

Our goal in studying the Bible is two-fold. One part of the goal as we read is to engage with our **mind**, to grow in our knowledge of who God is as he has revealed himself in his word. The other part of our goal is to engage with our **heart**, by responding to God as we read with our love, praise, gratitude, confession, needs, questions, and desires.

Engaging with our mind *and* heart as we seek the help of the Holy Spirit helps us grow in an intimate relationship with God through Jesus our Savior as we see him more clearly, know him better and love him more.

## Day 1- Read Luke 15

- How is God revealed in this chapter? What is he like? Who is Jesus shown to be? What is he like?

Pray: Spend time in adoration and thanksgiving.

- What is human nature shown to be like in this chapter? Is this true of you in your life right now?

Pray: Spend time in confession and repentance.

- What does this passage of Scripture show that you need from God? How does your heart need to move to align with what you see in Scripture? Is there something you need to believe? Is there action you need to take?

Pray: Spend time asking God for what you need to live for him.

Meditation: *Luke 15:7 "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."*

## Day 2- Luke 15:1-10

1. Why do you think the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to hear Jesus?

2. Though very brief, verse 3 points us to the reason Jesus told the next three parables. What is the word “so” referring back to?
  
3. What lengths does the shepherd go to, to find his lost sheep according to verse 4-5?
  
  
  
4. What is the response, in verses 5-6, of the shepherd when he finds his lost sheep?

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses:

*Romans 3:10 “None is righteous, no, not one;”*

*Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

-Why is there more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine “righteous” people who need no repentance?

5. How extensively does the woman search for her lost coin in verse 8?
  
  
  
6. What is the woman’s response when she finds her coin in verse 9?



In Ezekiel 34:16 God declares, “I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed...” We see Him doing this through Jesus who clearly declares his mission on earth was “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Reflect on how these two parables illustrate the way God seeks the lost.

- ❖ Who initiates the search?
- ❖ What does the lost one contribute to the search?

- ❖ What is the result of the search?
- ❖ Spend some time reflecting on and thanking Jesus that he didn't leave you lost, but that he sought you out and saved you.

### Day 3- Luke 15:11-32

7. Look up the word prodigal and write its' definitions.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What kind of attitude does the younger son demonstrate in asking his father for his inheritance now?

Scholar's Note: "For a son to say such a thing to his father in that culture was tantamount to saying that he wished that his father was dead, since he was not entitled to his share of the inheritance (one-third of the estate, since his brother was the firstborn [Gen. 25: 31- 34; Deut. 21: 17]) while his father was still alive. Normally a son who shamed himself by making such a request would have been publically shamed by his father, perhaps disinherited, or possibly even dismissed from the family and considered dead (cf. vv. 24, 32)." <sup>1</sup>

9. What situation finally made the younger son come to his senses in verses 14-17?

- How is this a picture of what sin offers and what it really delivers?

10. What can we tell about the Father from verse 17?

11. When the younger son comes to his senses where does he turn, and with what new perspective (vs.18-19)?

12. In verse 20 it says, “while he was still a long way off his father saw him.” What might this suggest?

13. What is shocking to you about the father’s behavior in verses 20, 22-24? What is missing?



Spend some time meditating on the love and mercy of your heavenly Father with these passages:

*Titus 3:4-5 “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy...”*

*Romans 2:4b “...God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.”*

*Psalm 103:8-14 “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust”.*

*Isaiah 44:22 “I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.”*

Day 4- Luke 15:11-32

Scholar’s Note: “The word [anger] used here [in verse 28] carries the idea of swelling, settled anger that rises like sap in a tree on a hot day.”<sup>2</sup>

14. How did the father respond in verse 28 when the older son refused to come in and celebrate?

15. The sins of the younger brother were evident to everyone, while the older brother's sins were hidden. From the information in verses 28-30, what sins can you see leaking out of the older brother?



It is easy to see the passionate, outward sins that we commit—they embarrass us, they are messy, difficult to ignore and those closest to us probably bring them up from time to time. But there are also the inward sins, the ones we keep well hidden. For a while they can remain concealed, but at some point they do come leaking out or... exploding out like with the older brother in Jesus' parable.

- ❖ What are outward sins that people struggle with that are pretty obvious to those around them?
  
- ❖ What are inward sins that are easier to keep hidden from others?
  
- ❖ How are inward sins sometimes more of a threat to your spiritual health?
  
- ❖ Spend some time in prayer confessing those sins in your life that no one but God may be able to detect.

Picture and Ponder: "...the older son was a hypocritical legalist, doing what was expected of him on the outside, but inwardly filled with secret sins, such as bitterness, hatred, jealousy, anger, and lust (Matt. 23: 28). The truth is, he was more profoundly and truly lost than his profligate younger brother, because he had spent his life convincing himself and others that he was good and morally upright. That made it impossible for him to acknowledge that he was in reality a wretched sinner."<sup>3</sup>

16. How does the older son reveal, by his reaction to his father's kindness and mercy, what he believes his father's love was based on or should be based on?

## Day 5- Luke 15:1-32

17. Jesus ends his parable of the Prodigal son abruptly without resolving the issue of the older son. How would you end the story?

18. How does what the Pharisees are grumbling about reveal their total lack of understanding about the nature of God, their own human nature and Jesus' mission?

19. According to these parables what brings joy to God?

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, John F. (2011-02-21). Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) (Kindle Locations 20257-20259). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Hughes, R. Kent. *Luke, That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word series*, (Crossway, Wheaton Ill. 2015),p.577

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, John F. (2011-02-21). Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) (Kindle Locations 20257-20259). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

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