

**The Far Country**  
**Dr. J.B. Buffington**  
**November 2001**

Let us open our Bibles to Luke 15:1-24: *Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.*

Our Father, in Jesus' name, we thank You for Your care for the wandering. I pray in Jesus' name for power to push the blessed Word of God. Lord, give me the ears of each of those who sit before me. I pray, Lord, their hearts might be open to receive the Word of God. May this be a life-altering service this morning — salvation of the lost, restoration of the saved, and a warning to those who are contemplating sin. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I have preached this message generally for teenagers and young people. There is a need for adults to hear this message. You will understand why in just a little bit.

“The Far Country” — This is one of the most important and dramatic chapters in the Bible. There are three actors — the father, the Pharisees, and the elder brother. The murmuring Pharisees were pictured by the elder brother. They said, “What is all this fussing about soul winning? *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* What is all this fuss about soul winning and dealing with sinners?” The elder brother reveals a self-righteous spirit. The prodigal son represents the sinner. He can also represent a sinning saint. The grieving father represents God. His heart grieves over sinners. In their murmur, we discover their murmuring is illogical. Sheep have to be sought because they are senseless. They are wanderers. The coin is insensitive. It is helpless. You have to sweep the floor to find the coin that fell under the bed. Then you weep over the son. They are sensual and have responsibilities. Each of these things were of increasing value to God. It ends up with a son. I want you to understand the home from which this young man came.

Let me say this. There has always been a difference between adults and teenagers. That is a normal, healthy thing. There is nothing wrong with that. Some of it is innocence, and some of it is natural. For instance, when I was a teenager, we sang, “Mairzy doats and dozy doats and little lambsy divvey.” That is

deep. You will not understand, but that was a tremendous song in my days. There are different songs. “Boop Boop diddum daddum waddum choo” — Man, that was an excellent song. It had a lot of intelligence to it. Music has always characterized young people and adults. There is nothing wrong with that. You should never expect young people to act like adults. The sad thing today is that the young people are trying to skip the cycle of being young people and move up into adulthood. You blow it when you do that because you are not an adult.

**NUMBER ONE, LET US LOOK AT THE HOME LIFE OF THIS PRODIGAL SON.** Many times, something happens, and a boy or girl goes astray. The first thing the parents say is, “Well, I wonder where I failed.” You tell me where this father failed in this story. This young man came out of an ideal home life. It was a prosperous home. They had servants and bread enough to spare. There was not a shortage of finances. It was a loving home. I do not care if a boy or girl has gone astray. If there was not the expression of hugging and embracing before they went astray, going astray will not bring it about. There are grown people who cannot show affection. They grew up without it. Their daddy was cold. He did not show affection, and they grow up to be the same identical way. A boy or girl going astray does not put compassion in a home. It does not put affection in a home. It has to be there before they leave. This was a compassionate home. This father was a compassionate, loving father. He went out and threw his arms around his boy. He put his head on his neck and kissed him. That did not start when he came back home. That was part of their family life. This was a reasonable home. It was a reasonable home when you deal with the elder brother. The father talked to him. He entreated him. In other words, he was reasonable. He could sit down and talk with him. This was not an unreasonable home. It was a hospitable home. They were used to entertaining guests. They were familiar with that. This is the fatted calf. The prime rib was out there waiting for the guest to come. It was a sharing home. This man divided unto his sons his living. It was a sharing home. It was not a stingy home. It was a forgiving home. Verse 19: *When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.* It was a forgiving home. It was not a long, drawn-out process about the matter of forgiveness. It was a tender home. This young man was a long way off. His dad had been watching for him. We see all the tenderness for his son as he saw him come home. It was a home with proper priorities. They rejoiced over reconciliation. They did not rejoice over riches. They did not rejoice over servants. They rejoiced over that which Heaven rejoices — reconciliation. Oh my, when men are reconciled to each other, reconciled to God, and young people are reconciled to parents, it is great. This young fellow had a good home and did not know it. Why did he not know it? I will tell you who told him it was not a good home. It is sad to have good parents and a good home and not know it. There are a whole lot of people that do not know it. They leave a good home for the hog pen. That is tragic. As far as I know, this is the only ideal home in the Bible. This home represents God. David did not have an ideal home. Abraham did not have an ideal home. You can search from Genesis to Revelation. There are no ideal homes listed in the Scriptures but this one. God gives it as an illustration of His love for mankind and what they have done with that love.

