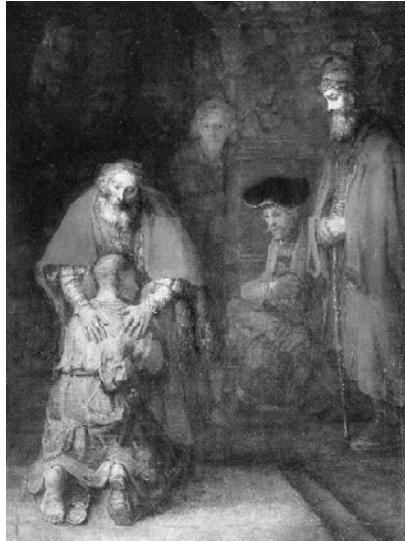


# **Prodigal** "THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RETURNED"

*A JOURNEY OF FREEDOM, HOPE, AND TRANSFORMATION FOR MEN*



## **JOURNEYMAN**

DALE POLLARD

BARON MILLER & J. MICHAEL MATKIN

EDITED BY RICHARD MYERS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

  
INTEGRITY  
INTENSITY  
INTENTION

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Bellingham, WA*

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Note:

For information on how to be trained to start and coordinate a Prodigal Men's Ministry group in your local church, contact Dr Dale Pollard at Prodigal Men's Ministry Central at (360-67-0081) or e-mail at [pollardo@openaccess.org](mailto:pollardo@openaccess.org).

# Welcome Back

**Welcome back to Prodigal Men's Ministry!** On behalf of the over 200 men who have been part of this ministry since it started in 1995, and on behalf of the leadership of this group, we welcome you once again into "**The Fellowship of the Returned**".

In the first phase (the **Apprentice** phase) you were asked to complete Four Objectives and to commit to meeting for at least nine months. You've completed that phase and are ready to journey into more of God's depth, healing, and direction. Remember, this life's journey is never over and God, by embracing us, is always leading us to discover new things about our faith as he transforms our fears and struggles into strength and service.

In the second phase (the **Journeyman** phase) you will complete Objectives Five through Eight. At the beginning of the second phase the Lord's work in your life will be apparent if there is an attitude of daily surrender to his will. By the end of the Journeyman phase you could be a maturing leader, praying and living passionately in community. The Lord is calling you to serve and lead in this ministry and in your community of faith. Remember, we do not lead alone in this life; we serve alongside others in humility and honor. We serve as men of **Integrity, Intensity, and Intention!**

The final phase is the **Craftsman** (Leadership) phase. When you enter into this part of the journey, you will plunge deep into Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, concentrating on the Beatitudes, as well as His words of compassion as described in the Parable of Good Samaritan. The **Craftsman** phase focuses on prayer and service within community, growing more and more into Jesus' image. A central element to the Craftsman journey is the participation in a two-year cycle of monthly reflections named **Coracles**. These monthly reflections are avenues of prayer, spiritual formation and community building not only for Prodigal but for your family as well. Being immersed in these reflections tie us into a rhythm of life and a connection to a larger and more in-depth vision of Jesus and community that will enhance and shape the specific Prodigal ministry as a weekly place of rest and Sabbath.

Some of you will be asked to help lead a small group as you begin this year's Journeyman adventure. Please pray about this invitation. Leaders must commit to attending Leadership Meetings one hour

before the group begins. In addition, you will need to read and agree with the Leadership Guidelines in the Prodigal Leadership manual.

Leaders of a fully developed Prodigal ministry are men who have entered the journey fully, having completed the Eight Objectives, and who've committed themselves to guiding others. In the beginning stages of a Prodigal ministry group in your church or fellowship, leaders must be men who are actively making progress in completing the Objectives. We can't take anyone farther than we've gone ourselves. That's why, when the Prodigal ministry of which you're a part has fully matured, everyone who leads should have completed all the Objectives. Your brothers may rightly expect this of you as a leader, and you may expect this of anyone who is leading you. To lead others in Prodigal, you must complete the Objectives or at least be committed to doing so and be actively on your way to carrying out that commitment. You must be living in growing **surrender** and **maturity** in our Lord. We expect a lot from men and they seldom disappoint us. We know that the Lord fills us with **power** and with **courage** as we move forward together. But, first things first!

Please take time to update your Action Plan (see Appendix A for an example) and your Value Statements (see Appendix B and C for examples of Value Statements). Be sure to finish these by the time you begin Objective Six.

Once again welcome to an adventure into the very heart of our Triune God of Grace! With feasting, with fellowship, and with fortitude we ask the Holy Spirit to guide as we traverse the wilderness and the waters of this journey together. It's time to invite Jesus to make us more like the father in the parable, able to embrace men who need a place of home, of hope, and of healing.

