

Luke 15

Small Group Guide & Discussion Questions

1. To whom was Jesus telling this parable, with three stories?
2. In the Middle Eastern tradition, logic is built upon a series of similar illustrations to make a point. The same way is also used in the Quran. Luke 15 begins with the Pharisees and the scribes' complaint against Jesus, that he "welcomes" or "receives sinners". Now, having read the three separate stories (lost sheep, lost coin, lost sons), what is the point Jesus is making?
3. For centuries, Muslims have misinterpreted and used the father's forgiveness to question the need for a mediator between humanity and God. (They interpret that the younger son repents on his own without needing rescue, only accepting the father's mercy and forgiveness to get into. Where, then, is the incarnation and the cross (costly love) in the story of the prodigal son?
4. How does the father demonstrate his self-emptying love to both the younger and older son? (consider Philippians 2:5-11)
5. In this parable, Jesus redefines what repentance truly means. Rather than returning to the Lord with our own effort by fulfilling the law or praying the right prayer (a lost sheep cannot find its own way back), it is like the prodigal son, *rejoicing and accepting being found*. How might Jesus be inviting you to "be found" through His costly love? For example, even though I know in my head that God loves me unconditionally, I still sometimes picture Him as disappointed in me when I don't read the Bible, serve more often, yell at my kids, (the list goes on). I can ask the Holy Spirit to reshape my perception of God's posture towards me - not as a taskmaster, but as someone who runs to meet me with compassion and grace.
6. [Suggestion: pause here for 1-2 minutes to reflect honestly with the Lord before sharing.] As a church, ministry, small group, and/or individual, how have we served God to earn his blessing and love? When have I rendered myself "unfairly" treated by the Lord, with all that I have done to serve Him?
7. Considering God's extravagant love for me, how does it influence my heart and attitude when I serve Him and His body?