These figures are out of date. Before I preach it again, I should get it up to date. There are two to six million children that run away from home every year. The teen suicide rate raised more than 100 percent between 1968 and 1976, so I am twelve years out of date. Boy, the figures are astronomical, far greater than this, now. The number of juveniles arrested for serious and violent crimes increases 1,600 percent between the years of 1952 and 1972. Teenage rebellion against the lifestyle, values, and beliefs of parents has become a national epidemic that is escalating daily.

When you begin to define rebellion, it is a conscious or unconscious rejection of the values, lifestyle, and/or the theology of one’s parents. A study was done by Dr. Truman Dollar and a lady, Dr. Grace Ketterman, who was a pediatrician of psychiatry. They got together and wrote a book on teenage rebellion. They had fifty years of combined experience working with troubled young people. They gave a detailed questionnaire to folks for information. One hundred young people were interviewed. The questions were designed to evaluate behavior, philosophy, and thought patterns of modern American youth. Those taking the survey were carefully chosen to represent every facet of teen life in the country. Throughout every section of the nation, diverse backgrounds, religious and cultural, were included. Criminals, hard drug users, honor students, Christian, and un-Christian were questioned. Some interviews were held in prison cells; others were

held in public schools and Christian schools of different qualities and philosophy. Every interview was personally conducted by Dr. Truman Dollar and took approximately fifty minutes. Each child was shown a waiver signed by a parent or guardian which guaranteed complete confidentiality. He was assured that the questions would be discontinued immediately upon his request. Not one young person refused to answer a question. Each teen surveyed, when asked, responded that the interview was both fair and significant. A copy of the parental consent form was read. I will not read that. This was the home of this young man.

**NUMBER TWO, CONSIDER PACKING FOR THE FAR COUNTRY.** I will come back to that which I just read in just a moment. Young people pack for the far country. The average earliest age in this survey when asked, “*At what age did you first seriously question the moral value system of your father and/or mother?*” was 11.3 years. *There are little boys and girls sitting over next door who are packing their suitcase for the day when they can get away from home. They have already rejected the lifestyle of mom and dad. They do not start rejecting it when they become teens. It goes back farther. It shows up when they are teens. The mind gets there before the body gets there. Parents, you had better watch the peers of your children. You had better watch the girls that they date. You had better watch the boys that your girls date. You had better watch who your kids play with. You had better watch, mom and dad. You had better tell them, “You cannot play with this one. You cannot go with this one.” You CAN tell them that. Yes, you surely can. You say that you did not know that. Well, I just told you. You cannot tell them unless you teach them respect for authority when they are little, bitty fellows. When you do not teach them respect for authority and they get to be teenagers, you are wasting your time. You teach them respect for authority when they are still in diapers and training pants. That is when they begin to learn respect for authority. If you do not do it when they are little, then you have blown the matter of guidance for young people.*

