

Action - Bible Study } on LUKE 15:11-32 T&V
Theology

THE SCRIPTURE: There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me now my share of the property." So the father divided the property between his two sons. ¹³After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. ¹⁴He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. ¹⁵So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. ¹⁶He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him any. ¹⁷At last he came to his senses and said: "All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am, about to starve! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer fit to be called you son; treat me as one of your hired workers.'" ²⁰So he got up and started back to his father.

He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. ²¹"Father," the son said, "I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son." ²²But the father called his servants: "Hurry!" he said. "Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. ²³Then go get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! ²⁴For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found." And so the feasting began.

²⁵The older son, in the meantime, was out in the field. On his way back, when he came close to the house, he heard the music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the servants and asked him, "What's going on?" ²⁷"Your brother came back home," The servant answered, "and your father killed the prize calf, because he got him back safe and sound." ²⁸The older brother was so angry that he would not go into the house; so his father came out and begged him to come in. ²⁹"Look," he answered back to his father, "all these years I have worked like a slave for you, and not once did I disobey an order of yours. What have you given me? Not even a goat for me to have a feast with my friends! ³⁰But this son of yours wasted all your property on prostitutes, and when he comes back home you kill the prize calf for him!" ³¹"My son," the father answered, "you are always at home and everything I have is yours. ³²But we had to have a feast and be happy, for your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found."

THE ACTION takes two shapes, the first mainly biblical and the second mainly theological. Both point toward *action in the world*.

ACTION BIBLE STUDY

Four levels of quiet contemplation followed by group passionate engagement...four approaches to the text, and of the text to us...four alternations of silence and sharing.

- PHASE #1: *What did the passage say to its day?* (Conceptual life--facts and ideas.)
- PHASE #2: *How does the passage prick my and our conscience about my and our life and the present life and mission of ecclesial institutions?* (Moral-ethical life.)
- PHASE #3: *What new light has come to me and us during this session?* (Perceptual life--what we see, perceive, grasp.)
- PHASE #4: *What can we do and what should we do in the light of God's dealing with us in this session? What attitudes, habits, courses of action do we see now as needing changing, in our lives and in the life and mission of ecclesial institutions we have to do with?* (The life of action.)

ACTION THEOLOGY

is a type of role-playing adapted from Gestalt psychotherapy's one-to-one-in-group style. Our aim is not narrowly therapeutic, but broadly theological: to engage the whole man (and thus the community) in the *experiencing* of theology.