

## A LIVING FAITH Lesson on FORGIVENESS

**Theme:** The Story of the Prodigal Son  
**Object:** A book or video of "Aladdin," or a brass lamp would be a great object  
**Scripture:** Luke 15:11-24 (RSV or KJV)

### *Paree Looy's!*

I am sure that most of you have read a book, seen a movie, or at least heard the story about "Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp." In one version of the story, Aladdin worked in a shop that exchanged new lamps for old ones. Aladdin's job was to polish the lamps and make them look like new. One day, as he was polishing a lamp, a genie came out of the lamp and promised to grant Aladdin anything he wished for. With the help of the Genie, Aladdin gained great wealth and won the love of a beautiful princess.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have your every wish come true? You might think so, but the truth is, sometimes the things we wish for are not good for us. That is what a young man discovered in today's Bible story.

Our Bible story today is about a young man who had three wishes.

1. He wanted a lot of money.
2. He wanted to travel and see the world.
3. He wanted to be his own boss.

The young man got his wishes, but they were not granted to him by a genie. The young man went to his father and asked him to give him the inheritance that would be his when his father died. Even though the father was sad that his son wanted to leave, he gave him his share of the family fortune and the young man left home and traveled all around the world. He visited all of the places he had always wanted to visit and did whatever he wanted to do. He was happy that no one was telling him what to do. Since the young man had a lot of money, if he saw something he wanted, he bought it, and since he had a lot of money, he also had many friends.

This sounds like very happy story, doesn't it? Well, that isn't the end of the story. After a while, the young man ran out of money. When he ran out of money, his friends ran out on him. He was so desperate that he went to work for a man who sent him to feed his pigs. The young man was so hungry that he would gladly have eaten the food he was feeding to the pigs. As he looked at the filthy pig pen, he thought about the mess he had made of his life. He thought about his father and the home he had left behind.

"Even a servant in my father's house lives better than this," the young man said to himself. "I will return to my father and tell him that I am sorry for the way I have behaved and ask him to give me a job as one of his servants."

Do you think the father was willing to take him back? Yes, but not as a servant. He welcomed him back home as a son. He called his servants together and told them, "Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was lost, but now is found." This is truly one of our most important stories about **forgiveness**.

Well, the story had a happy ending after all, didn't it? The father showed incredible **forgiveness** to his son. This story that Jesus told is really a story about you and me and the way we sometimes behave.

Sometimes you and I make bad choices - just like the young man in our story. We sometimes wish for things that are not good for us. We sometimes don't want to listen to God and obey what the Bible tells us we should do. When we act that way, we really make a mess of our life. Well, I have good news for you! Just like the father in our story, God, our Heavenly Father, is always willing to take us back and **forgive** us if we will admit that we were wrong and return to Him.

Dear Heavenly Father, we sometimes make bad choices. Thank you for being a loving Father who will always take us back when we come home to you. Amen.

