
How To Get Closer to God Luke 15:11-24

Over the next several weeks, we will look at seven key areas of your life. Seven key areas that you want to make changes in – SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, RELATIONAL, FINANCIAL, VOCATIONAL.

Our theme verse is Romans 12:2.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

“I can be changed. I will be transformed.” - Pastor Billy Johnson

The way you **THINK** determines the way you **FEEL**, and the way you **FEEL** determines the way you **ACT**. If you want to change something in your life that you don't like, you don't start with your actions; you don't even start with your feelings. You start with your thoughts.

“When I change the way I think, my entire life will be transformed.” – Pastor Billy Johnson

- Transformation changes us from emptiness to fullness.
- Transformation changes us from defeat and failure to faith and victory.
- Transformation changes us from insecurity and inferiority to courage and boldness.
- It helps us to become all that God wants us to be.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

We must start with our spiritual health because the further away you get from God, the more trouble you are going to have in life (Rick Warren).

On the other hand, the closer I get to God, the more my life is going to be transformed.

We can see this in scripture.

- Paul was transformed from a religious terrorist to an Apostle.
- Peter was transformed from a cussing fisherman to a Pentecostal Preacher.
- Moses was so close to God that he was even transformed in appearance.

Fortunately, we have a story in the Bible of **How to Get Close to God**.

Luke 15:11–24 (NLT)

¹¹To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: “A man had two sons.

¹²The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. ¹³“A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. ¹⁴About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. ¹⁵He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. ¹⁷“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!

¹⁸I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.” ²⁰“So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. ²¹His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ ²²“But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. ²³And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

FOUR THINGS YOU NEED TO DO TO GET BACK TO GOD

“No matter how far you are, you can get back today.” Pastor Billy Johnson

Get Fed Up With My Life

Luke 15:14–17 (NLT)

¹⁴About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. ¹⁵He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. ¹⁷“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!

- Fed up with low living.
- Fed up chasing the money.
- Fed up with feeling empty.

“Nothing happens until you get fed up.” – Pastor Billy Johnson

Jeremiah 29:13–14 (MSG)

¹³“When you come looking for me, you’ll find me. “Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, ¹⁴I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed.” GOD’s Decree. “I’ll turn things around for you. I’ll bring you back from all the countries into which I drove you”—GOD’s Decree—“bring you home to the place from which I sent you off into exile. You can count on it.

Own Up to My Sin

Luke 15:17–18 (NLT)

¹⁷“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you,

“You can never be delivered from that which you befriend.” – Pastor Billy Johnson

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

²It’s your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

- **Sin separates us from God.**
- **David owned up to his sin.**

“Psalm 51:1–4 (NLT)

¹Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. ²Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. ³For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. ⁴Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.

If you own up to your sin, God can forgive you.

Isaiah 1:18 (NLT)

¹⁸“Come now, let’s settle this,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.

Make a habit of having a spiritual checkup.

Psalms 139:23–24 (NLT)

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

God is not unaware. He already knows.

Offer Up Myself

Luke 15:19 (NLT)

¹⁹and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.” ’

- The son drifted away saying, “GIVE ME MY share...” Luke 15:12
- He returned to the Father saying, “MAKE ME a servant.” Luke 15:19
- *When we are going away from God is about him **giving** me.*
- *When returning to God it is about him **making** me.*
- *We are to offer ourselves.*

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

“Nobody can offer me but me.” - Pastor Billy Johnson

THE FATHER'S RESPONSE

Luke 15:20 (NLT)

²⁰“So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.”

Luke 15:22–23 (NLT)

²²“But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. ²³And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast,

“There are some things we are walking in that God never intended for us to walk in.” – Pastor Billy Johnson

Lift Up My Praise

Luke 15:23–24 (NLT)

²³And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

The Father Celebrated the Son Coming Back.

He had a celebration, not a condemnation.

The Father Encouraged the Son to Celebrate Being Back.

We must celebrate coming back.