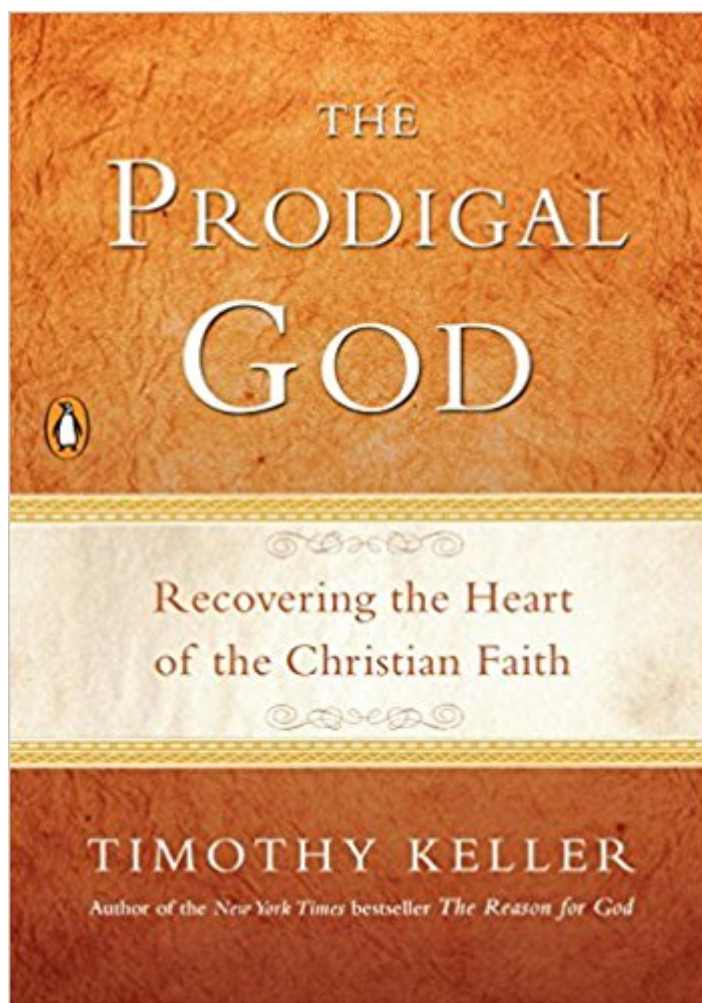


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The Prodigal God: Recovering The Heart Of The Christian Faith



Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling author of the forthcoming *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life* uncovers the essential message of Jesus, locked inside his most familiar parable. Newsweek called renowned minister Timothy Keller "a C.S. Lewis for the twenty-first century" in a feature on his first book, *The Reason for God*. In that book, he offered a rational explanation of why we should believe in God. Now, in *The Prodigal God*, Keller takes his trademark intellectual approach to understanding Christianity and uses the parable of the prodigal son to reveal an unexpected message of hope and salvation. Within that parable Jesus reveals God's prodigal grace toward both the irreligious and the moralistic. This book will challenge both the devout and skeptics to see Christianity in a whole new way.

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Timothy Keller and *The Prodigal God*"Thrilling . . . Brilliant. Keller elegantly explains the goodness of God, redefining sin, lostness, grace, and salvation." —HeartsandMinds.com"An amazing, thought-provoking, illuminating work." —Examiner.com"The insights Tim Keller has about the two individuals in the story, and about the heart of God who loves them both, wrecked me afresh. Tim's thoughts deserve a hearing worldwide." —Bill Hybels, founding and senior pastor, Willow Creek Community Church"Explain, explode, expose, explore—all of these Jesus did by telling the parable of the prodigal son. In this book, Timothy Keller shows us something of how this story actually reveals the heart of God, and, if we read it carefully, our own hearts. This

brief exposition is unsettling and surprisingly satisfying. Like seeing something as your own home, or your own self, with new eyes. Enjoy and profit." —Mark Dever, senior pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, D.C. "When it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ, Timothy Keller is simply brilliant." —Mark Driscoll, pastor, Mars Hill Church and president, Acts 29 Church Planting Network "Keller will be remembered as a pioneer of the new urban Christians." —Christianity Today magazine "I thank God for him." —Billy Graham

Timothy Keller was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Bucknell University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary. His first pastorate was in Hopewell, Virginia. In 1989 he started Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City with his wife, Kathy, and their three sons. Today, Redeemer has nearly six thousand regular Sunday attendees and has helped to start more than three hundred new churches around the world. He is the author of *The Songs of Jesus*, *Prayer*, *Encounters with Jesus*, *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, *Every Good Endeavor*, and *The Meaning of Marriage*, among others, including the perennial bestsellers *The Reason for God* and *The Prodigal God*.

