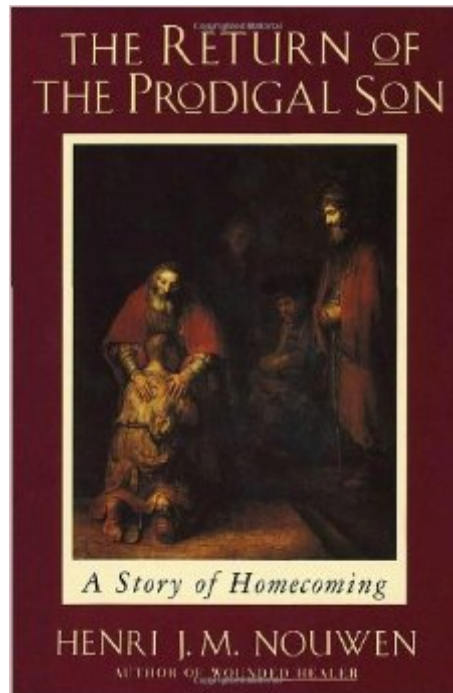


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The Return Of The Prodigal Son: A Story Of Homecoming



Synopsis

A chance encounter with a reproduction of Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son* catapulted Henri Nouwen on a long spiritual adventure. Here he shares the deeply personal and resonant meditation that led him to discover the place within where God has chosen to dwell. In seizing the inspiration that came to him through Rembrandt's depiction of the powerful Gospel story, Henri Nouwen probes the several movements of the parable: the younger son's return, the father's restoration of sonship, the elder son's vengefulness, and the father's compassion. In his reflection on Rembrandt in light of his own life journey, the author evokes a powerful drama of the parable in a rich, captivating way that is sure to reverberate in the hearts of readers. The themes of homecoming, affirmation, and reconciliation will be newly discovered by all who have known loneliness, dejection, jealousy, or anger. The challenge to love as the father and be loved as the son will be seen as the ultimate revelation of the parable known to Christians throughout time, and here represented with a vigor and power fresh for our times. For all who ask, "Where has my struggle led me?" or for those "on the road" who have had the courage to embark on the journey but seek the illumination of a known way and safe passage, this work will inspire and guide each time it is read. "The Return of the Prodigal Son is a beautiful book, as beautiful in the simple clarity of its wisdom as in the terrible beauty of the transformation to which it calls us." --New Oxford Review

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Customer Reviews

Fr. Nouwen's book was recommended to me by a counselor whom I was seeing about

inability/unwillingness to break free of bitterness and forgive past and present hurts. I believe that Fr. Nouwen's tale of his spiritual progression, from seeing himself only as the "prodigal son;" to recognizing himself as the "elder brother;" and finally to recognizing God's desire that he become "the father" describes the "journey home" to which God's calls all His children: to come to the "place" of being forgiven and reconciled to God; to move on to the "place" of forgiving others based on our security in being loved by God; and finally to provide the "place" in our own hearts into which others may come to experience God's forgiveness and reconciliation. Had I not read the convincing "portrayal" of this truth by Fr. Nouwen, I would not have believed it. This truth puts a whole new meaning to "being a member of God's household" - to be fully in the Father's house is to be a living extension of the Father's home, which is always welcoming! This is indeed a "high calling," and one that inspires me to strive even harder to cease allowing self-centeredness to hold me back.

Henri Nouwen has a way of making us look into the places that we would rather not look. When we are drawn into this study of the Rembrandt painting we find a darkness that leads us to an illumination of our own lives. In this book it is with great joy that we discover love and forgiveness as well as hope. This book is a must read for all Christians. In going to the place that I did not want to go I found the place that I needed to go. This is the best spiritual book that I have read in years. I wish we had published this book.

God's love is unconditional is real that is the message. I loved the book. I would also recommend An Encounter With A Prophet for the same message

What an incredible book. What a simple message, deeply explored and wonderfully expounded. Henri Nouwen is a master of reflection, study, self-knowledge, and of writing beautiful, profound books. This book is amazing, perhaps life-changing. It has spoken to me in profound and deep ways, and I am deeply thankful for it. Nouwen's main message, I think, is the unconditional, unfailing, all-surpassing love of the Father, this love that meets all needs easily. He puts himself in the place of the younger son, the older son, and the father, and considers this love - and the things that keep us from fully experiencing it - in all of these places, places that ring universal. The media of realization here is the parable of course, but also Rembrandt's painting, Return of the Prodigal Son. It is profoundly helpful, fun, and provoking to consider this representation of the story and let it work spiritually in us, as it has in Father Henri. This book has more than opened my heart to the love of my Father, it has given me a new love for art, and a side education on Rembrandt and one of his

most famous paintings. In short, this is another truly rare, truly wonderful book from a modern mystic. Nouwen will be remembered, I hope, alongside Augustine, Lewis, and others I have yet to discover but now believe exist. A sample: "Home is the center of my being where I can hear the voice that says: 'You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests'-the same voice that gave life to the first Adam and spoke to Jesus, the second Adam; the same voice that speaks to all children of God and sets them free to live in the midst of a dark world while remaining in the light. I have heard that voice. It has spoken to me in the past and continues to speak to me now. It is the never-interrupted voice of love speaking from eternity and giving life and love whenever it is heard. When I hear that voice, I know that I am home with God and have nothing to fear. As the Beloved of my heavenly Father, 'I can walk in the valley of darkness: no evil would I fear.' As the Beloved, I can confront, console, admonish, and encourage without fear of rejection or need for affirmation. As the Beloved, I can be tortured and killed without ever having to doubt that the love that is given to me is stronger than death. As the Beloved, I am free to live and give life, free also to die while giving life." If you'd like to discuss this book with me, or recommend others, or just chat, e-mail me at williekrischke@hotmail.com. I'd love to talk with you.

The Return of The Prodigal Son is one of those books with a special message that made me want to be a better person. If only it was that easy. Henri Nouwen used his experiences and feelings surrounding the Rembrandt painting "Return of the Prodigal Son" coupled with time as the father at a group home for the severely handicapped as a back drop for this book. But it is not a book that is about his time at the home, nor it is a book that really reflects that he is a catholic priest. It has a universal message and is based squarely on scripture revolving around the story of the prodigal as well as insights gained from Rembrandt's painting. The pleasant yet challenging surprise of the book is how Nouwen takes the logical path from rebellious son through older brother and landing finally at the role of father and how the Father Himself calls us to become as He is. It is the first time I have read or heard a teaching that moves from the unrelenting love that the father has for the son in the story to the idea that God is calling us not just to accept His love as the younger son does once he realizes how lost he had become, but how God is calling us to become like Him and love the rebellious and lost as He does. I found it very interesting how Nouwen sees parts of Rembrandt's work as being reflections of or symbols of something great and true. These insights made the book more interesting than just a simple bible lesson on an old and familiar story. Whether you find yourself in a foreign land or just outside the Father's House, or whether you tend to feel a bit resentful that you're "following all the rules" and yet things just don't seem quite right this book has

something important and powerful to say to you. If you are a leader in the church and want to be compelled to try a little harder and move a little closer to being the accepting and loving father that God calls you to be; this book has something for you. I enjoyed reading this and can highly recommend it.

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