

# The Parable Of The Two Sons

Matthew 21:28-32

## **MEMORY VERSE**

COLOSSIANS 3:20

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Several different kinds of ripe fruit (an apple, banana, lemon, orange, grapes, pineapple, etc.), and a blindfold.

Some small, deep boxes with pictures of meals pasted on the outside, a pole with a magnet attached by a string, pictures of ingredients to each meal with a paper clip attached, and pictures of things not found in the meals posted on the boxes.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **The Matching Game**

Bring several different kinds of ripe fruit to class. Line them up on a table. Pick volunteer students to come up blindfolded in front of the class and determine which fruit is which with only their sense of smell.

Explain to the class that each fruit has its own special aroma. A repentant life does as well. The characteristic aroma or “fruit” of a repentant life is obedience. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

## **LESSON TIME!**

What do you think is more important: what you say or what you do, your words or your actions? Jesus is going to answer that question for us today. And as He answers this for us, we will learn some valuable lessons about living for Him. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

### **MATTHEW 21:28-30**

**"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'**

**"He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.**

**"Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.**

Remember that a parable is a story that throws down a spiritual truth alongside an earthly or physical reality. Here is another of Jesus' wonderful parables. How many people did you notice in this parable?

The father spoke to the first son and said, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." This first son was rebellious and wanted his own way. He said, "I will not."

After the father walked away, the rebellious son thought about things and changed his mind. He did not think about maybe working; he repented to the very core of his heart. The Bible says that he "regretted" it. He realized his rebellious heart had not acted right. He realized he had sinned by not submitting to his father. He needed to give up his will and turn toward the will of his father.

Something big and important happened in this man's heart. It changed. He gave himself over to his father's will and pleasure. He changed on the inside, and his actions on the outside changed as a result. The same is true for us. When we let God change us on the inside, it shows on the outside by what we do. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

We can learn from the first son. If we do something wrong, repent from it, and ask Jesus to forgive us, He will always make it right. God is loving and forgiving. He desires obedience, but when we fail, He is quick to restore us if we are repentant.

The second son said, "I go, sir." His words said that he could be counted on. He said "yes" to his father, which was good. It seemed that he was being obedient, but he did not follow through with his promise!

What good were his words without actions to back them up? Words without actions are worthless! He professed with his mouth to be faithful to his father, but his lack of action proved his profession to be false. His lack of "doing" made him a liar. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

## **Fishing for Supper**

Make several "fishing ponds" by using small, deep boxes (these could be made out of milk cartons or shoe boxes). Make a couple of fishing poles with wooden dowels, string, and a magnet. Paste a picture of a finished meal to the outside of the box. Inside the box, place paper clipped pictures of the ingredients for the meal posted on the outside. Include some ingredients that would not be a part of the meal as well (ie. pictures of old shoes, empty cans, or general refuse).

Have your students fish for the ingredients to their supper. When they fish out an ingredient, they must determine if it goes to the making of that supper or not. Continue until all of the ingredients for the meal are found.

Explain to your class that the ingredient to a repentant life is always obedience. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

Jesus was telling this parable to some men who considered themselves to be very holy. They seemed to say all the right things. They said with their lips that they were faithful to God, but the Bible tells us that their hearts were far from Him. Jesus, out of His great love for these men, was trying to get them to see themselves as they really were so they would repent and draw close to Him.

## **MATTHEW 21:31-32**

**"Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.**

**"For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.**

Jesus asked these men to answer His question about the two sons. He was actually asking them to judge their own lives. Jesus wanted to open their eyes, just as He wants to open our eyes, to the truth that we need to repent from our sins. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

What a privilege it is to get to repent, to change our mind and turn toward God! He loves to receive us when we repent. He forgives us and guides us into all truth.

The men Jesus was speaking to were like the second son. They said they were loyal to God, but they were not willing to see that Jesus was the Messiah. They refused to believe. They had heard John the Baptist talk about Jesus, and they knew perfectly well that John spoke the truth about Jesus, the Messiah. But they did not obey God's call.

Even the rebellious people of the day, the tax collectors and harlots, repented and turned to God. And when Jesus came, they received Him as the Messiah and accepted His forgiveness through faith. They became doers of God's will. They did not just say "yes" to God with their lips. They allowed God to work in their hearts and change them from the inside out. They obeyed God, and He changed them into loyal men and women who did His mighty work. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

## **What Am I?**

Describe the characteristics of several different kinds of fruit for your students. If you are going to describe an apple, you might say that it has seeds, a stem, and a skin, is sweet, red, grows on a tree, etc.

Have the children raise their hands to guess what you are describing. When a child guesses right, go on to another fruit and let the class guess what it is. Some fruits you may want to try are grapes, oranges, pineapples, kiwis, lemons, watermelon, grapefruit, etc.

Explain to your class that they could identify the fruit based upon the descriptions of its characteristics. The characteristic or "fruit" of a repentant life is obedience. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

This lovely story is one way Jesus used to help us look at our own lives. Am I just a "talker"? Am I a person like the second son who said, "You can count on me, God" but did not do anything? Or am I a "doer"? Does my heart's response to Jesus show in my actions and obedience to Him? **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

People who just give God lip service might say, “Oh, yes! I love God and I want to please Him!” but they keep on lying, bullying, cheating, or being rebellious to parents and teachers. That kind of person has not repented or turned away from their sin; their words are worthless. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

When we say we want to please God with our words and follow it up with our actions, we demonstrate true and pleasing faithfulness to God. God knows that our true hearts will come out in our actions. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

Invite your children to turn toward God today and repent. Be ready to pray with your children to settle the matter once and for all.

## **Parable of the Two Sons**

Select three children to act out the parable of the two sons. One child will be the father; the other two will be the sons. Instruct them to re-enact the scenes of the father requesting the sons to work in the vineyard.

After the scenes where the father makes his requests of his sons (one will answer in rebellion the other with submission), have the two sons reveal their true hearts. The first son, who answers in the negative, will have a change of heart, repent and go out into the field to work. The second son, who seemingly submits to his father, may come up with many excuses as to why obedience is not currently convenient.

Explain to your class the importance of obedience; it is a reflection of our hearts. **True repentance is shown by our obedience.**

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of repentance from self-will. If any children have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.