

Going is only the first step.....

a Modern Day Parable inspired by Matthew 21:28-32

A man had twin sons, Eli and Zeke. He loved them both dearly. These twin boys had some common traits, but they looked and acted very different. From their beginning, the man tried to honor the unique personality of each boy while instilling the same virtues and work ethic in both.

Eli was a little smaller with dark brown hair and dark blue eyes. He was shy and reserved. He liked to plan things out before he acted. Eli didn't get excited or energetic about things and preferred to stay in the background. So, he often appeared to be uninterested and unenthusiastic about life. His father felt like he was always facing a battle to get Eli to comply with family rules and chores. Eli would protest in the beginning, but he always came through and did what was asked of him.

Zeke stood 1 ¾" taller than Eli. But his blonde hair, blue eyes, and outgoing personality made him appear to be much larger. He was always jumping into new adventures. He lit up the room when he walked in, and his energy drew everyone's attention and affection. He liked to be liked, and was always eager to say yes to whatever was asked of him. The problem was Zeke rarely followed through. His father stayed hopeful that one day Zeke would come through and actually comply with the family rules and chores.

Eli made better grades, kept a few very close friends, and participated in only carefully selected activities. Zeke on the other hand, had mediocre grades, was very popular in school, and joined every club or team he could. As the boys grew, their differences became more and more evident.

When they were mere toddlers, the boys were allowed one hour of TV time while supper was being prepared. During their favorite program, the man said to his son, "Eli, go put away your shoes and toys." Eli said in reply, "I will not. I don't want to miss my show." But afterwards, he changed his mind and immediately put away his shoes. The man went to his other son and gave the same order. Zeke said in reply, "Yes, sir! I will do it now." But, after he did not put away his shoes.

When the boys were in elementary school the man said to his son, "Eli, when you come home from school today, go put away your backpack and clean your room." Eli said in reply, "I can't. It is too much of a mess, and was mostly made by Zeke!" But afterwards, he changed his mind and went to work cleaning the room. The man went to his other son and gave the same order. Zeke said in reply, "Yes, sir! I will do it. You can count on me!" But, after school he did not help with the cleaning.

As they grew older, the man began teaching them about choosing a vocation and finding their career path. He advised them that high school is an important time of one's life. This is when you need to develop your strong work ethic and focus on planning your future." He said to his son, "Eli, when you come home from school each day, go do your homework then look up a different career to explore the possibilities." Eli said in reply, "I can't. That will take up too much time." But afterwards, he changed his mind and found the exercise very interesting and helpful. The man went to his other son and gave the same order. Zeke said in reply, "Yes, sir! I will do it. Sounds like a good plan to me!" But, after school he found he would rather spend time with his friends than do what his father suggested.

When the twin sons were grown men and busy with families of their own, the man suffered a stroke and was left paralyzed. He said to his son, "Eli, I would like to see all of my family this Fall before everyone gets too busy with the holidays. Go prepare a nice reunion for our family." Eli said in reply, "I can't. I just don't think I have the time." The man felt sad and disappointed. But afterwards, Eli changed his mind and began planning and sending out invitations. The man went to his other son and gave the same request. Zeke said in reply, "Yes, sir! I will do it. You can count on me! I have so many friends and connections it will be a grand event!" The man felt relieved and filled with joy. But afterwards, Zeke looked at his busy social calendar and decided he did not have time for a family reunion.

Which of these two sons did their father's will? Even after all those years, it seems neither changed his mind or his ways.

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