



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 5 March 17, 2024

“Parables of the Lost Things”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for this wonderful group that has gathered together in your name today. Help us to be real with each other and with you. Give us courage to be honest and to talk with those we trust. We want to experience the hope, freedom, and peace that comes from confession to you and to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Luke 15:1-7 (NIV)

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Luke 15:8-10 (NIV)

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins^[a] and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

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INTRODUCTION

It becomes very easy for religious people to look down at people who are not like them. But Jesus had a heart for non-religious people. Being right doesn't give us the right to be self-righteous. This is what Jesus teaches us in the parables of the lost things.

In the parables of the lost things, Jesus reminds us that when we lose something of value we are laser-focused not on what's found, but on what's lost. And he reveals to us that God views unrighteous people as something valuable that got separated from God. According to Jesus, God does not see “good” and “bad” people, he sees “lost to God” people and “found by God” people. If we can do the same, we will no longer be self-righteous and write people off.

QUESTIONS

1. Which way do you lean: Self-Righteous? Unrighteous?
2. Why are we quick to size some people or some types of people up and write them off?
3. Read Luke 15:1–7 (on page 1). What key words or phrases stand out to you in this parable?
4. Read Luke 15:8–10 (on page 1). What do you notice about this parable as compared to the one before it? In verses 7 and 10, what was Jesus trying to communicate about God's priorities?
5. Luke 15:11–31 is a parable Jesus once told of a prodigal son. The story has three main characters:
 - The son, who demanded and squandered his inheritance.
 - The brother, who was frustrated that his good behavior seemed overlooked.
 - The father, who welcomed his lost son back to the family.
6. Is there a key time in your life when you could relate to one of these three characters? Why?

FINAL APPLICATION

Who in your life is it most difficult to rebrand as “lost” versus “bad” or “evil”? What difference do you imagine it would make if you did?