

## { Day 234 }

The older brother became angry and refused to go in. ... “My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” **—Luke 15:28, 32**

Our own patience is so insufficient. We spot one thing we disapprove of in another believer's life, and then we struggle to enjoy him. Why? Because we secretly believe that God does that to us. This is not the heart of God. When the Lord finds something about our character that bothers Him, He doesn't cut us out of His heart. Rather, He is filled with patience and is slow to anger. Luke 15 is often called the parable of the prodigal son, but it's primarily about a father who lost his son and what he did when his son returned. Jesus was teaching His church how to respond to those brothers or sisters who stumble. We all know what to do when a new convert comes into the kingdom. We rejoice and throw a party. Yet we don't easily enter into God's gladness when one of our brothers stumbles or, far worse, when we ourselves stumble. And yet our ability to enter into God's patience and loving-kindness when we stumble is determined by how much patience and loving-kindness we have toward a brother or sister who stumbles.

### { PRAYER STARTER }

Holy Spirit, empower me to exhibit Your patient love toward a fellow believer who has stumbled. Give me the courage to stand alongside and encourage and strengthen that person through Your love and power.

**God does not reject us when something awful in our character comes to light.**