

## THE REBEL CHILD

*Do you remember that I promised you the story of a rebellious child who turned his back on his dad? After much difficulty, he decides to come back, but will his father welcome him? Will he accept him despite all the suffering he caused him? Will he forgive him? This is what we're going to see now. We will tell you this story, it's a parable of Jesus; you will find it in chapter 15 of the Gospel of Luke.*

### LOVE OF THE FATHER



This rich man has two sons. One day, the youngest hears about a distant land:

- I'm tired of staying here. I am going to leave! He said to his father, I need money, a lot of money, now give me my share of the inheritance, I'm not gonna wait until you're dead!

- But, my son, what you are saying is serious, you cannot do that.

- My decision is made, you are not going to hold me back; no one will change my mind!

- Don't you have everything you need here; everything is at your disposal.

- No need to insist, give me my share, I want to be free, do what I want!



One morning, his head held high, he leaves the house, the inheritance in his pocket. He happily leaves the house, full of plans for the future! His father stays on the doorstep for a long time, hoping for a look, a goodbye. When the young disappears behind the hills; the father comes back home with a heavy step, his back bent over, crushed with pain and sadness. - Today I lost my son. Will I see him again?



Every day, he fixes the horizon. But the young man is far away and so busy. He undertakes great journeys. He finds dozens of new friends

He drinks, dances, has fun, gets drunk and gets dizzy, night and day:

- Life is ahead of us, my friends, enjoy it and have fun, he often repeats.

Like in a whirlwind, days, months and years fly by at high speed, money as well!



One day, he reaches into his right pocket, and finds nothing! Nothing more in the left pocket! He shakes his wallet but nothing at all:

- Not a penny! He said to himself very surprised, but that's not possible!

He's looking for his friends, but they're all gone!

He sells what he has left, his beautiful clothes, his jewelry, even his father's gold ring ... and with this money, he continues to party!

Sometime later, he wakes up shivering:



- It's too cold now to sleep outside and it's been two days since I didn't eat anything. Someone's gonna give me a piece of bread and a piece of cheese! He knocks on doors, but they remain closed. He didn't realise that all these years he spent celebrating, famine had taken hold in the country. He is now looking for work:

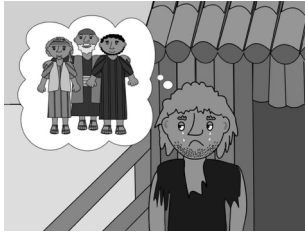
- Do you want to keep my pigs? said a peasant to him.

- No way! It's worse than anything, he told himself! ... But in reality, I have

no choice; if at least I could eat what his pigs eat!

He is ragged, muddy, extremely thin.

But what happened to this handsome rich young man, resplendent with health and life? What did he become? He begins to think; memories of his childhood come back to him ... fatherly home, moments of joy, of sharing, the love of his father, the table laden with delicious food, and ...his departure, his father's sad look:



- My father ... What happened to my father? He thinks, it's been so long since I left home! He regrets his contempt, his arrogance, his folly:

- At my father's house, even the workers have to eat as much as they want and I, here, I'm going to starve. I want to go back home. But will he accept to receive me after all the harm I did to him? He must be very angry. I made him suffer so much. I will tell him the truth, I'll tell him:

- Daddy! I have done wrong, I have sinned; I don't deserve to be your son anymore but, I beg you, accept me as a servant. Will he forgive me?

The young man sets out painfully. He left rich and happy, he comes back miserable and ashamed. He sees familiar places again; emotion seizes him, tears flow. The closer he gets, the more he slows down, he is so ashamed, he imagines himself in front of his father.

Suddenly he sees someone running towards him:



- My son! My son! Finally you're here! I saw you from afar, I ran up, I've been waiting for you for so long time!

He hugs him and kisses him.

The young man is in tears.

- Dad! Dad! I have sinned against God and against you. Don't call me your son anymore, I don't deserve it, but if you will forgive me, I will be one of your servants:

- No! You are not a servant but you are my son. For me, all these years, you were lost, as if dead, and now there you are! Finally, I found you!

All the servants are gathered:

- My son is back! Quickly prepare the most beautiful clothes, put a ring on his finger because he's still my son. He walked barefoot like slaves, but give him shoes because now he's a free man.

- Prepare a big feast! We will rejoice because my son who was dead has come back to life. He was lost and today I found it. This is my greatest joy; I want to share it with you!

## 1, 2 3, 4 AND YOU AND ME!



*Do you understand why Jesus told this parable? He wants to show us the love of God for each of us, for you and for me. He is ready to receive and forgive us. Did you notice how the son came back to his father? He was no longer the proud and arrogant young man... No, it was over. He just told the truth and he asked for forgiveness.*

*When you'll be alone, still, think about what Jesus tells us in this parable. If you told God, your Father, what is in your heart, if you asked for forgiveness, he would welcome you as his child.*

## 4, 3, 2, 1 AND WE PARENTS!



*A little child easily trusts his or her parents and God but a bigger one, a teenager, may have more difficulty doing this. In this parable, Jesus highlights the way to come to God, his welcome and the forgiveness he reserves for us. Make sure your children have understood it well. Let them tell or act out the story; you will share with them enriching moments. Maybe you are disappointed because one of your children is opposed to God and to yourself? Take heart, it was the memory of his father's love that prompted the young man to repent and come back. Continue to pray so that they question themselves and take the path of the return to God.*