

- Home
- Reading notes
- Good Poems
- Media Diary
- Photos
- Live Blogs
- Links

# The Prodigal God

Keller

xv - reckless (prodigal) father

13 - religious moralism (older brother) particularly dangerous

Reminds me of some of the problems I have with Mako. It seems the danger to Christian artists is the same in his eyes: moralism; overly strict requirements; legalism. We need more free-flowing grace for sinners. Mako wants to translate that into the artistic sphere.

15 - "That can only mean one thing. If the preaching of our ministers and the practice of our parishioners do not have the same effect on people that Jesus had, then we must not be declaring the same message that Jesus did. If our churches aren't appealing to younger brothers, they must be more full of elder brothers than we'd like to think."

22 - best robe

36 - "The hearts of the two brothers were the same. Both sons resented their father's authority and sought ways of getting out from under it. They each wanted to get into a position in which they could tell the father what to do. Each one, in other words, rebelled-but one did so by being very bad and the other by being extremely good. Both were alienated from the father's heart; both were lost sons.

Do you realize, then, what Jesus is teaching! Neither son loved the father for himself. They both were using the father for their own self-centered ends rather than loving, enjoying, and serving him for his own sake. This means that you can rebel against God and be alienated from him either by breaking his rules or by keeping all of them diligently.

It's a shocking message: Careful obedience to God's law may serve as a strategy for rebelling against God."

38 - "If, like the elder brother, you believe that God ought to bless you and help you because you have worked so hard to obey him and be a good person, then Jesus may be your helper, your example, even your inspiration, but he is not your Savior. You are serving as your own Savior."

43 - "seeking to put God in his debt"

48 - sin and salvation = being lost and being found

49 - "Elder brothers believe that if they live a good life they should get a good life"

62 - self-centeredness disguised as unselfishness. An example: if we do the right acts of service in the community, God will make our church grow.

64 - "But perhaps the clearest symptom of this lack of assurance is a dry prayer life. Though elder brothers may be diligent in prayer, there is no wonder, awe, intimacy, or delight in their conversations with God.

Think of three kinds of people—a business associate you don't really like, a friend you enjoy doing things with, and someone you are in love with, and who is in love with you. Your conversations with the business associate will be quite goal-oriented. You won't be interested in chitchat. With your friend you may open your heart about some of the problems you are having. But with your lover you will sense a strong impulse to speak about what you find beautiful about him or her.

These three kinds of discourse are analogous to Redefining Lostness forms of prayer that have been called "petition,"

"confession," and "adoration." The deeper the love relationship, the more the conversation heads toward the personal, and toward affirmation and praise. Elder brothers may be disciplined in observing regular times of prayer, but their prayers are almost wholly taken up with a recitation of needs and petitions, not spontaneous, joyful praise. In fact, many elder brothers, for all their religiosity, do not have much of a private prayer life at all unless things are not going well in their lives

much of a private prayer life at all unless things are not going well in their lives. Then they may devote themselves to a great deal of it, until things get better again. This reveals that their main goal in prayer is to control their environment rather than to delve into an intimate relationship with a God who loves them." [#prayer](#)

Not only does this reflect my prayer life, it reflects my journaling as well. All about goals and needs, not joy.

66 - Many abandon faith because they see that religion is full of elder brothers. "They have come to the conclusion that religion is one of the great sources of misery and strife in the world."

69 - contrast with "religion"

76 - older brother can't confess individual disobedient actions because he doesn't have any.

81 - older brother should have sought out younger. He owned the wealth of his father. Forgiveness is costly, but we have an older brother who is willing to pay for it.

111 - resurrection

112 - Jesus' miracles = restoring the natural order (joy, health, life)

121 - nothing Jesus cannot ask of us

I wonder what Keller would counsel someone to actually \*do.\* Pray? Read the Bible? Meditate?

125 - importance of church

127 - "took a community to know an individual" - application to parents?

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