Packing for the Far Country. The first thing that the father says to his son in the book of Proverbs 1:8: *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:* The first instruction in Proverbs 1:10: *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* Proverbs 1:15: *My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:* He said you do not walk with them. Do not go close to their pathway. He says in Proverbs 13:20: *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* Some of you young girls are dating fools. You ought to listen. If you date a fool, you will marry a fool. You will not change a fool. His mom and dad could not change him. You had better hear me this morning. It said the rejection of the value system is influenced by several things. It is influenced by the music they listen to. There is nobody—I do not care who you are—who can listen to rock music and not have it affect your value system from mom and dad. You do not program all that stuff into your brain hour after hour after hour without it changing you. That is the same thing that communism does. They shut a man up in his cell and blast his brain. He comes out, and he is brainwashed. All they did was done through the ear gate. What you listen to and allow to be programmed through the mind will be your lifestyle. You are responsible for choosing what you allow to go into your ears and what you allow your eyes to see. Moms and Dads, you had better watch the music of your boys and girls. You had better watch the television. I would not buy a boy or girl a television set for them to have in their room. I did not have a television until my boy was in high school. I do not think I was wise when I got it then. I got rid of my television set when my grandchildren came along. I got tired of the commercials. I got tired of turning it off because of the blaspheming. I got tired of it. I got a little black and white television to use for emergency purposes—hurricanes and so forth. I got tired. I did not want my grandchildren programmed with that. I did not want my children learning under the instruction of a television set. Now, you can have a television. I do not have it. I am not saying that you have to get rid of yours because I did mine. Do you understand that clearly? I am telling you this: if you let your boy or girl sit in front of the television set hour after hour, that television set will influence your boy or girl more than you ever, ever will. You see, that television set is the far country. That far country is not real. That far country seems so beautiful and so wonderful and so attractive. You get everything done immediately. You get your sink unstopped by just pouring in a little bit of this “stuff,” and bam! It is really cleaned out. It will make your teeth sparkle so quickly. It will make your grey hairs turn black. Some of them try to put hair back on. That country out there is really the place to live. No, that is a lie;

that is not reality. That is the far country. You let your boy visit the honky-tonks on television on Saturday night. You let your girl watch immorality, listen to profanity, and rub shoulders with the homosexuals and the perverts. Then they come to church on Sunday. The church on Sunday cannot do a thing in the world with all that is being programmed hour after hour after hour into their mind. The devil has got them all set up for Sunday School. They will not get anything out of Sunday School because he has programmed them all week long. Now packing for the far country begins with the mind and a rejection of the value system. I do not think we quite understand what has happened in America. How in the world did we get where we are? Well, after World War I, men had been in combat. I was away from home three years. Many of the men had been away from home for five years. They had been sleeping in fox holes and ate sea rations and cave rations. They came back home. They wanted to enjoy a little bit of comfort. They went back to their jobs. They began to make money. They began to enjoy things they had not had for four or five years. They gave things to their children. They were busy getting back into their work and so forth. They kind of overlooked their children. They gave them things and money to replace themselves. Consequently, we had in the 1960's the political revolution, the rioting, and the burning with no place to repair it. Patriotism was rejected. We have never gotten over that. You face it in the election now. They are making fun of saluting the flag. You would not have made fun of saluting the flag back in the war days. They would have put you in jail. Amen! Amen! Amen! That is the Sixties political revolution. Here we have the cultural revolution that followed the drugs. "We want to feel what it does. We want to feel what it does." They want to experience with dad's alcohol. Then there was the sex revolution. It attacked all the moral age and questioned everything. Free speech was exchanged for dirty speech. All of those secular colleges today have an open door policy in the dormitory, even in the military. Now you have a million and half young people living together without any form of marriage whatsoever. Some dumb guy says to some dumb girl, "Well, marriage is, after all, just a piece of paper." So is the title to your car. So is the deed to your house. So is that hundred dollar bill in your pocket. If it is just a piece of paper, why not play paper dolls with that piece of paper called a hundred dollar bill. We had the style revolution. Women want to dress like men, and men want to act like ladies. Then we had the religious revolution. You do not know anything until it is real to you. You have to experience it. The charismatic came out of that. That was a rejection of all that America stood for. That happened in the Sixties, and we have never gotten over it. You boys and girls that are brotherly influenced do not know what America was like. Historians have lied to you about what was really old America. Consequently, we have not gotten over the rejection of the Dad's value system. Dad was saving and not stingy. This boy wasted his substance. Dad's home — he was true to his wife. This boy had spent his living with harlots in immorality. Dad had a work ethic. The boy had a play ethic. The hippie generation, with the rejection of the value of the parents, say they are not going to be like their Mom and Dad. "I am just not going to do that." Well, it is strange that your mom and dad gave you everything in the world that you have. Remember the average age was 11.3. A little junior boy may be thinking about the day he can leave home and get out from under the restriction of mom and dad. Can you think about it? A little eleven-year-old boy thinking about going to the far country. There is a visible change in his attitude in the matter of, "Give me." He starts packing — self first. His attitude toward spiritual matters changes. He moves to the back seat. He gets distracted very easily. The Bible devotions — they put away the Bible devotions. The services — they do not really like to attend. His attitude toward the youth activities is, "Deliver me from them." They begin to move from talking about Christ and serving Christ to sports, the girls, the gangs, and staying home. He would stay out of church if Mom and Dad would allow him to do it. There is an attitude change towards his parents. Are you listening, Mom and Dad? To a teenager, peer pressure is more important than God, than parents, than purity, and than grades. They would rather their peers accept them than have a knowledge that they are right with God. That is all-important. So they move from personal living to impersonal living. What the gang does determines what they do. Nobody dares step out of line because this is what we do. "We want to be accepted here. We all act like linked sausages. We think alike. We smell alike. We go together. We are just like that." There is a tremendous change, and with that change comes an attitude toward parents. Where did they get it? They got it from the crowd they run with. "Well, I am having problems with my mom and my dad; they are too strict." They are running with the crowd that is down on parents. I have got news for you. You could not get here without parents. Contrary to

