

God or man.

He resented the authority of his father; he wanted to be his own master; he was not any worse morally after he hit the gutter than he was when he asked his father for his inheritance.

Rebellion had been in his heart a long time before he left for the far country. A sinner is not more guilty after the sin than before the sin is committed in his heart.

"Don't tie me down; don't fence me in; and don't bridle me" is still the demand and the cry of the sinner.

It is like the flood in nature. It says, "Let me out of these banks. Let me roar; let me go out in all directions; let me destroy the crops; let me sweep away homes; let me drown the lights of the city and leave behind wrecks, and bereavement, and people who are homeless."

Sin is like electricity which says, "Let me out of these wires and cables. I don't want to pull a trolley car or light homes, or to heal the sick. I want to be free so I can split trees and burn up houses."

The cry of the sinner is like that of the wind who wants not to be a blessing, to blow upon the sick face, or the sail boat for little children on a gentle lake, but the wind says, "I want to become a hurricane and sweep like mad across the sea and destroy boats and destroy dikes and destroy homes and destroy fruit trees."

WALKING AWAY FROM SIN!

Luke 15:18

"I will arise and go to my father; and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee.'"

Charles Dickens said the story of the Prodigal Son is the most beautiful story ever told. Now all believers can say that it is the most beautiful story; all of us are thrilled with the dramas of men who go from poverty to riches. It is a far greater interest, however, to read of a man who, like the Prodigal, went from spiritual poverty to spiritual riches.

All the young men of the world cannot throw off the rags of poverty and replace them with the garments of success. But all who hear the wonderful story of Christ can become spiritual millionaires in just the twinkling of an eye.

Now there are many individuals in the Bible who walked away from sin. I want to concentrate on the Prodigal Son. However, let me mention a couple just in passing.

For example, Joseph. Joseph was a young man, sold by his brothers into Egypt, bought as a slave by Potiphar, a captain of Pharaoh's guard, and in Potiphar's house this man Joseph was lifted up to a place of honor and trust. Now Potiphar's wife fell in love with Joseph and tempted him to dishonor and to sin. The more you read about this story, the more you wonder that Joseph was able to walk away from



sin and say "No." Here was a young man in his twenties with a full tide of natural life and a most natural temptation, that of his body, was strong and dangerous. This temptation was unusually strong because of the person who was the tempter. She was not a common woman; she was not a street walker. She was a woman of rank and beauty and fashion. From the standpoint of worldly policy, she might well have whetted his appetite, and if he yielded to her advances, he would have no doubt been placed in higher places of power because she would, as a friend, influence for him in the court. But he refused to do this. And another thing about this--you will note this--that the temptation was repeated. It would be easy perhaps for a person to walk away from sin once, to walk away from it twice, but day after day this temptation came to him. There was his father's religion, and his father's people; and yet, Joseph met the temptation in this way by saying, "How can I do this great evil and sin against God?"

This did not go well with the woman, and she laid charges against him. But Joseph fled; he walked away from sin.

Another illustration we might use to illustrate this is the story of Vashti. In the Old Testament a great feast was being given. One hundred and twenty-seven outstanding leaders

and rulers from all parts of the world had gathered. The cups were filled and there was silver and gold aplenty. The floor of this palace was red, blue, and white marble, and King Ahasuerus was giving a feast and entertaining his guests. They had plenty of women dancing, but he wanted to bring in the Queen. He wanted to bring her in to exhibit her charms before this drunken group. So he gave the order to the beautiful woman of the world. The Queen received the message and the chamberlains came back and said the Queen will not come in. In rage and drunken--of course she knew that this meant disgrace; that she would be removed from the throne, and that her power would be taken away. However today, that palace is just a heap of dust where wild beasts howl, and Vashti, this noble Queen, certainly would be a blessing to the women and young girls of this country if they had an organization after her kind.

As we think about walking away from sin, there are several things I'd like to say about this Prodigal Son.

I. He's a typical sinner. V. 12

The Prodigal Son was not a rare sinner; he was not unlike the sinners of today. The germ of evil is in the individual. He wanted to run his own life without regard for



had been reared grew dimmer. And by and by his mind only held a faint outline of what the old home looked like. His father's tender face became only a blur. Someone has said that conscience does not stop us from sinning, but it keeps us from enjoying sin after we have committed it.

A 16 year old boy was arrested because he and a group of other boys had staged a holdup at gun point. None of the boys had been in trouble before, but this boy told that his heart was not in the crime. He knew he ought to leave the other boys before the crime was done. When he was asked why he didn't he said, "I didn't want them to call me 'chicken'."