**Soli Deo Gloria!**

**Prodigal**  
"THE FELLOWSHIP  
OF THE RETURNED"



# Introduction Materials



## Vision/Mission

Our passion and commitment is to enable men through the transforming power of the Gospel, to live in freedom, obedience and holiness within the context of spiritual friendships and community involvement.

## Purpose

Our goal is for every man to experience a journey of repentance, hope, and joy in the forgiving and loving heart of God the Father. The Father creates in us new lives of purity and purpose, dedicated to loving service within the family, church, workplace, and community.

## Values

Our conviction is that all men desire authentic relationships and purpose, purity of heart and conduct, and Sabbath rest and peace with our Triune God of Grace. We help develop this conviction through three core values:

- 1) **Integrity:** In honesty and humility, every man can be a consistent witness, true to his values and beliefs and a resource and mentor for others.
- 2) **Intensity:** With a growing passion to see Jesus formed in himself and all people, every man can trust the Holy Spirit to gift him and assist him in discovering and outlining the Lord's true priorities in his life.
- 3) **Intention:** With a dedicated and resolute purpose, every man can pursue the redemptive goals of discipleship in every area of life, vocation, and community.

## Statement of Faith

### ***We at Prodigal Believe In:***

*God, the Father, who creates and sustains us;  
Jesus Christ, the Son who redeems and rules us;  
The Holy Spirit, who guides us personally  
and professionally through God's inspired Word,  
the Bible, our infallible guide of faith and conduct,  
and through the fellowship of the Christian Church.*



# Format & Expectations

## Prodigal Regular & Summer Sessions

- **Regular Prodigal Season:** Beginning of October to the end of May
- **Summer Prodigal Season:** Beginning of June to end of September

## Prodigal Regular Session Format

6:15 – 6:45	Mealtime
6:45 – 6:50	Announcements
6:50 – 7:00	Devotion
7:00 – 7:35	Worship and prayer
7:35 – 8:00	Teaching
8:00 – 9:00	Small groups

## Expectations for Participation

- Confidentiality
- No judgmental attitudes
- Everyone participates
- Make group times a priority
- Show up on time
- End on time
- Complete assignments on time
- Let your group leaders know of an absence
- Help create an atmosphere of honesty, prayer, and respect
- Contribute to group meal and cleanup responsibilities

- Practice mercy and patience and love
- Contact fellow small group members outside of group time

## Goals for Each Individual

- Growth in Jesus
- Spiritual depth
- Following Jesus in all we do
- Power to overcome obstacles
- Friendships
- Service and passion

## Suggested Donation

- \$90.00 per person per year
- No one is turned away for lack of money

## Prodigal Summer Session Format

6:15pm	Start the BBQing
7:00pm	Eats/treats and greetings
7:15pm	Gather and worship
7:30pm	Singing and prayer
7:45pm	Teaching and small group interaction
8:30pm	Prayer and ending

# Prodigal Small Groups

## Participants

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An ideal small group in Prodigal has 4-6 participants, one leader, and one co-leader to assist. The leader's job is not so much to "lead", as to facilitate the group process. Prayer is the root of this process. The purpose of Prodigal small groups is to make a safe (confidential) place for you to share and pray for what is going on in your lives. For the group to be successful, some boundaries must be in place. These are:

- Confidentiality
- Beginning and ending on time
- Keeping to task (prayer) and keeping to purpose (personal issues)
- Minimizing cross talk

When you uphold these boundaries, you help establish an orderly small group framework. Prodigal small groups usually operate for one hour, from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The material you discuss and pray over in the small groups should be directly related (as much as possible) to the evening's teaching. As men come together for worship and teaching, we call on the Lord to reveal to us "great and mighty things which we do not know." (Jer. 33:3) As these revelations occur, our small group is the place where we do business with the Lord. It is where we share with the group what God is telling us and how it affects us, and then begin to pray for ourselves while the others in the group silently intercede.

### Confidentiality:

It is paramount to uphold confidentiality in a Prodigal small group. By not sharing any stories, no matter how ambiguous, with your wives, friends, roommates, or even other pastors, you protect your fellow group members and yourself from gossip. However, there are appropriate times that your small group leader may need to breach confidentiality, but only if the safety of others is at risk. Also, be sure to sign the confidentiality statement. No group may proceed unless all participants have turned in their confidentiality statements to the small group leader and he has given them to the Prodigal Coordinator.

