

# UNBELIEVERS' CHARACTER - WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

## Unbelievers are...

### 1. Captured by Satan to Do His Will

2 Timothy 2:26 “and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will”

### 2. Follow Their Own Path Rather than Submit to God

Romans 1:28–32 “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. [29] They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, [30] slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, [31] foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. [32] Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)

### 3. Prioritize Desires (What Feels Good and Appears Good) and the Pride of Life (Self-Focus, Self-Love)

1 John 2:16–17 “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

## The Prodigal Story

In Luke 15 Jesus tells the story of a Father with two sons to explain God’s love for humanity. In the story he describes lostness and unbelief as seen in both sons, with a focus on what true repentance and belief looks like when the “prodigal son” repents and returns home to his father.

Luke 15:11–13 “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.” (ESV)

## Prodigals Have...

Luke 15:14–16 “And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.”

### 1. Rebelled against God

### 2. Run from God

### 3. Avoided Christian Reminders - Church, Bible, Christians

### 4. Past Regrets Towards God

### 5. Past Regrets Towards Others

### 6. Wasted their Lives on Trivialities

### 7. Real Suffering - No True Peace, Hope, or Joy

Luke 15:17–19 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.’”

## ***Prodigals Have a Heavenly Father Who Is...***

Luke 15:20–24 “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

- 1. Over Them - Kingly Authority and Power**
- 2. Watching Them - Knows Everything**
- 3. Compassionate Towards Them**
- 4. Lovingly Patient With Them**
- 5. Forgiving Towards the Repentant**
- 6. Merciful and Gracious**

## **Christians Have a Purpose and a Message**

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

2 Corinthians 5:11 “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.”

- 1. Surrender to Jesus’ Loving Control**
- 2. Speak Truth to a Deceived World**
- 3. Show Love to the Hateful**
- 4. Share Jesus Persuasively**

2 Corinthians 5:14–21 “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

## **A Christian Response Towards Unbelief**

- 1. Humility**
- 2. Compassion**
- 3. Truth**
- 4. Love**
- 5. Faith-Filled Action**

- Jude 22–23 “And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.” (ESV)
- Proverbs 11:30 “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”
- James 5:20 “let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.” - Charles Spurgeon