what he already says, you could not get here. Did you know if it had not been for the older generation, you would not know how to turn on the lights because you would not know what the lights were? All of the inventions came from older people. They made the cars that you drive. If it were not for older people, you would not even have a bicycle. Older people made the bicycle. You are in sad trouble if you are down on the older crowd. If you are down on the older crowd, why not denounce and reject everything that the older crowd gave you and start from scratch? If a boy or girl is having trouble with his parents, you had better keep your boy or girl away from that guy or that girl, or you are going to have trouble with yours. Why? They become his peer. I am concerned about my peers. I am concerned about what they think. I say to you young people: why in the world do you go to somebody who is having trouble with their parents? Why not go to some young person who is not having trouble with his parents and get advice from him? No, you go to the place to get the advice you want to hear. It just gives you courage to run along with them and bully up one another. Problems with your parents did not start automatically. That process has been going on through the years.

The following are some questions from the questionnaire:

1. *In your judgement, what was the single most important rejection of the theology of the values of your parents?* The influences of friends was twenty-four percent; lack of communication was twelve percent; nature of discipline was nine percent; absentee parents was seven percent; hypocrisy in the home was five percent; and forty-three percent have no discernible pattern—it probably deals with the nature.

2. *What effect have friends had on you in general?* Forty-four percent said a negative, bad affect.

3. *Did the public school system negatively influence the change in your attitude towards your father's value system and theology?* Sixty-eight percent said yes.

4. *Which of the following in the public school system influenced your change in attitude the most?* Friends, forty-three percent

5. *Did you look forward to being home with your family as a teenager or prefer being with your friends?* Fifty-six percent said their friends.

6. *Do you consider yourself rebellious?* Fifty-six percent said yes.

7. *Do you spend a significant amount of time with your parents?* Forty-five percent said no.

8. *Do you enjoy being with your parents?* Forty percent said no.

9. (This is an interesting one in view of what is important in life.) *Do you feel your parents' values are right or wrong?* Sixty-seven percent said they felt like mom and dad's values were right.

