

“Par-a-ble” Non-Series

Discussion Starter: Have you ever lost something which was highly valuable? Explain. Were you able to find it?

Explore: Read Matthew 9:9-13.

Jesus called several men to follow Him. These men gave up everything, including their families and jobs in order to do so. One such man was Matthew.

1. What was Matthew’s occupation prior to meeting Jesus (vs. 9)?
2. To celebrate his new life, Matthew decided to throw a dinner party. Who was in attendance at the party (vs. 10)?
3. Who took notice of the party and what was their reaction to what they saw (vs. 11)?
4. Summarize Jesus’ response (vs. 12-13). What does this tell us about the mission of Jesus? ...the purpose of Jesus’ followers?

Reflect: Review the LG and discuss the questions below.

1. Jesus often spoke in parables to make a point. What is the connection between the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son?
2. In the parable, who represents the 99 sheep and who represents the 1 sheep? When did you first sense God was chasing after you?
3. Describe what emotions the woman may have felt when she found the lost silver coin. Have you thought about the fact that all of heaven rejoiced when you put your faith in Christ?
4. Once a person becomes a member of God’s family – it is possible to stop thinking about others who are far from God. Why do you think this is the case? What can a person do to prevent themselves from becoming inwardly focused?
5. Which of the three points from the lesson impressed you the most? Who is God putting on your mind or heart right now that needs to be found?

Live:

As a group: Practice using the “open chair” as a group. The “open chair” is a reminder that we should always make room for one more person. Encourage everyone to be looking for others to invite to join the group.

On your own: Make a list of people you know who are far from God. Pray for them every day this week.

Listening Guide Notes

Par-a-ble - A simple story illustrating a moral or religious lesson.

^[1] “Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him.

^[2] But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” –**Luke 15:1-2**

Parable 1: The Lost Sheep

1. Without Christ, we are helpless.

^[3] “Then Jesus told them this parable: ^[4] ‘Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ^[5] And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ^[6] and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ^[7] I 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 15:3-7**

Parable 2: The Lost Coin

2. Without Christ, we are careless.

^[8] “‘Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ^[9] And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ^[10] In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’” –**Luke 15:8-10**

Parable 3: The Prodigal Son

3. Without Christ, we are selfish.

^[11] “Jesus continued: ‘There was a man who had two sons. ^[12] The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. ^[13] Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ^[14] After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ^[15] So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ^[16] He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him

anything. ^[17] When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!' ^[18] I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ^[19] I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' ^[20] So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ^[21] The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ^[22] But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ^[23] Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ^[24] For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. ^[25] Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ^[26] So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ^[27] 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' ^[28] The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ^[29] But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ^[30] But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' ^[31] 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ^[32] But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' ”

–Luke 15:11-32

^[15] “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ^[16] Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.’ ” **–Mark 16:15-16**