

*The Return Of The Prodigal Son*  
*Henri Nouwen*

*April 13, 2025 Conclusion: Becoming the Father; Epilogue: Living the Painting*

Conclusion: Becoming The Father

1. What is your image or picture of God the Father?

*“It dawned on me that even my best theological and spiritual formation had not been able to completely free me from a Father God who remained somewhat threatening and somewhat fearsome.” (p. 212)*

2. Have you ever thought that your spiritual journey was for you to come like the welcoming Father in Jesus’ parable? Do you see the goal of your spiritual life is to become like the Father?
3. Have you found it easier to identify with either of the two sons than it is to identify with the Father?
4. Who has encouraged you to leave immature childhood to become responsible-living adults?

Epilogue: Living The Painting

1. *“It is the connection between the blessing given by God and the blessing given by the poor. In L’Arche I came to see that these blessings are truly one.” (p. 135).*  
Have you experienced the connection between the blessing of God and the blessing given by the poor?
2. How have you experienced welcome and celebration in your life?
3. How do you see in Rembrandt’s painting “reconciliation and resentment, repentance and anger, communion and alienation, mercy and resistance?”

4. How has a sense of community brought both light and darkness to your life?
5. Is it more “*comfortable to be the wayward younger son or the angry elder son?*” (p. 137)
6. Then Nouwen wrote, “*yet the longer I am part of the community, the more that solidarity proves to be only a way station on the road to a much more lonely destination: the loneliness of the Father, the loneliness of God, the ultimate loneliness of compassion. The community does not need yet another younger or elder son, whether converted or not, but a father who lives with outstretched hands, always desiring to let them rest on the shoulders of his returning children. Yet everything in me resists that vocation.*” (p. 137) Have you found that to be true in your life?