Why are they running around with this crowd? "I value the peer pressure. I would rather be accepted. I would rather be in there. I know mom and dad's values are right. I know that. I must have the approval of the crowd that I go with." If you cannot stand on your own two feet, you are not much of a man. Daniel stood against a whole empire because he purposed in his heart. Daniel was a young man. The Hebrew children put their life in a furnace. They said, "No, we will not bow; we will not budge; and we will not burn." They stood. Esther stood. Joseph stood. Hey, you need something in your vocabulary. You say you believe in everything positive. Yes, you positively say, "No." We need young people, and we need adults who can stand on their own two feet and look the crowd in the eye and say, "No!" If you cannot say, "No," somebody else will determine where you are going to be and where you are going to go. God gave you a brain, and God gave you a will. You are held accountable for your personal choices. Nobody makes you do anything. You got in the wrong crowd because you chose to get in the wrong crowd. You stay in the wrong crowd by choice. You do what the wrong crowd does by choice. You are not a robot.

There is an attitude towards self—a know-it-all, "I know! I know!" Yet the adults teach you. If I go to a high school, I do not find your peers as your teachers. They are adults. You got all of your education at the feet of adults. Well, how in the world, if you know everything, why are you not a teacher? That would make you a good principal. Where did you get that from? You got that from the crowd that had all the answers. You got as many answers as the sit-and-twiddle crowd downtown. I am not trying to be funny with you this morning. I am trying to be directly plain. Young people, you do not have all the answers. I am sixty-five years old. I do not have all the answers. I have got a lot of questions. This Book has all the answers. You are talking to kids that do not have all the answers. You are asking them for advice. I talked to a little boy out on

visitation the other night. My heart grieved. He had an earring in his ear. He had been on drugs. His face showed dissipation. I said, "Son, why don't you go to church?" He said, "What is at church? I have been there." I finally got him settled down after a while. After all the front, the show, the macho, I got him quieted down. I got him in a corner, and he said, "I am a sinner." I asked him, "Where do sinners go?" "They go to hell." "Do you want to go to hell?" "No sir!" "Then, I have got a Bible to tell you how to stay out of hell." Here is a little fourteen-year-old boy who had the look of dissipation that you would see on a thirty-year-old man. What was he doing? I guarantee you his peers were telling him this and that. He was loaded with television and loaded with what his peers had. They got it off of television. My! My! It is trouble, a "Me first" attitude, know-it-all, "My rights, my room, my TV, my car, my money, my telephone, my responsibility." There is somebody—I think they are here this morning. I was in their home. I had an argument about what kind of music was being played on the stereo. The young person said, "Wait, just a minute! I can play anything that I want to in my room." "Did you know that room is furnished by your parents? You are under them." "Well, I can." "If you were in my house and you played it, I would throw it out the back door." He said, "That would not be very kind." "Well," I said, "It would not be kind, but it would turn off the music. I would not be trying to be kind. I would be letting you know that under the roof of my house, you are not going to play that. You are not going to do that." There were four grown boys at my house. I was number five. My older brothers were men. Mama came around, and if you were playing cards, mama did not ask questions. The cards went into the stove. Anything else that did not belong in the house just went in the stove. No questions were asked. It did not disturb mama. She did not get upset, no nervous exhaustion, or, "What am I going to do with you?" She just threw them in the stove. She just quickly, powerfully, and plain simply threw them in the stove. There was not anything to do about it. Everybody in the house knew you would not do that. Papa reigned as King Turkey in the house. You said you do not know what in the world you are going to do. If you wait until they are teenagers, you will wring your hands. If you start when they are little, you will not have to wring your hands like that.

Then there was a private experiment with the forbidden. *What age did you first experiment sexually?* Seventy-nine percent of the them had experimented and had done so at the age of twelve to sixteen years. *At what age did you first engage in sexual intercourse?* The average age was thirteen and a half years. There is a tremendous percentage that has a knowledge about sex that I did not have a knowledge of until I was married. Kids are not in it for sex education. These humanists want to make sex animals out of them. That is the way they live. They want the whole country to live that way. (I will start preaching in a minute. I am just meddling around a little bit right now.)