### Beginning and Ending:

As we teach and model the concept of boundaries, one needed yet challenging boundary is to start and end small group sessions on time. With men eager to share in a small group and receive prayer, the group must begin as close to 8:00 PM as possible. Also, out of respect for our kids in childcare and wives at home, it is important to end on time and go home.

### Task and Purpose:

During prayer the facilitator may begin the time of prayer by acknowledging what God is saying to the group member and then allowing the individual to pray to God himself for what is going on in his life. This is a time to confess sin and allow God to forgive you, as well as to acknowledge whatever else God is saying about character flaws, past hurts, current issues, and future direction.

This process of prayer is intensive, and the group may not pray for all group members each night. This is okay, as God may not stir all members to ask for prayer either. Whatever the case, the next week of ministry will begin with prayer for those over whom the group didn't pray the previous week. It is better to respect and model the group boundaries by finishing on time and not praying for everyone than it is to squeeze in some "quota" prayer time while checking the watch, hurrying the process merely to "take care of" everyone.

Also, limit your sharing to what is happening to you, not what is happening to ex-wives, parents, your boss, or rowdy teenager. At times, of course, you'll need to talk about your relationships with other people, but it's important to focus on your own feelings and actions in the relationship, not other people's problem behavior. It is important that you share about what is happening to you, not others.

### Cross Talk:

Cross talk is natural in any group, especially in the group's early stages. Prodigal men love to give advice, which is fine during fellowship over snacks. However, it is detrimental during the small group time. Remember, the task is prayer, not counseling, and the focus is the guy who is sharing, not any one person's remedy for fixing. All men must covenant to uphold the sanctity of the small group. In the beginning of the ministry year, the small group will devote some time to allow members to share more generally about themselves, allowing men to bond so that when the time comes the group is ready to "do business." If cross talk persists, your facilitator may intervene and redirect the group's focus, reminding the person that by cross talking, he is not listening to the man who is sharing and thus he is not respecting group boundaries. Hopefully, though, by addressing this issue in the early stage of group development, men will be respectful and listen well to one another.

# Journeyman Phase Schedule (Sample)



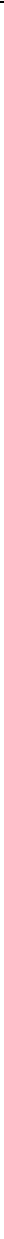
Week	Date	Topic	Teacher
1		Welcome/Overview, Parable & Stories	
2		Youngest Son	
3		Oldest Son	
4		Father (Small Groups & Notebooks)	
5		<b>Objective Five: Reconciliation</b> Forgiveness Part Two	
6		Restoring Honor and Dignity	
7		Prodigal Masculinity	
8		Christ and Women	
<i>Happy Thanksgiving - No man without an invitation to a feast!</i>			
9		The Reconciling Love of God	
10		Objective Five: Workshop & Worship	
11		<b>Objective Six: Restoration</b> All Things New (Renew commitment)	
<i>Christmas Break for two weeks! Optional meeting on the last Thursday of the year.</i>			
12		Relationships and the Triune Life of God	
13		The New Humanity: The Gift of Reconciliation and Restoration	
14		Character Restored	
15		Family of Origin	
16		Objective Six: Workshop & Worship	
17		<b>Objective Seven: Awareness</b> All in the Family	
18		Staying Up-To-Date	
19		Fun & Fellowship Night	
20		Spiritual Gifts and Service	
21		The Community of Faith	
22		Spiritual Fitness (Disciplines)	
23		Objective Seven: Workshop & Worship	

24		<b>Objective Eight: Awakening</b> The Great Awakening; Men and Emotions	
25		<i>R &amp; R night and Men's Retreat preparations</i>	
<i>Men's Retreat—Friday-Sunday between weeks 25 and 26</i>			
26		Sanctification and the Christian Life	
27		Spiritual Leadership	
28		The Gospel of Grace: Turning a Grain of Sand into a Pearl	
29		The Banqueting Table of God	
30		Objective Eight: Workshop & Worship	
31		Objective Review Night	
32		Extended Small Group Time	
33		<i>End of the Year Potluck, Worship, Communion and Blessing</i>	
		<i>Summer Session begins...runs through September</i>	

# Small Group Snack & Devotion Sign-Up (Sample)

Week	Date	Devotion	Snack and Set-up/Clean-up
1		Leaders	Leaders
2		Leaders	Leaders
3		Leaders	Leaders
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
<i>No meeting – Happy Thanksgiving!</i>			
9			
10			
11			
<i>Christmas Break for two weeks! Optional meeting in the last week of the year.</i>			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25		<i>R &amp; R Night/ Men’s Retreat Prep.</i>	
26			
27			

