

Application

4. What signs do you see in your life that you might be like a Pharisee, either in your attitudes or your actions? What do you plan to do about it this week?

5. Psalm 51:13-15 are David's promise to share the joy of restored fellowship with God with other "transgressors" and "sinners". We are quick to apply this passage to younger brothers. How would you convince an older brother that they need the same restoration?

MARCH 18, 2018

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THE ART OF REBELLION

TOPICS: REPENTANCE, PHARISEE, FORGIVENESS

THE COVERT REBEL (They're Harder to Spot than You Think) Luke 15:1-32

"Revolt is revolt whether it is militant, blatant rebellion or quiet, respectable indifference.

Cited by Lou Nicholes, Missionary/Author

A recent survey gauged Christ-likeness vs. Pharisaic attitudes¹ and found the following results in theologically Evangelical Christians:

- Christ-like in action and attitude – 23%
- Christ-like in action, but not in attitude – 25%
- Christ-like in attitude, but not action – 15%
- Christ-like in neither – 38%

Clearly, we have a long way to go!

The Barna Group

The incomplete story

The story addresses two audiences, not just one.

The older brother was responsible, obedient, morally pure, and oriented to serve (to the point of exhaustion).

He prided himself in his devotion to duty.

He believed in holding people accountable for their actions.

¹ <https://www.barna.com/research/christians-more-like-jesus-or-pharisees/>

Two brothers return home

A repentant, broken brother, and an angry, vengeful brother and a dad who **reaches out to both in reason and compassion**.

What is wrong with dad?

Where's the **punishment**?

Where's the **reward**?

The older son takes the "**moral high ground**." Sin must be punished!

Words to a wary audience (Pharisees didn't look as bad as we think)

We become older brothers when we ...

- Selectively obey – Matthew 23:23
- Focus on the little stuff & ignore the big stuff – Matt 23:24
- Are externally moral but internally corrupt – Matt 23:25
- Self-promote at others' expense – Luke 18:11
- Critical of others without offering hope Luke 11:46
- Separate from others because of their need – Luke 7:39

There's a little Pharisee in all of us. The older brother isn't always someone else!

Getting to Know You

1. What is the earliest thing that you can remember that happened to you? Is it a good memory or a bad one?

Into the Bible

2. Last week, we talked about the downward spiral of the younger son's rebellion. What are the steps that the older brother took in his covert rebellion? (Luke 15:28-30)
3. Compare Luke 15:30 with Luke 15:2. How do these two verses show us that in describing the older brother, Jesus is aiming the parable at the Pharisees and teachers of the law?