A lot of the books I read on here are for my personal study, and my personal interests, hence the chess books, but this book was for a sermon series that I have developed on the Prodigal Son parable. I have planned a year's worth of sermons, so before I start a new series of lessons, I begin to read about the topic. This was why I selected the book. I wanted to blend something that was popular level with some scholarly reading on this parable. This book was insightful, and practical, and easy to read. I have never read any of Keller's material before, and left this book impressed. He is a good author, and does his homework in the text. The book tells the story of the Prodigal Son, though he notes that this is perhaps not the best title for the parable. The book looks at the major characters of the parable, which was helpful because that was the way I developed the series of lessons. He does a good job of highlighting the point of the parable within the attitude of the older brother, and using some of Willimon's material, of preaching to the baptized, this created a lot of connection to the text. A lot of the people in church will agree with the sinner coming home, but demonstrating the attitude of the older brother is the common sin in numerous church pews. The book does a good job of bridging the ancient social context with the modern world. This book helped with the sermon series and it would be a good book just to read on its own. It is short, interesting, and good.

This book has a well defined perspective that makes this worth working through. As a study, it's been full of strong discussion material and new understanding for group members.

I was taken by surprise by how the author talked about a prodigal God. It talked about the Prodigal Son and how both sons were wrong in their behavior in order to inherit their father's money. I found this book very interesting and I recommend it to anybody who maybe curious why the oldest son, who stayed home, was wrong in his actions.

Prodigal God had an enormous impact on my thinking related to my sin and God's love. Chapters 3 and 4 in particular helped me understand that rule-following "elder brother" attitudes are as toxic to my life as are rule-breaking "younger brother" attitudes. That was such a profound shift for me, that I can't help but sharing it with others. Since I finished the book, I have taught it in my community group at our church, given it as a gift (audio and kindle) to my brother and dad, and referred to it countless times in conversations with both Christ followers and seekers. In a short 149 pages, Timothy Keller will transform the way you think about relationships.

I never understood the full implications of the parable of the prodigal son. I appreciate getting the full story in a beautifully written book. The last part is about the necessity of faith. This is a little harder to like, because the author says that you cannot fully be a good person if you do not accept Jesus as your god. Perhaps this is true but if it is, than that's how it goes. In this case, I can not realize my full potential, since nothing but worshipping Jesus, accepting the Bible as the holy word of god, and belonging to a church can get you there. If you see nothing that you recognize as proof of something, than you don't.

Great thought provoking book for individual or group study. You will never look at this parable the same way again.

The parable of the prodigal son is oft explored as an affirmation of God's love, particularly toward those who have been reckless but now recognize Him as the source of salvation and fulfillment. Keller, then, opts not to repeat and rehash the exposition of other teachers. Rather, he looks at the character often ignored: the elder brother. In his book, Keller makes the case that the elder brother necessarily deserves at least equal emphasis as the younger brother, particularly in light of the fact

that with this parable Jesus was addressing the Pharisees, whom the elder brother represents. From this he teaches about the elder brother's role in the story, his heart, his response to the father, and the applicability of the elder brother to Christian life. Keller spends the first five of seven chapters diving into the younger-elder brother contrast in detail. He shows the error of legalism, how it is a symptom of pride, and how it leads to a sense of entitlement. Elder brothers adhere externally and joylessly to the law in exchange for favors owed. But God is prodigal--that is, "reckless"--and He is merciful to save worldly younger brothers and moralistic elder brothers alike. But the final two chapters are where I think this book truly comes into its own. After talking about the problems--sins, really--of the two sons, Keller finishes his book with a look at the father. He looks at the parable's relation to the gospel, as well as a look at what a believer's life should look like in light of the gospel and this parable. God the Father sent His Son to pay the price for our homecoming. He crushed His Son on the cross so that we might be welcomed into heaven, and eventually the new earth, to live in an eternal home with God. And in that eternity, there will be great feasting (Rev. 19, Is. 25, Matt. 8:11). His last chapter, focusing on the "Feast of the Father," shows how we ought to live in experiential enjoyment of God. Keller does a good job of tying all the previous material back to applicability and how it works for God's glory. I found that these two chapters helped me understand more the grace of God, our subsequent gratification in God, and how they glorify God. Who is this book for? I think this book is best suited for non-believers and new believers, to correct any misconceptions they have about how to live the Christian faith. It clearly demonstrates the folly of legalism and introduces how we ought to live in enjoyment of God and the gospel. This book contains a good presentation of the gospel, which will be of great benefit for non-believers. For believers who are older and more mature in the faith, this book is a welcome reminder of why God does not accept legalism. I do have to note that I don't think this will be as substantive for older, more mature believers. Since the final chapter of this book covers, briefly, the same material as John Piper's "Desiring God," I find that they pair very well together. I happened to be reading "Desiring God" at the same time as "The Prodigal God," and I found this book's final chapter to be an excellent introduction to the principles explained in "Desiring God." More mature believers may benefit from the greater extent to which Piper discusses the enjoyment of God. Still, this book is helpful at causing us to search ourselves to see if we have become complacent and legalistic in our faith. This book is not dense. It is not a multi-hundred page exposition and exploration of this parable. It is a concise look at the tale and its implications for the life of a true Christian. Neither is any of the material particularly groundbreaking, but it is solid teaching and a good reminder of the fact that elder brothers in the church, proponents of pride and legalism, are wayward sons. "The

Prodigal God" is a quick and helpful read examining and denouncing pride and legalism and exalting the all-surpassing love of the Father.

One of the best books I have ever read. I felt proud that I was not like the younger brother, but after reading this book I am ashamed that I am so much like the older brother. Accept Jesus Christ as your Savior today before it is too late. He paid the price for your sins.

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