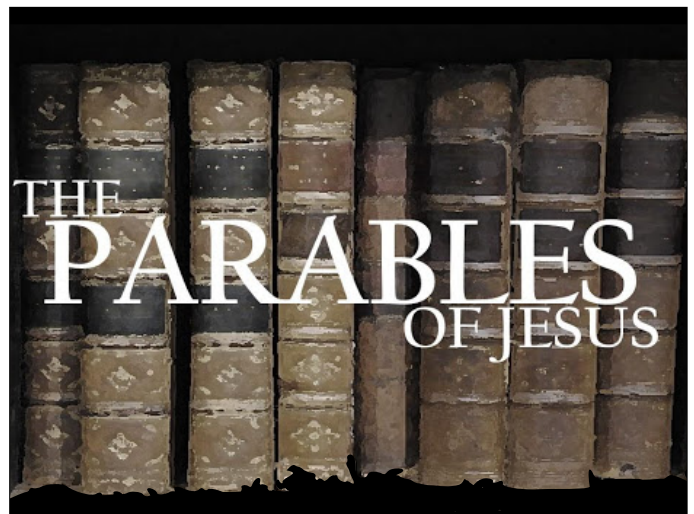
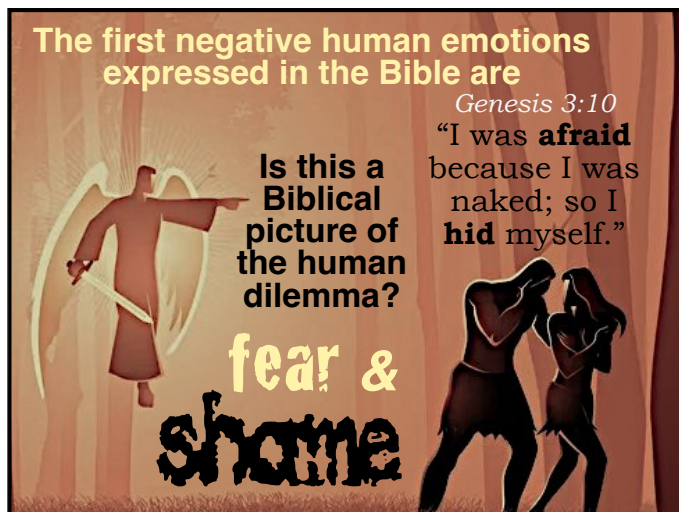




