

# THINGS TO STOP AND START

## Stop Shaming and Start Honoring

Luke 15:11–32

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

In the garden of Eden, one of the first descriptions recorded of Adam and Eve's relationship was this: "Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame" (Genesis 2:25). Before the serpent's lie and the temptation, before the first couple made the mortifying decision to be wise in one's own eyes, there existed vulnerability and openness (nakedness) in relationship *but no shame*.

Is shame such a bad thing that it had to occur *after* the fall of humanity? It's useful, after all; shame can be wielded to keep teenagers from engaging in sexual behavior, or to teach little children to avoid disobedience in school, or to prevent first offenders from becoming repeat criminal offenders.

However, there is a *toxic* shame—a shame that refuses rescue. To embrace this kind of shame effectively accuses God of being a liar. To promote this kind of shame dishonors God Himself. Let's dig into Luke 15:11–32 to find out more about toxic shame.



### Helpful Hints

- Reading different Bible versions can help you to read the same passage with fresh perspective. If you don't have different versions handy, there are plenty of Web sites that can help you.
- Remember: *Observation* is a critical beginning technique you will want to use to put together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. Paying particular attention to Luke 15:11–32, make some initial observations about what you see—for instance, *who are the main characters? Who drives the action? Who speaks? Did Luke use any connecting words that offer clues into what he was emphasizing?* Write down your observations and discoveries.

(Continued on next page)

## Quotable

*We must stop giving shame any respect and start sharing the hurt with others who understand. Refuse to be another person's judge by cultivating genuine compassion.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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S03  
1

(Continued from previous page)

- When searching the Scriptures, a helpful first step is to gather resources that will guide you in your study. Make certain you have handy a Bible dictionary and a concordance, as well as a reliable commentary on the book of the Bible you're studying.

### A Bit of Context

To our eyes and ears, a son asking a father for some cash doesn't sound especially scandalous. In fact, it happens all the time! While we may get annoyed at the entitlement that some spoiled people display in asking Daddy for money, the mild irritation is not what's in view here. The audience hearing Jesus' opening words would have been immediately aghast. *This is why the original context of a particular story is vital to gleaning principles from the Bible.* This exercise—discovering a passage's cultural context—is the difference between merely drinking the *milk* of the Bible or sinking your teeth into its *meat*.

Chuck Swindoll explains: "You understand in Jewish Law that a man who had wealth could divide his wealth among his boys at his discretion. Didn't have to die to release his wealth. However, if he had two sons, he would give two-thirds of the wealth to the older, and a third of the wealth to the younger. That would be their inheritance, and it was in the Law.

"So, based on that kind of culture, we're able to see that the younger son wanted his money, but he didn't want to wait till the dad came up with the idea, he wanted it now! 'I don't want to wait till you die; I want it now.'"

### Your Turn in the Scriptures

Take a few minutes to read through Luke 15:11–32.

Here's how to glean cultural context and application the way Chuck would: Using a commentary and Bible dictionary from your library or online, along with your Bible, take some time to look up information about the following. (Don't forget to write down your discoveries!)



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What were the parameters of the typical Jewish inheritance? What is the typical timeline and hierarchy? How did the younger son break from this tradition?

How were the Jews to interact with foreign women? How did the younger son break from this tradition?

How were Jews to interact with swine? How did the younger son break from this tradition?

Based on the younger son's behavior, how should have the father responded? How did the father break from this expectation?

What does the father's response teach you about the Lord?



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S03  
3

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SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Traditionally, how much of the inheritance would be reserved for the older son? How much inheritance did the older son lose?

How did the older son's response differ from his father's?

What does this say about how believers should respond to the “younger sons” in our lives?

#### **This Brother of Yours Was Dead . . . and Has Begun to Live**

Oh, the straight-to-the-heart brilliance of story. Jesus was a master at sharing profound theology through *parables*. These parables took abstract thought and plunked them down with specificity and concreteness into the earthy, everyday lives of His listeners.

In this incredible story of a father's otherworldly love, what's the point?



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S03  
4

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*Luke 15:11–32*

Take a few moments to write your application from Jesus' parable.

Shaming others and offering compassion for others do not mix. If one lives in your heart, the other gets evicted. The older son so desired to define the younger son by his sin that when the father forgave instead, the older son turned on the father in order to shame him also! Of course, he didn't succeed.

The Father's love does not shame. The Father's love looks afar, daily hoping for His child's repentance and return. The Father's goal is reconciliation, not banishment. Just as He did in the garden of Eden, the Father receives us, naked in our sin, and clothes us.

#### A Meditation from Scripture

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. . . . But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? . . . The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . . If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (1 John 3:1, 17; 4:8, 20–21)



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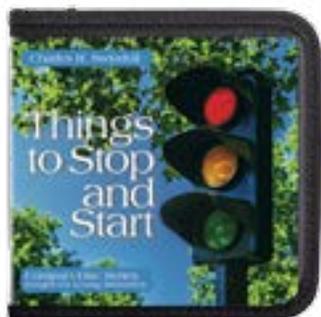
Luke 15:11–32

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### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Things to Stop and Start**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Leisure: How to Recharge  
without Guilt**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
booklet



**Rules for Running  
a Rewarding Race**  
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CD message

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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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S03  
6