

WHAT MADE HIM TURN?

Every Bible student is familiar with the account in Lk. 15:11ff of the prodigal son. He was that young man who took his father's gracious blessings and wasted them in riotous living. Anyone who has ever rejected His Father's will can identify with the son who came to his senses in the mire of a hog pen and made up his mind to return home. One relevancy of this story is found in the reasoning of this young man facing the consequences of his unwise choices. Understanding what made him turn may help us understand how to reach others to bring them home to the Father also. So...what made him turn?

It is too easy to say, "the filth of the hog pen." There are many people who live in the hog pen of sin and have developed a liking for it. Consider it an "acquired taste" if you wish, but it's the truth. It takes more than just a disliking for hog food and mud baths to make a person swallow his pride and start back down that road he has come so far. What would be the motivation?

Perhaps he saw finally what he was missing. I note that he did not hope to be received as a son again. He had fallen so far that to be taken back as a servant was all he desired. That tells me that rather than constantly pointing out the mud hole that people may be living in (certainly there's a place for this), maybe I should be letting them see what they're missing. Of course, to show others the peace of mind, joy of heart, love of fellowship, and confidence of spirit that comes from being a Christian – I'll have to make sure they are in my life first.

Maybe his view of the road changed. Where at one time he was following his feelings without regard to which way he went – now he was older and wiser and appreciated the high cost of unwise decisions. Suddenly the road meant more to him than the destination. Impatient people sometimes set their eyes and heart on a destination without regard for others or what they will do to themselves in getting there. This young man had learned that the road to self-indulgence was a hard one. And now another destination appeared to his mind...home. The road back was just as long and lonelier than when first traveled, but I suspect this time the young man considered the path. This time he made the decision that it would be well worth the effort of travel. Can we convince others that the effort of coming to our Father is well worth it?

Lastly, I will "borrow" an idea from a recent class. Perhaps what made this young man turn was an emptiness in his own heart that could not be filled by friends, foolishness, and frolic. It has been described as a "God-sized" hole in the heart that nothing else will fill. It is the echo of Simon Peter's question, "Lord, to whom shall we

go?” When men open their eyes and finally realize there is nowhere else to turn, they will turn to the Father. It is sad to see one come to this point in his life, but it is much to be preferred over those who continue to deceive themselves and drown that quiet inner voice with alcohol and shouts of mirth.

There are many reasons to turn to God and no good reason not to. Let me encourage you to try and figure out the “turning point” of those you care about so that you can stir them to come to God. God bless your efforts.

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