Now the word "chicken" is a current word among teenagers to describe one who backs out or refuses to go on. But this lad said, "When I get out of this trouble they can call me anything they want to." Now while he was riding around with his companions, he had the idea that some quick and easy money would be a good thing. For a time, at least, he had to

blot out his parents, his Sunday School teacher, and all that he had learned at the church. How much better it would have

been had he walked away from sin. *Prodigal son - 1st trip to his legs - 2nd trip - 3rd trip around barn, knew made a mistake*  
Sin seems to be a good companion to the Prodigal until

he began to be in want. His K had begun to take the place of

Sin is like atomic energy. It does not want to heal the sick or lighten the burden of mankind, or to make people happy, but it says, "Drop me; I want to run wild."

He wanted to put his feet on the broad way of the world. His appetite—it prompted him; and he did not want to be answerable to any man at sunset. Sin and the sinner have not changed in the two thousand years since the Prodigal Son left his father's house. He was a typical sinner, and he wanted his freedom from all moral responsibility. He did not care about any responsibility at all. *can't wait for you to die, can't wait my Bro: 1/2 younger 1/3 older -*

II. He was a typical wanderer V.13

All sinners become wanderers. They know before they start out that their sins will cause them to wander far from God, but they don't know that they will waste their bodies and minds, and eventually become human driftwood.

The Prodigal Son wanted to see life. He wanted to go out and see the world.

He wanted to taste of life. He was determined to know what life was all about. Young men have not changed. They still talk about seeing life not realizing that they are going to see death at its worst. But sin continues to pay in the same currency, the currency of death. It never uses



any other kind of money.

One fine, spring day when the Prodigal Son left home, he awakened with the birds singing at dawn, he packed up his little traveling bag and he hurried after dressing fully and carefully. He gave himself one final look in the mirror, liked what he saw, told his parents goodby, and was gone without looking back. The birds never sang sweeter, the grass never looked greener, the sky was never bluer, and the air was never so soft on his eager face.

What a morning of adventure? He took out his billfold and he counted his wealth, and then his dreams began to pound his brains, and his feet were planted on the road ready to go where he wanted to go.

He had no plans for the first day, nor did he have any plans for the second day. He didn't want any dull routine-- the very thing he was trying to escape from. He had no brakes on his desires. He said, "Just let them lead me where they will."

What was this wandering boy looking for? What is any sinner looking for when he takes his life in his own hands and begins wandering? Ponce de Leon was looking for the fountain of youth. His quest was silly and fruitless; he was supposed to have discovered such a spring at St. Augustine, Florida.

I've been there. I did not taste the water because I knew that it would not add one minute to a man's life, but the man who drinks of the fountain of youth at St. Augustine is no more foolish than the sinner who thinks he can enrich joys of his days by drinking at any of the springs of sin.

The Prodigal Son had to learn the naked facts the hard and expensive way. He did not know that his soul was made of the same materials of which God and eternity are made, and that nothing but God and eternity could ever satisfy them.

In Africa certain tribes of people will not travel without a day to rest. Ask them why and they will say, "We need time for our souls to catch up with our bodies." Now it's a sad day when a man tries to escape his soul. When he goes on, one sin will demand another sin until his life is constantly manufacturing sin. Sin is a hard taskmaster.

As the Prodigal continued in his wandering from day to day, he thought less and less of his father's house. It had to be that way. You can't think of a father's home too much without remorse, and sometimes ends in genuine repentance. No doubt the Prodigal thought of his father's home during his first adventure in selfishness. But as each sin was committed, his memory of the clean atmosphere in which he



killed by the thief. Now the man had killed the faithful dog that had been warning him of danger.

When you drive God and conscience out of your heart, you are driving life out of your soul. "For whoso findth me, findth life. But he that sinnth against me, wrongth his own soul. All they that hate me love death" Prov 8:35-36

Being in want made the Prodigal think of home and other days. At long last he learned that he was a spiritual being and that this world and its offerings were earthly. Fortunately, he had never become a citizen of the far country. He was just a transit there, as if he had been stranded there.

Thank God for whatever it is that wakes you up before you take out citizenship papers in the land that is far from home. - God -

The brightest day in a sinner's life is when he becomes hungry for God. Showing a man a picture of food will not stop his hunger any more than earthly things can take the place of reverence, hope, and love. Man is not a machine.