*What age did you first experiment with tobacco?* Seventy-four percent of them had experimented at 10.3 years of age. I experimented with corn silk. Does anybody know what dried corn silk is? Man, that is real habit-forming. You make one, and you have a habit of putting the rest of it down.

*What age did you experiment with marijuana?* Forty-seven percent had experimented at the age of thirteen to sixteen years.

*What age did you experiment with cocaine?* Fourteen percent had experimented at the average age of fifteen to eighteen years.

*What age did you first experiment with alcohol?* Seventy-two percent had experimented at the age of seven to eleven years. There is an epidemic in our country of little boys, ages nine, ten, and eleven, that get drunk at least once a week in our country. Where did they get it? They got it from television, and they got it from their peers.

They begin to have problems publicly. They have hero problems. Look at the pictures in their bedroom. If they have a picture of a rock star in their room, you have got problems with your boy or girl. That is a hero. Would it be sinful for a Christian boy or girl to have a picture of a Christian athlete, a preacher, or a man of God? These heroes look like last year's bird nest. You cannot tell what they are. They have long, shaggy hair. Man alive, they have got their shirt unbuttoned down to their belt line. Any Christian ought to know that that is not the right crowd. You do not have to hear the music. All you have to do is look at their bodies. Do not come to me with that. You ought to have sense enough to know that when you look at some people, you know they are the wrong crowd. That appeals to a kid because he cries out for that macho style. They become your

heroes. You will live and die like the heroes with a beard, beads, candles, earrings, and all these other things.

Listen to this. This is the back breaker. *Do you know Jesus as your Savior?* Ninety percent said, “Yes, well sure, I am saved. I will wind up on end.” Let us check it out if you are saved or not.

**NUMBER THREE, CONSIDER LEAVING FOR THE FAR COUNTRY.** He left abruptly. He wanted to find out for himself. He left excitedly for the country where there were no rules, where everything was fun. He went proudly. He went away as a big shot. “I can manage my life.” He did not need parents to always tell him what to do. He left in a hurry. He left completely. He gathered everything all together. He did not intend to come back. He left with no forwarding address. Did you know that a far country could be in your back bedroom? In many houses, mother and dad are in the livingroom, and the children are in their bedroom. There is a million miles between them. There is no communication system that is long enough to reach you. You are so far away. You are in the back room, in some apartment house, or in some campus dorm. Communication is impossible.

**NUMBER FOUR, CONSIDER WASTING IN THE FAR COUNTRY.** Luke 15:13: *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.* He wasted his years. You will never be a carefree teenager again. Teenagers come and go. There are those who mess up their lives. Little children are born, and parents say, “Boy, I want to go back to being a teenager.” You cannot go back to being a teenager again. You have a child. God intended the teenager’s years to be one of the most thrilling times of life. It was to generate joyfulness and happiness and to be filled with laughter and fun. It was not intended to be filled with suicide, drugs, alcohol, immorality, profanity, and disease. God did not do that. The devil is after this generation to destroy you. Many years, he spent his purity. He could see all he wanted to, but I guarantee you that there is no man or woman who wants used merchandise. There is no woman that wants used merchandise. There is no woman that says, “Bless God, I am glad that my husband ran around with everybody.” Not on your life. That is reserved for marriage, one person and one person alone. You will never have your purity again. You can repent, but you will not get your purity back. You spent your purity. You spent your health. It is a horrible thing to live in a body where the health is gone. You cannot breathe. You cannot walk. You cannot see. You cannot hear. You cannot feel. You destroy your lungs with cigarettes. You destroy your liver with alcohol. You destroy your brain with drugs. He spent his influence in name. You can live a little while off of your daddy’s reputation, but you will eventually live off of your own reputation. Your reputation will follow you. The computer will have it down. Somebody will want to hire you, and when he punches a button, the computer will tell all about you. I told my son he could not hurt my reputation. I made my reputation. What I am, I am. You build your own reputation. I told the girls, “What you do to yourself is more important.” You say, “Look what you are doing to me.” I am concerned about what you are doing to yourself. When they mention your name in circles, if you have been impure, girls, guys will laugh. It has been a long time since high school days. I have forgotten the names of the girls that were impure, but I can remember their faces. I was not associated with them. It was common knowledge. He lost his purity. He lost his years. He lost his health. He lost his influence and name. He lost his family. A man that goes to a far country does not know how to raise a family. Girls, it is poor business to marry one. They do not make good daddies. They do not make good mamas. They have learned from influences. They want to be free. Just because they are older, they do not get away from their past living. They live from one party to the next, from one rock concert to the other, from cop chases, from sex experiences; and they become prematurely old.

