all that he had been missing out on for a long time. Why had he not thought of it sooner?

*I will go home to my father's house, where there is food to eat and self-respect for everyone. I will tell my dad, "I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son;*





*make me like one of your hired servants” (Luke 15:18, 19). If Father is willing to receive me back home, I will do anything to serve him. I will even muck out his barn!*

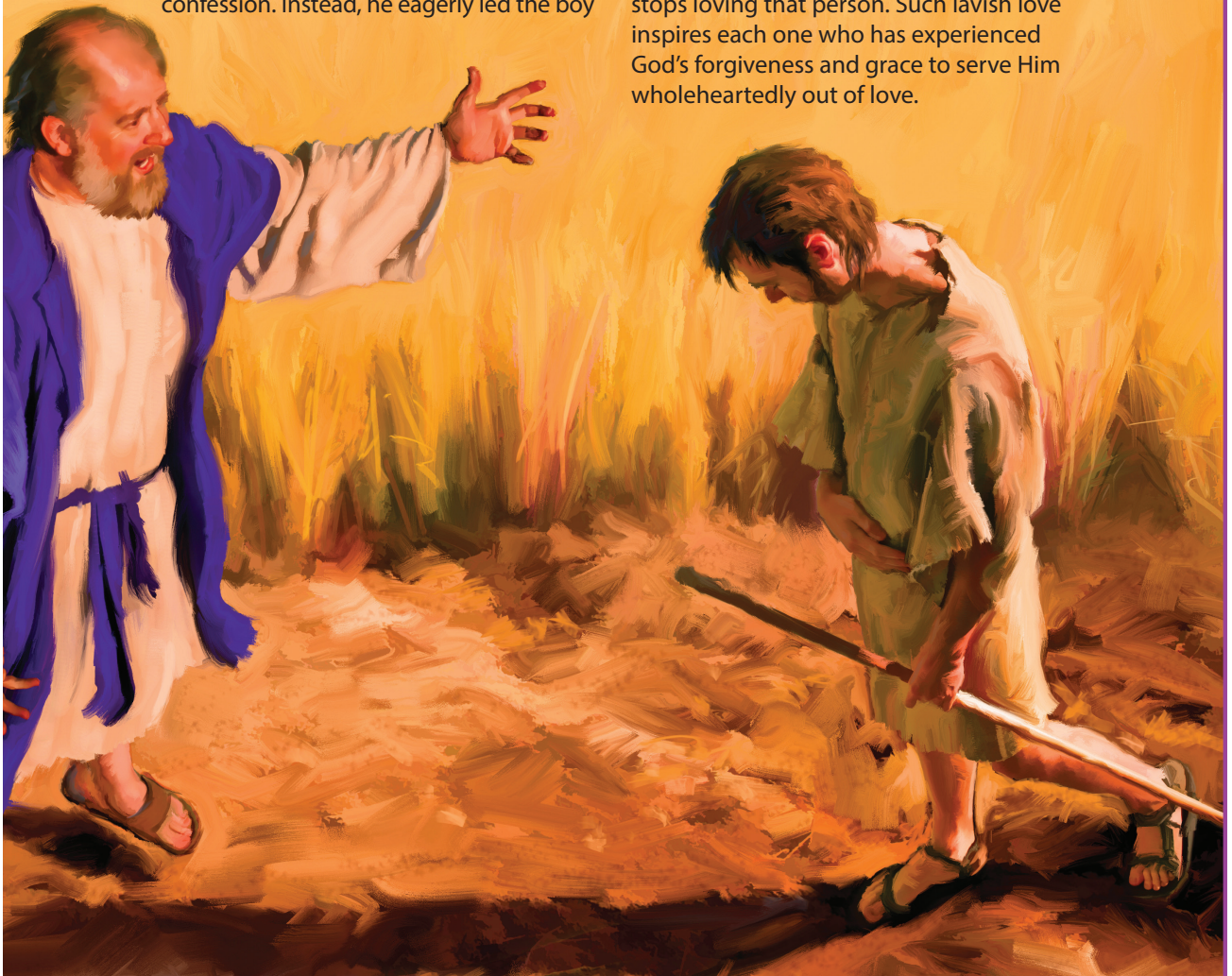
And before he realized it, he was running, stumbling toward home. And all the way he rehearsed his confession. *Father, I have sinned against God and against you.*

The father saw his son a great way off and ran to welcome him. The old man didn't seem to hear the heartbreaking confession. Instead, he eagerly led the boy

inside, called for a rich robe to cover the filthy clothes, and laid plans for a lavish welcome-home party.

The old man's joy could not be contained. He was leaping and singing and telling everyone the great news. "This son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (verse 24).

This story reminds us of God's amazing love. In spite of the sinner's wayward behavior, the Father never stops loving that person. Such lavish love inspires each one who has experienced God's forgiveness and grace to serve Him wholeheartedly out of love.





## CELEBRATE

**Instructions:** The answers to the clues can be found in Luke 15. The appropriate verses have been placed in parentheses. Each answer consists of a nine-letter word or words. When you have found these nine letters in the grid, mark them. We have given you one word to get you started. When you have marked all of the answer words, you will have nine letters left over in the grid. These letters form the two words that complete the following sentence.

1	2	3
RIG	WEA	ERS
HIS	FIE	NER
SHO	EBR	OME
CEL	NWH	LTH
MEA	ESH	ING
CAR	ULD	LLY
HIS	OBE	HER
<del>GAT</del>	TSH	EES
ONE	SIN	OUS
HIS	HTE	YED
REJ	EFU	ATE
DIS	<del>HER</del>	ILE
LOS	FAT	LDS
PHA	OIC	ING
COM	RIS	EEP

**Clues:**

1. "The tax collectors and sinners were all GATHERING around" (verse 1).
2. "The \_\_\_\_\_ . . . muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners'" (verse 2).
3. "Doesn't he . . . go after the \_\_\_\_\_ until he finds it?" (verse 4).
4. "When he finds it, he . . . puts it on his \_\_\_\_\_ and goes home" (verses 5, 6).
5. "There will be more \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven over one sinner who repents" (verse 7).
6. "Than over ninety-nine \_\_\_\_\_ persons who do not need to repent" (verse 7).
7. "Doesn't she . . . sweep the house and search \_\_\_\_\_ until she finds it?" (verse 8).
8. "There is rejoicing . . . over \_\_\_\_\_ who repents" (verse 10).
9. "The younger son . . . squandered \_\_\_\_\_ in wild living" (verse 13).
10. "A citizen . . . sent him to \_\_\_\_\_ to feed pigs" (verse 15).
11. "So he got up and went to \_\_\_\_\_" (verse 20).
12. "The father said . . . , ' . . . Let's have a feast and \_\_\_\_\_'" (verses 22, 23).
13. "\_\_\_\_\_, the older son was in the field" (verse 25).
14. "All these years I've been slaving for you and never \_\_\_\_\_ your orders" (verse 29).

**Puzzle Clue:** All of heaven celebrates when a sinner \_\_\_\_\_.