What was the cry of the young man in the far country?

"I am not worthy to be called Thy son." Self importance had gone from him.

His trouble with himself began by despising his father's house and he wanted to be free to run wild.

fresh, spring water; sleepless nights became common; the sweets on which he had been feeding for so long began to trouble his soul, and he was really in the far country now. The greatest distance one can get away from God is the far country.

v.16 Now the Prodigal's money was gone. When it was gone, his so-called "friends" left him. He could have done a very useful thing with the money by getting himself an education, but now his money was gone.

Sinners are always wasting their substance. A barber once said that a big man lay down in his barber chair for a shave. The man open his mouth and said to the barber, "What do you see in my mouth and throat?" The barber passed the man's remark off lightly, but the man said, "You can't see far enough. If you could, you would see one of the finest ranches anyone owned, a herd of Herdford cattle, liquor, and gambling. I lost them all with wasting their substance. And they finally learned that they take on a heavy yoke, a heavier one when they continue to wander in sin." Above the door of Sing-Sing you read the words, "The way of the transgressor is hard." Men see it when they come out as a reminder of what a life of sin leads to.



Evil companions helped the Prodigal to waste his money,  
his mental faculties, and his self respect. You cannot run  
with an evil crowd and expect to remain pure.

Two rivers in Canada flow in parallel directions for more  
that one hundred miles before they join. The water of one is  
clear while the water of the other river is muddy. Do you  
think after they meet together and merge that half of the  
river is clear and half of it is muddy? No, you can't see any  
of the clear water. Jesus said, "You cannot serve two masters.  
You will hate the one and love the other." How true it is of  
people who get in the far country.

V.14 Sooner or later famine always strikes the far country.  
That which has been satisfying ceases to satisfy; that which  
has looked so golden has turned to brass; companions that  
seemed so alive have turned to dead men; and the laughter that  
was gay has turned to wailing. Instead, the far country has  
become a desert.

What the Prodigal ate served only to produce starvation.  
Starvation had taken over in his soul. He had learned too  
late that sin is just simply madness. It is not shrewdness.  
Almost too late he had learned that God not only gives  
us laws by which to live, but he is the one who gives life.

Without God we are not truly alive; we are dead while we yet  
live. Man can make almost anything but life. We do not see  
the source of life but we do see its manifestations wherever  
we look.

Now we cannot see God, but we can see the constant  
result of his presence. If man is doing what God wants him  
to do, he is happy; if man is where God wants him to be, he  
is happy. Sin is when we are in the wrong place. Birds  
belong in the air; fish belong in the water; man belongs in  
the will of God, and this is the most appropriate place for  
young people to be and to desire to be and to seek to be and  
to pray to be and to be certain to do the will of God.

### III. The typical penitent.

Though the Prodigal had wasted his money, his opportuni-  
ties, and much of his personality, there was one thing that  
he had not exhausted—his conscience.

V.17 Conscience is man's most faithful friend. The sinner  
doesn't always realize that. A man once who was trying to  
sleep on a hot night was kept awake by his dog barking, and he  
had tied him beneath the window. After everything he tried  
to do had not quieted him, he killed the dog. Not long after  
that, a thief came along at whom the dog had been barking,  
climbed through the window. A fight followed and the man was



will the old man be here to stand in my way?" And it was not reasonable that he should stay there on the farm, and so he said, "Father give me..."

This was the first step of the young man's heart on his way down in the pit. Keep a young man's thoughts and imagination clean and he is safe, but once polluted by a bad book, a bad companionship, and a young man and his imagination, then nothing in the world can hold him back. And not many days thereafter, he took his journey into a far country. Unclean affections and a God abandoned heart—that is the far country. And when he had spent all there arose up a mighty famine in the land and he began to be in want. With one mighty sentence there is a perfect picture of the far country. Now he had no chance; he had wasted his substance in riotous living. What hope was there for him? What could a penniless spendthrift do?

And when he came to himself—underscore these words; underline them; it would be good to print them in capitals; it would be nice to engrave them in letters of gold for up until now sin had abounded. All ready we find now the grace of God taking hold in his heart, and he began to think about home. When he came to himself. When he was yet a great way off his father saw him. And we see him. Our Lord sees him

His repentance began with the desire to return. The far country disgusted him while the land he once despised became the desire of his heart. He wanted the shelter of his father's house.