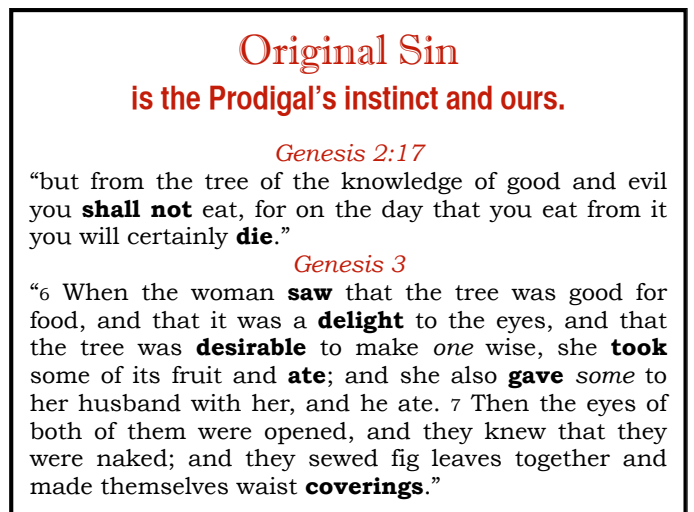
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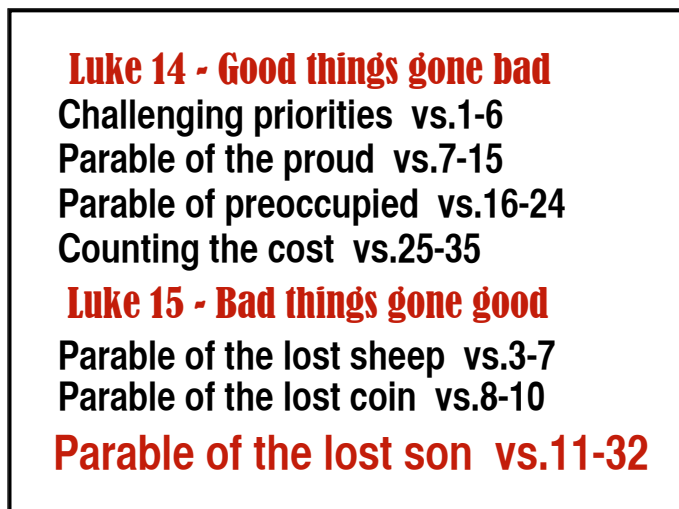
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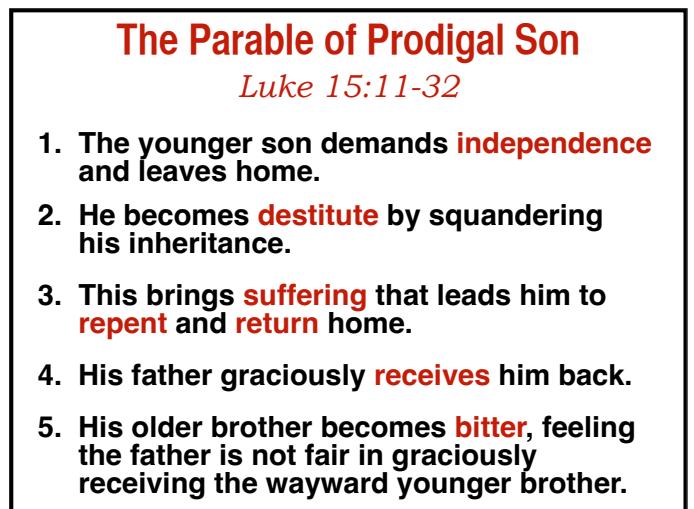
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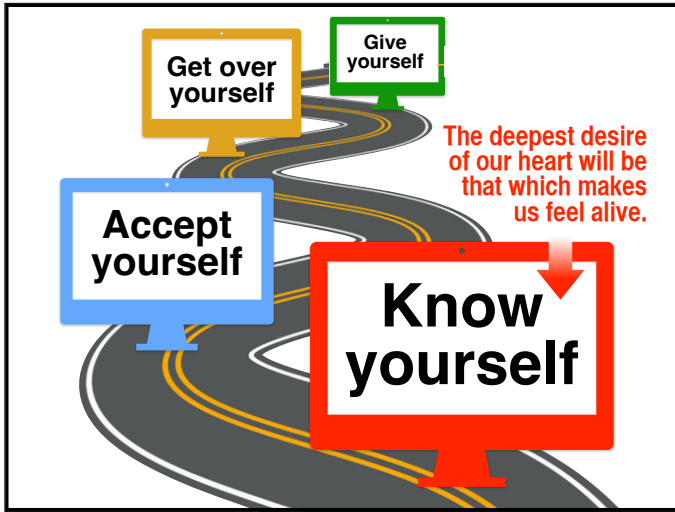
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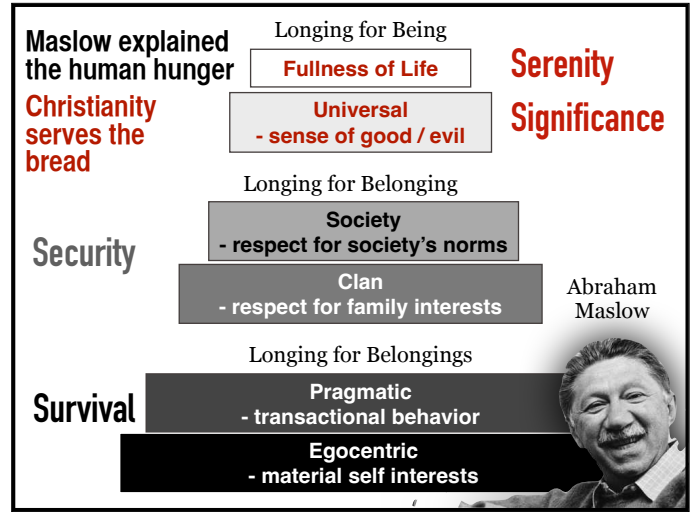
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7



8

#1 Identifying the human dilemma
Declaration of Independence

- **Root - Spiritual change of address**

"11 And he (Jesus) said, "A man had two sons." 12 and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. 13 And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a **journey into a distant country**, and there he **squandered his estate** with loose living."

- **Fruitless - Tactical waste of life**

9

Luke 15

"11 And He said, "A certain man had two sons; 12 and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. 13 And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living."

14 Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him."