**NUMBER FIVE, CONSIDER REAPING IN THE FAR COUNTRY.** He discovered that sin was expensive. Sin is expensive. He spent all. A-L-L—he spent all. He did not intend to go broke. He did not intend to go all the way. He discovered that sin was not only expensive, but sin required stronger doses for a thrill. When you play with sin, you say marital sex does not satisfy, so you try extra-marital sex. Then you say, “Why stop with swaps?” Then you move to homosexuality and bestiality. When you play with sin, sin never satisfies. It causes stronger doses. I did not play with alcohol, but I read about someone who had. As you move from spiked coke to brandy to bourbon to gin vodka to marijuana to LSD to cocaine to murder to torture to pre-marital sex to extra-marital sex to homosexuality to bestiality and on and on and on, you discover sin requires stronger doses. He discovered the anguish of sin in a far country. He was alone with

guilt, alone with memories, and alone with warnings from his parents. There, no man gave unto him. If you think it is such a wonderful world out there, when you hit bottom, the man that sold you the drink will kick you out the front door. You are a bad advertisement for him.

Far country reaping—he discovered that sin is disappointing. It is a vacuum in his soul. Ecclesiastes 3:11: *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.* Go and turn on the stereo and see if you find one song of contentment. It is somebody crying in their beer. It is somebody broken-hearted, “She mistreated me.” It is all about sorrow. It is all about disappointment. There is nothing in the world about joy, joy, joy. Why? They do not know joy! Televisions lie to you. The folks that do it are liars. Look how many times they have been married. Look what they have done to their lives. Look at them. Some tell you some other story. He discovered the humiliation of sin. He was in the hog pen. He used to be in the palace. He discovered that sin separated. Luke 15:16: *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

**NUMBER SIX, CONSIDER AWAKENING FROM THE FAR COUNTRY.** I want to tell you there are not many that go to the far country that return. I will tell you why. Luke 15:17-19: *And when he came to himself, (Reason began to operate for the first time. My, the lowest place at home was better than the hog pen.) he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! (He did not realize what he had, and now he perished for hunger. Resolution flamed.) I will arise and go to my father, (I need him.) and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.* He wants to go home a servant. “Make me as a servant.” Your old buddy shows up and says he will not forgive you. He will not take you in. The recognition of his main problem is, “I have sinned.” *I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.* You had to watch him in the father's house. You say, “I bet he got a licking when he got home.” No, no, he got the licking in the far country. He did not need a licking any more. The far country was a licking he would never get over. When he got home, he got the feasting, the readiness to forgive him, and the provision of the father's rejoicing.

