

The Lavish Father: How much do I imitate the Father in my life?

A session with Sahaya G. Selvam, sdb – Part 2



Step 1: Read the following story now focusing on the FATHER.

Luke 15:1 The tax collectors and sinners, however, were all crowding round to listen to him, 2 and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' 3 So he told them this parable:

4 'Which one of you with a hundred sheep, if he lost one....

8 'Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one....

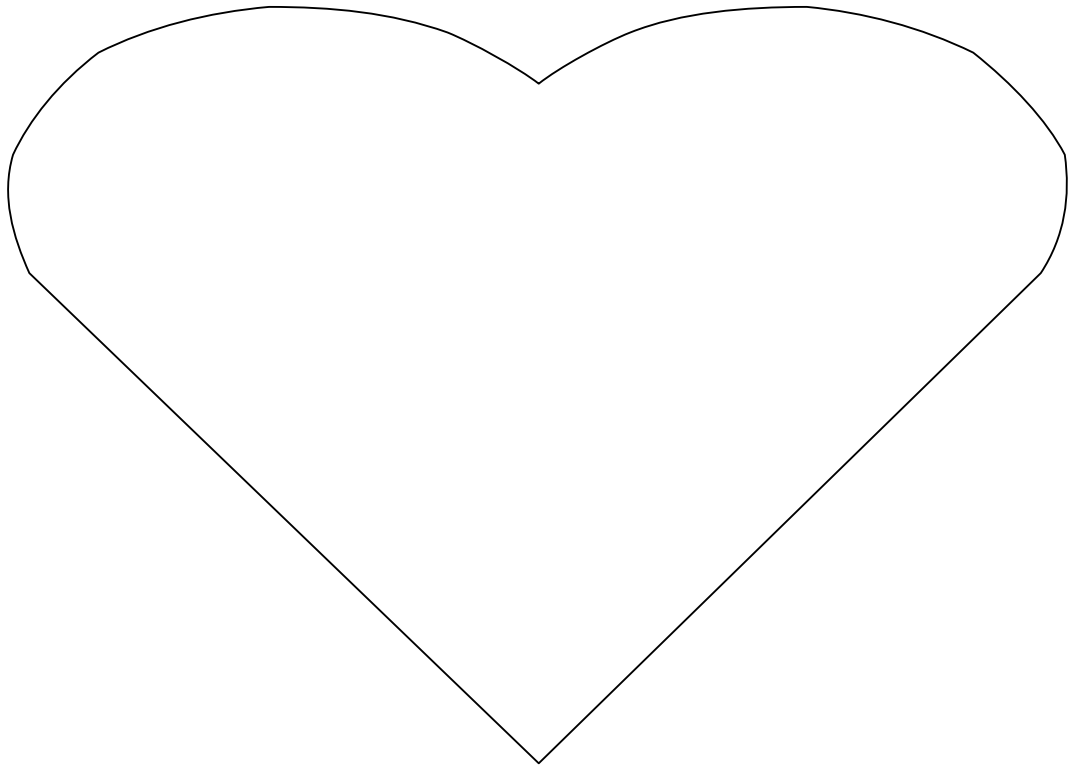
11 Then he said, 'There was a man who had two sons.

12 The younger one said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that will come to me." So the father divided the property between them. 13 A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. 14 'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch; 15 so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. 16 And he would willingly have filled himself with the husks the pigs were eating but no one would let him have them. 17 Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's hired men have all the food they want and more, and here am I dying of hunger! 18 I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; 19 I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired men." 20 So he left the place and went back to his father. 'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him. 21 Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." 22 But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we will celebrate by having a feast, 24 because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

25 'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. 26 Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. 27 The servant told him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the calf we had been fattening because he has got him back safe and sound." 28 He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out and began to urge him to come in; 29 but he retorted to his father, "All these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed any orders of yours, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. 30 But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property -- he and his loose women -- you kill the calf we had been fattening." 31 'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. 32 But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found." '

Step 2: Personal Work: The heart of the Father!

Pick out qualities & characteristics of the father in the story that appeal to you. Write them out in the heart below.



Step 3: Group Activity

Share with one another what you have written. Would you like to add anything more to the heart of the father?

Step 4: Common reflection

- Jesus invites us to appreciate & imitate the father. The focus is not on the sons!
- Consider the qualities of the father listed below, together with what you have listed above. What dimension of the heart of the father that you would wish to add to your own heart?

	The Father	To the Younger Son	To the Elder Son
1.	<i>Does not Control</i>	v.12b: "the father divided the property between them..."	v.31: "...all I have is yours."
2.	<i>Goes out to welcome</i>	v.20: "He ran to the boy."	v.28: "his father came out"
3.	<i>Lavish</i>	v.22: "Bring out the best robe..."	v.32: "only right we should celebrate..."
4.	<i>Wants the sons to be sons, not servants</i>	Cuts short his statement - not allowing him to request a position of a slave. Compare vv.18-19 & v.21	The son does not address the father as such; The father calls him 'my son'. Compare vv.29 & 31.
5.	?		

Step 5: Take it in prayer: My own heart!

- Fix the duration. Sit quietly. Become aware you are in the image of God!
- Recall the story in your mind. Put yourself in the position of the father and go through the events described in the story. Pay attention to your own feelings: what happens in your heart? What moves you? Where is God?
- End by having a friendly conversation with the Father, or with Jesus about the Father!