

THIS IS YOUR STORY Luke 15:25-32

Int: If his listeners thought the Prodigal the “black sheep” of the family, surely they saw the Elder Brother as the “white sheep,” i.e. the perfect son. But Jesus’ judgment of him was far less generous. If the Prodigal was lost in a far country, his brother was lost at home!

What are the marks of an elder brother? Elder brothers tend to be
STRONG-WILLED

The Elder Brother *would not* please his father! The man left the party (a social error) and went out to beg (another social error) his son to come in and join the celebration. But the Elder Brother absolutely refused. “I know what my father wants but I WILL NOT give it to him.”

Churches are full of strong-willed elder brothers who care more about getting what they want than about giving the Father what he wants!

Are you a strong-willed elder brother?

SELF-RIGHTEOUS

The Elder Brother thought himself more righteous than his brother. “He blew your money on prostitutes” (Lu 15:30).

He also thought himself more righteous than his father. His father was just too easy on the Prodigal. The boy deserved a penalty, not a party.

Churches are full of elder brothers who are sure they are more righteous than other people. They come down hard on sins of the flesh but pay little attention to sins of the spirit. God’s Book says pride and self-righteousness are the biggest sins (Prov 6:16-19).

A common complaint about Christians is that they are judgmental and look down on everyone else. The complaint is often just!

Are you a strong-willed elder brother?

SELF-CENTERED

Five times in Lu 15:29 the Elder Brother said, “I,” “me” or “my.” It showed his real concern was for himself, not his father or his brother. He stayed home, worked hard, and followed the rules. But he did so for what he could get out of it. It was all about him!

Modern elder brothers show the same self-centeredness. “This is about what I like and what I want. It is all about me!”

If you were put on trial for being a Christian and investigators had to establish motive, what would they find? Why do you do what you do? For love of the Father, or for what you hope to get out of it?

Are you a self-centered elder brother?

Con: When last seen the Elder Brother was sulking outside alone in the dark. How did his story end? Did he convince his father to humiliate the Prodigal and banish him forever? Did he repent and join the party? Did he lose his temper and leave home himself? Jesus left the tale unfinished. Why? Because every elder brother must add his own ending. *This is your story.* How will you end it? What will *you* do?