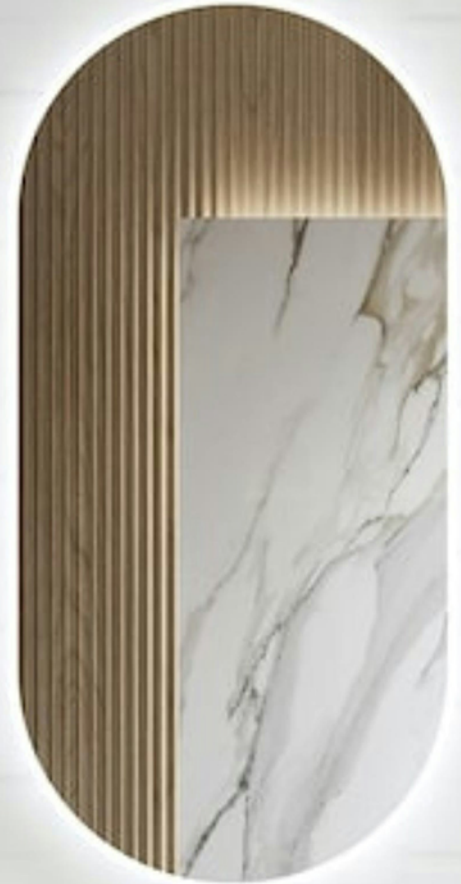




NO LIMITS

WITH PASTOR DELMAN

I'M STARTING WITH THE MAN IN THE MIRROR



S E R M O N G U I D E

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Luke 15:11-20

INTRODUCTION

In 1988, Michael Jackson released the iconic song “Man in the Mirror.” It tells the story of someone who grows tired of turning a blind eye to the world’s suffering. He realizes that looking out the window at everyone else’s problems is not enough. To make a real difference, he has to start with the person he sees in the mirror. This powerful shift from observation to conviction is a profound spiritual truth. If we want to see transformation in our lives and in the world, we cannot just point fingers. We must begin with self-examination.

Jesus tells a similar story about a young man who had to look in the mirror. After squandering his inheritance in a distant land, the prodigal son hits rock bottom. It is only when he is broke, alone, and humbled that the Bible says, “he came to himself.” In that moment of clarity, he saw the gap between who he had become and who he was created to be. This story is not just an ancient parable; it is a picture of our own capacity to lose our way. But more importantly, it is a powerful reminder that no matter how far we have gone, we can always turn around and come home.

KEY POINTS

1. Acknowledge where you are

The first step toward transformation is radical honesty. The prodigal son did not get better until he stopped pretending. He was broke, hungry, and alone, so desperate he longed to eat what the pigs were eating. Before God can take you somewhere new, you must be willing to take inventory of where you are right now. Healing cannot begin until we stop minimizing our condition and accept that where we are is not where we belong. It is a powerful act to pray as the psalmist did, “Search me, O God, and know my heart,” asking God to reveal what we are not seeing about ourselves.

2. Recognize what you have lost

When the son came to his senses, he compared his current misery to the abundance he left behind. He remembered the security of his father’s house and realized how far he had fallen. Sometimes, hitting rock bottom is what it takes to jolt our memory and remind us of who we once were: the joy we used to have, the passion with which we used to pray, the peace we once knew. This is not just about personal loss; it is also about recognizing how we have strayed from our values of justice and compassion, losing touch with the person God calls us to be in our community.

3. Take ownership of your choices

When he decided to return, the son prepared a confession: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.” He did not blame the famine, his friends, or his

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circumstances. He took responsibility for his actions. This level of accountability is rare, but it is essential for true change. We must look in the mirror and ask, "What part of this is mine?" Owning our role in our personal struggles allows us to see how we may have also contributed to the broken systems around us. This self-assessment is the beginning of tearing down the walls that keep us from reuniting with God and our true purpose.

4. Make a decision to pivot

The son's realization was followed by a resolution: "I will arise and go to my father." This was not just a moment of reflection; it was a change of direction. Revelation without redirection is just information. Transformation happens when we combine what we see with the courage to turn our lives around. God has shown you what needs to change. You know the habits that need to stop and the relationships that need to end. You cannot remain stuck between awareness and action. Today is the day to rise up, leave the pigpen behind, and start moving toward the Father.

The journey of the prodigal son is a powerful model for our own lives. It teaches us that true change begins with an honest look in the mirror. We must acknowledge our brokenness, take responsibility for our choices, and make a conscious decision to pivot back toward God. This isn't just about personal piety; it is about social transformation. When we examine our own hearts, we are better equipped to examine our role in the injustices of the world. Acknowledging our own "riotous living" might mean confronting our complicity in systems that harm others, whether through our spending habits, our silence, or our apathy.

God is not waiting for you to clean yourself up before you come home. The story's beautiful climax is the father running to embrace his son while he was still a long way off. He met him with compassion, not condemnation. God's grace is waiting to meet you right where you are, ready to restore you and throw a party for your return. Your transformation matters. It restores your identity as a beloved child of God and empowers you to become an agent of healing and justice in a world that desperately needs it.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In what areas of your life have you been looking through a window at others instead of looking in the mirror at yourself?
2. What practical steps can you take this week to “come to yourself” and honestly assess where you are financially, emotionally, or spiritually?
3. How can your personal journey of repentance and restoration empower you to more effectively advocate for justice and compassion in your community?