If he only could be away from the hogs and back among the old scenes of his childhood. If he had no shelter from life's storms neither does a lost man—he wants rest. How weary was his soul; how hectic his days and nights; life was without purpose; how he wanted to relax once more at the close of day. Sinners find that life becomes more weary each year in the deep of the night with only the eyes of darkness looking at them. They long for the capacity to rest.

V. 18 But more than all of this, the Prodigal wanted forgiveness. He knew how to get forgiveness; "Father I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight am no more worthy to be called Thy son." How great God must yearn to hear our prayers like that unto Him.

#### IV. The typical forgiveness.

V. 20 "And when he was yet a great way off (his father) saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. When Jesus wanted us to know about God's eager desire to save us, He gave us these words that have no equal for compassion, love and mercy. (Old Man sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch jumped up - Broke the back of the screen



What a reception? It's not difficult to imagine the father looking from some high place on his farm for the boy who had gone away. The story from Luke makes it plain that the father never ceased to look for his return.

V. 22-24  
He fell on his neck and kissed him. There was no command, no suggestion that he must go and wash first, for his father fell on his neck. God takes us just as we are when we come with that plea, "Father, be merciful to me a sinner." Even while the Prodigal was confessing, the father interrupted him and said, "Yes son, I know that you have sinned. But I saw the repentance in your heart the minute you turned around and walked away from sin with the hogs and you started home."

He said, "Servants, bring in the best robe, the best we have, and put it on him. Prepare a feast for him. This son was lost and is now come home. He was dead to decency and shame and now he is alive to God and to duty."

*(Prophet in London - Told my next boy, go home your father will be faithful for you. Went home - later, he did walk out - Not " " " " " But nearly killed me!*

The story of the Prodigal is not over. Day by day all over the world wherever the Gospel is preached, the Prodigal is coming to God. No matter how deep into the slim of sin he may have fallen, the hand of God can go out still deeper to lift him, to clothe him. Jesus said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Billy Sunday used to

say, "If God would give me just five minutes to preach to the people in Hell, I would stand at the entrance and repeat the invitation of Jesus—'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' I could empty Hell if everyone there would believe those words."

But sinners must know what the Prodigal learned. The pig pen will never leave you; you must leave it.

Sin never willingly leaves you; you must walk away from them to the seat of God.

Joseph did not have the temptation of sin to leave him but he walked away from temptation.

Veshti, the Queen, did not yield to the temptation but she walked away from the temptation.

You must begin where you are, where you stand now, and make your journey. Every journey away from sin and to God begins with the first step. As we think of how tragic and yet how wonderful this story is, it certainly causes us joy. Here is a young man, a man with a little money who can command almost anything in a great city. A young man who has never been away from home. When he thinks of the gang, the shows, the theaters, the circuses, the feasts, the dances, and everything that his heart desires with the good purse can buy it. "How long will my father live," he began to ask. "How long



and He makes us see him. Look at him. Look how he runs. He is walking away from sin. No, he's running like a man running for his life. He forgets his bleeding feet and his hungry stomach. He outstrips everybody on the same road; he runs as he has never ran before. And when he comes to the first sight of his father's house his strength suddenly fails him. Then all of this long time in the far country, his father's gray hairs have increased. His father had never been the same man since that evil day when his son had left his father's door without kissing him goodbye. He had ever since that day gone up and down his house, a broken hearted man. And every night also he sat and looked outside his window until the darkness fell again on all the land, and in the darkness he listened all the night for a footstep that never came.

But at last, one day his son walked away from sin, and he said that his long, lost son was now saved. Yes, that's a fatal day when a young man hears a bad story. It's a fatal day when somebody whispers in the heart of an innocent young man some evil secret of Satan's kingdom and his imagination is set on fire and he pictures sin and he sees secret delight. It's a sad day when a bad companion takes over his life or a bad book will do it or a bad picture will do it. And it is being done every day on the streets of this city and in the

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schools of this city, and in the colleges. A bad story, book will do it, a bad song will do it. They cannot be in this world and flee and escape it. Every man is certain to run into these evil things. Oh, that somebody would supply a knife to cut out this corrupt spot out of the memory of every heart. And when he was a great way off--nothing is more truer than the history of man walking from sin.

Old Barn Drinker - won by Sal Army -

He came in a Public house with hand full of journals.

Man on Sati, pockets full of money, drinking -

Invited him to drink a pot of Beer -

Offered him some reward money -

Refused - Not in Thousands -

One thing a pot of Beer into his face - laughter -

Jim - Still - I don't want drink -

Collection - left, walked away, pocket full of money,

+ also he left as a hero