28			
29			
30			
31			
32			
33		<i>End of the Year Potluck, Worship, Communion and Blessing</i>	
<i>Summer Session begins...runs through September</i>			





 **Prodigal**  
"THE FELLOWSHIP  
OF THE RETURNED"



# The Journey Continues

  
INTEGRITY  
INTENSITY  
INTENTION

# The Youngest Son

Read Luke 15:11-31

As Prodigal Journeymen, we want to continue to return to the Father's heart. We'll review the lessons on the three main characters of the story as found in the Apprentice Manual, and look again at the values of Integrity, Intensity, and Intention. This review serves two purposes, to immerse us in the Scriptures once again and to update each other on the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Perhaps the character we identified with most in the Apprentice Phase is not who we identify with now. We encourage you to enter the story again in new ways with the knowledge and growth you've gained. The adventure continues with expectation and courage and new challenges ahead. Welcome into the ongoing journey as God redeems us and continues to transform us!

A parable is a story. These stories are one of the most powerful ways that Jesus taught his disciples and others. He still uses them powerfully to teach us today. Some think that a parable is a story with only a single, very obvious main point. We disagree. We believe that parables employ a whole range of themes that add to the richness of the story, and that Jesus was making more than one point in these stories. This is certainly true with the Parable of the Prodigal Son. You will become familiar with many themes with which the richness and the genius of this parable confront us, as well as the main characters of this story—the youngest son, the oldest son, and the father. The next three teachings will begin to describe these three characters and how their stories sound very much like our own.

How old do you think the youngest son is in this story? Jesus never told us. He left that to the hearer's or reader's imagination. What is the relationship between the youngest son, the father, and the older brother before the story begins? What was Jesus thinking when he started the story at this point in the life of the three characters? What is the context of the story? What is going on in the Gospel, the Biblical narrative, at this point in Jesus' public ministry? As you begin to immerse yourself in this story and to ask some of these questions, you will no doubt have many more. This is part of what it means to engage your imagination in the story, not to make things up that are not there but to engage more than just your mind. We need to engage our whole being in the stories of how God redeems his people.

Jesus weaves a magnificent tale, a broad and deep story that challenges the religious status quo. He begins by describing the shocking opening scene—the youngest son asks his father for his share of the

inheritance. This was punishable act, an act of disrespect and shame toward the father and the whole village. After getting the money, the youngest spends all he has (hence the word *prodigal* which means *extravagant*, in this case in the context of spending). After hunger almost kills him, he is desperate and poor and contrives a confession to return to his father as a hired hand. He is at his wits' end, at the bottom.

The welcoming arms of the father surprise him, though. His father embraces him, clothes him, and celebrates his return with the whole village. It is grace the son doesn't expect, coming in ways that surprise and perhaps even shock him. The father returns to him the signet ring, showing that he has restored to him the status of a son in the household. His father also gives him the best robe of protection and responsibility, as well as new sandals on his feet, which signify that he is a freeman and not a bound servant or slave. The youngest is alive again in his father's eyes, for his son was as good as dead to him. The youngest is found when once it seemed that he was lost forever. He has returned to his father and home again, in the midst of celebration.

This is the best news for all people who find themselves like the youngest son, people who have wandered far into foreign lands to squander life on their own idols. The youngest son is the consummate "sinner." People have written songs, poems, and books about him. He is the character in this story with whom we most easily identify. Some of the people around Jesus as he was telling this story were people that most of the religious leaders disdained as outcasts and "sinners" (the lame, blind, lepers, prostitutes, women, Gentiles, etc.) These people must have gasped for air. Jesus was saying that they were the younger son and that God loved, accepted, and embraced them. What hope this must have given them. What hope this gives us!

Below are some questions to get you started on your long journey into the heart of this story, this parable. This will be a wonderful adventure as the Lord reveals to you aspects of yourself that come to light as a direct result of reading and studying and hearing this story. You will continue to live in this story for at least this year and perhaps longer. It is the story of grace and of love and of hope and of home. Welcome, men, into the "Fellowship of the Returned"!

Questions:

- 1) Review your answers for this section in the Apprentice Manual. Revise them if necessary.
- 2) What part of the journey are you on? Are you heading for the distant country, returning home or somewhere in between?
- 3) Describe some ways that you have tried to manipulate confession and restoration. What is authentic confession?
- 4) What are you willing to do in order to change the patterns in your life that have led to walls between you and the Lord, your family, and your community of faith?
- 5) Read and re-read this story in the weeks to follow and pray for courage from the Holy Spirit to receive insight so you'll know how he wants you to change.

# Answers/Reflections

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