Let me just close with another person sitting in that hog pen while that prodigal son was there. He said he did not belong there. There was a pig lying in the hog pen, and his daddy hog was lying over there. He hears the prodigal son talking about how it was in the father's house. Man that sounded good, *bread enough to spare.* “If you are going back to that wonderful place, I believe I will go with you.” What happens? He becomes a pig delinquent, and he leaves his daddy. He left his daddy's instruction about the hog pen. This is where hogs belong. He leaves his daddy and heads off down after the prodigal son. He was thinking about *bread enough to spare*, all you can eat. When the prodigal son gets back home, they kill the fatted calf. The boy's daddy says, “Before we eat at the table, we wash up. Mr. Pig, you can eat at the table, but before you do, you have to take a bath.” “Take a bath?” Then when he got his bath, they said, “You have to sit up here at the table. You have to use knives, forks, and spoons.” He thought he could just put his feet in all that. No, he could not do that. That night, “When you go to bed, you have to sleep in a bed.” When he slept in the bed for a week, the pig said he had had enough of that. He said he was going to go back to his father and say, “I have sinned against hell and you. If you will just make me a little pig in a mud pile, I will be so glad to get back home.” Watch now. He headed back home. He was in the pig pen. Who was he? He was a pig. He heard the witness of somebody who was not a pig. That somebody was a son, but he was a son in the hog pen. He was not a pig. It was his nature that got him back to his father's house. It was a pig's nature that got him out of the father's house and back to his father's house. I read this passage in 2 Peter. I wonder, a lot of people go to the far country. They say they have made a profession of faith. I do not know whether they are pigs or whether they are Christians. 2 Peter 2 talks about those that have escaped the corruption of the world through the pollution of this world. 2 Peter 2:22: *But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.* There are a lot of folks that testify of the Christian life being wonderful. They say, “Bless God, that is what I want along with joy.” They do not get a nature with Christians, because they really do not get born again. Hey, the Christian life, if you do not have the nature of the Christian, is a burden to you. If it is a burden to you, when you get



older, your nature is a fallen nature that loves the far country. It does not love church. It does not love the Bible. It does not find enjoyment in the things of God. You find enjoyment running with the crowd of the World. What happens? When you get older, you head for the far country because that is your nature. A Christian can head for the far country because he has two natures. He has a new nature that he got in the new birth. He has an old nature that he got by his first birth. That old nature is desperately wicked. If he does not feed the new nature, that old nature will want to lead him astray to the hog pen. You say, "How can you tell if this one is in church and the other ones in the hog pen are his sons?" Give me time. The prodigal pig joins the church. Just give me time. If you are a Christian, it is the new nature that loves the things of God. If you are saved and you go to the hog pen, you cannot stand it. Throw a sheep in the hog pen. Throw a hog in the hog pen. The sheep may get in the hog pen, but it cannot stand the hog pen. That is why it gets out of the hog pen and goes back home. A pig cannot stand church. You give him time, and where will he head? If he has never been saved, he will go to the pen. How do I know whether he is a hog or a Christian? Just give me some time. They make a profession of faith. Give me some time. If he is a child of God, God will give him the whipping of his life out there. The hunger of his soul cannot be satisfied out there. He is coming back home. It may be today; it may be tomorrow; it may be a year; it may be two years. Just give him time, and you will see him heading back home. Are you a pig, or are you a prodigal son? I do not know. Tell me your nature. I know the difference between an owl and a dove. An owl flies at night. You do not find it in the day time. A dove flies in the day time. That is his nature. A hog's nature is slop and corn. A sheep's nature is grass. You say you made a profession of faith. Who is your crowd? Who is the crowd you run with? You name the crowd you want to run with, and that is what you are. You have a fallen nature. A Christian gets in the wrong crowd. Peter did. You are not one of his disciples. He wanted to prove to them that he was not one of the Lord's disciples, so he cursed and swore. They heard him curse and swear, but they did not see him out there with his heart broken for what he had done to the Lord Jesus Christ. You try to impress the world, but down deep in your heart, you do not impress yourself. Do you think the far country is attractive? If you think it is attractive, you are a hog. If you are a Christian that has gotten out of the Word of God, yes, it is attractive. When you head that way, I will remind you now, I suppose the reason most of them do not come back is that they do not have any nature in them to begin with to bring them back home.