



Week Two

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for loving all parts of us. Help us to see your heart for all of us. Help us to be aware of your presence as we look for your message in this story and during our discussion today. Amen.

Talk It Over

This week we continued to look at the Parable of the Lost Sheep, Coin, and more specifically, the Parable of the Prodigal (lost) Son laid out in Luke 15.

- Which of the three characters in the Parable of the Lost Son do you identify with most? The older brother, the lost son, or the father?
- Tell us a little bit about your thoughts regarding the older brother in this story?
- Has there been someone in your life you would describe as lost, that evokes a sense of anger or frustration in you instead of compassion or empathy? Why do you think that is?

Disclaimer: As we go about this conversation, it's important we remember and know that salvation is a done deal once we say 'yes' to Jesus. In other words, we may be "saved" and "found" yet still act or behave in lost ways.

Read Luke 15:29-30

The brother who appeared to have it all together is expressing his frustration to the father. The fit thrown by the brother reveals his own brokenness and creates an invitation to explore what growth and healing God has for him as he sees what is below the surface of his own behavior.

- Have you ever hid behind religion or by doing all the right things but not exploring (with God) what is in your heart?
- How easy is it for you to pause in relational conflict and explore what is happening inside of you and how you might be contributing to the problem? If you have learned how to do this a little better, share with the group anything that you find helpful in that process. If this is an area you struggle with, feel free to share that too. (And let's all remember this is not a time to tell people who they should be.)

Read Colossians 2:10 and James 1:16-18

As human beings, we are made to need love, affirmation, and approval in the context of being seen for who we really are (the good and the broken parts). The father extends this invitation to the two sons attempting to meet each of their needs individually and inviting them to see their worth and his love.

- How easy is it for you to know that God loves you despite your brokenness and needs? What allows you to connect to that truth and love?
- Can you recall a time you were vulnerable about the broken parts of you and, despite your fear, you were met with love and support? If you feel comfortable, share that with the group.

- When you lose sight of God's love and affirmation what do you turn to in order to distract you from the truth?

Read the quote below from Brene Brown and reflect on the following things:

A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.

-Brene Brown

Brene is speaking about the deepest parts of us. These desires are often reflective of our heart.

- How would you describe the health of your heart this season?
- Which of the words in her quote resonates with you the most?
- What small thing can you add to your life this week that helps to care for your heart and meet your need for God's love?

Read Luke 6:36

As we look at the reaction of the father we see that he truly does welcome them both to the party and his home. He leaves the party in order to meet the older brother and his need for love during his time of frustration. He extends an invitation to the older son — his desire was that the older brother would come into the party. The father's behavior mirrors that of Jesus. Jesus invites us to receive and extend his love.

- Have you ever been in a place to extend an invitation of love to someone who feels hurt, frustrated, and angry?
- Have you experienced being met with love during a difficult time in life?
- Can you identify with the older brothers resistance to join the party and instead choose to sit with his feelings (even though they are isolating him from the love offered)? How might we be able to shift that behavior?

Closing Prayer

God, you know the details of our story — you know the best of us and the worst of us — and you love us. You love us so much, you seek us. Help us to live aware of the simple truth that we are all sought and we can all be found. Help us to love all parts of us, the broken and the healed, as we love others. Amen.

Two Optional Challenges for This Week:

1. Pray each day that God would give you the opportunity this week to invite someone far from his love to church with you on Easter weekend.
2. Look for ways to show and receive love in some small way everyday this week.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group connect in friendship and grow faith.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

Spend some time praying for your group, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance regarding your specific group.