#2 Feeling the Pain of bad choices
Total Depravity
 (consequences of independence)

10

Paul echoes the point of the dilemma of the Prodigal Son and all humanity.

Romans 1

"21 For even though they knew God, **they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.** 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore **God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity**, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them."

11

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

C.S. Lewis

12

Our character is developed by and demonstrated in



our response to life's UPS and DOWNS.

13

FEAR & Shame

are God's tools before we come to Christ and if we don't,



they can be Satan's tools after.



14

In times of testing, our first question must not be, 'HOW can I get out of this?'

but '**WHAT** should I get out of this and bring to this?'

15

Natural disasters are called acts of God when they really are calling for acts of God.

God's will for circumstances may be a mystery, but His **will for our response is not.**

16

The Gospel is **good news** that starts with a **Declaration of Independence**

- ✓ Deeply embedded in human nature.
- ✓ At the heart of American culture.
- ✓ It awakens us to our hunger for life.
- ✓ A window into our search for peace.
- ✓ A doorway to authentic Christian faith.

The **sad news** is that it includes the "Way of the Cross", which is not the "American dream".



17

"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Jeremiah 2:13



18

Jesus' words to someone else from a distant land.

The Woman of Samaria

John 4

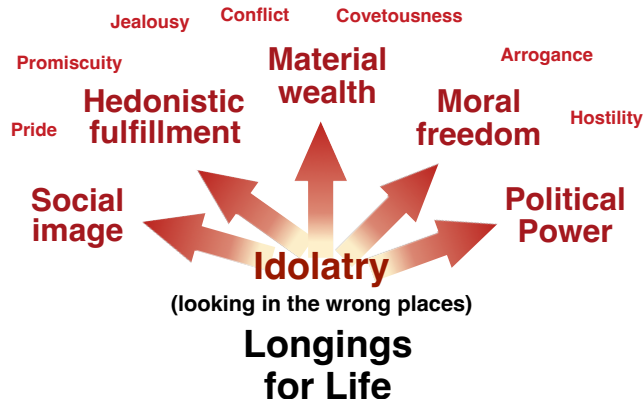
“13 Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water

shall thirst again;

14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him **a well of water springing up to eternal life.**”

19

“distant lands”



20

Our distant country (secular humanism)

Defining reality and making decisions as though God does not exist or does not matter.



- It's all about **this life**.
- MY hope is built on **this world**.
- God saves me **with MY dreams**.
- MY problems are **environmental**.
- I am **entitled to chase MY dreams**.
- Sin is reduced to **breaking the rules**.

21

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” *John 10:10*

The deepest desire of our heart is to live an abundant life, to be fully human, bearing God's Image.

22

In this life we share the fellowship of his suffering on our way to a banquet of his glory with an appetite for and display of a peace the world can't give or take away.



Our freedom is not from the suffering of this life so much as from the shame and isolation that it implies.

23

“Good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment.”

Fred Brooks

A loser is not defined by the scoreboard but by the learning chart.



24

The 1st steps to finding life.

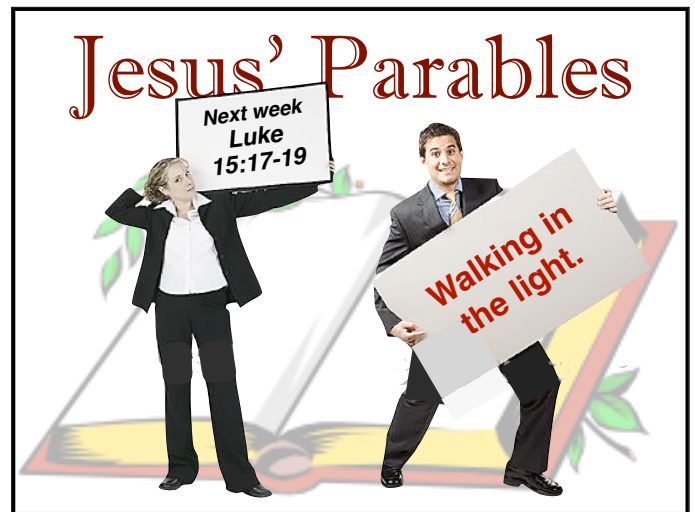
#1 Hunger for peace

- Root - “Spiritual change of address”
- Fruit - “Tactical waste of life”
- Meal - “Eating with the pigs”

#2 Learning from mistakes

- Pray for insight through, not rescue from, circumstances.
- Don't die in a distant land, on Satan's painkillers.

25



26