

the way
FORWARD
DEVOTIONALS

Written By: *Our Century Baptist Church Family*



Devotionals available online at centurybaptist.org/the-way-forward/

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About the Devotionals:

The Way Forward is a five-week series preparing us for and moving us toward our Sacred Assembly on September 20, 2026. A Sacred Assembly is not simply a special service or a church event. It is a gathered moment before God where His people slow down, reflect honestly, confess humbly, receive His forgiveness, and turn together toward His ways. The tone of this series is not condemnation, but invitation. We are moving toward repentance, but repentance rooted in hope — the hope that the Father receives returning children, the Spirit reveals what needs healing, and Jesus leads His church into renewal.

Throughout this series, we will consider the pathway God often uses to restore His people: joy, unity, reflection, repentance, and sacred assembly. We will ask where we have drifted from the Father, where our unity has weakened, where our hearts need honest reflection, and where godly sorrow must lead to real repentance. The goal is not shame, but restored communion with God and one another. We are asking the Lord to prepare CBC not merely for a service, but for a holy encounter that helps us move forward together in humility, forgiveness, renewed mission, and joy.



ESV used for scripture references



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Wanting the Gift Without the Giver

Monday, August 17, 2026

Dave Young

Essential Truth: *Self-rule begins when we want the Father's gifts without the Father's presence.*

Scripture: Luke 15: 11-12

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 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.

Observations:

- Jesus begins the parable by locating the younger son within a family: "There was a man who had two sons."
- The younger son asks for the father's property, but not the father's presence.
- His request treats the father more like a resource to be used than a relationship to be cherished.
- The father allows the son to receive what he asks for, even though the request is dishonoring.
- The son's self-rule begins before he leaves home; it begins in the heart that says, "Give me what is mine."
- The deeper issue is not only rebellion, but relational distance from the father.

Application: Self-rule often begins quietly. It may not start with obvious rebellion, but with a heart that wants God's gifts without God Himself. We want provision, comfort, control, blessing, success, ministry fruit, restored relationships, or answered prayers — but we may not always want the Father's presence, authority, correction, or love.

The younger son reminds us that sin's deeper problem is distance. We can be near religious activity and still far from the Father in our desires. As we move toward Sacred Assembly, we are invited to ask: Where have we wanted what God gives more than God Himself? Where have we treated His blessings as possessions to manage rather than gifts that draw us back to Him? The way forward begins by returning to the Father, not merely trying to fix our behavior.

Prayer: *Father, forgive us for the ways we have wanted Your gifts without wanting You. Forgive us for treating Your blessings as things we can control, consume, or use for ourselves. Show us where self-rule has taken root in our hearts. Lead us out of distance and back into communion with You. Teach us to desire Your presence more than Your provision, Your love more than our comfort, and Your will more than our own way. Draw us home to You with humility, honesty, and joy. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

