

Questions for Small Groups | April 7, 2019

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The Great Explorers — Jesus at Table with the Father – The Table Manner of Joy

Focus Passage: Luke 15:11–32

Context: Luke 15:1–32

Other Passages Referenced:

Sermon Recap: In Luke 15, Jesus tells three parables. Each parable highlights Jesus' table manner of joy. Each parable is filled with joy and rejoicing over the lost being found. As those who know we were lost but now are found—spiritually dead and brought back to life by Jesus—we find joy in our own salvation, joy in the salvation of others, and joy in being part of the process of finding the lost.

Background Helps

- The English word “prodigal” is not a biblical word as such. It does not appear in the text of the Bible itself, although it is often found in the English passage heading for this Luke 15:11–32. “Prodigal” is primarily defined as spending money or resources freely and recklessly; wastefully extravagant. If you have not read it, Tim Keller’s book, *The Prodigal God*, develops the idea that God is a prodigal God who spends all that He had to save us.
- Jewish inheritance in Bible times – “The older son would receive two thirds of the estate and the younger son one third (Deut 21:17). Actually the younger son would receive slightly less than a third if there were daughters, for money would be needed for their dowries. Usually such a division of the inheritance took place upon the death of the father, but it could occur earlier.”¹

Hook: Pick a Question to Help Ignite Conversation

What typically brings you joy?

Do you make a distinction between happiness and joy? ... If so, how?

Look—Observing and Interpreting:

READ Luke 15:11–32

1. To whom is Jesus addressing this parable? (Need to look back to Luke 15:1–2.)
2. If you were writing the heading for Luke 15:11–32, how would you complete the phrase: “The parable of the”?
3. How do you explain the younger son’s return to his father after he recklessly spent all of his inheritance his father had advanced to him?

¹ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 405.

4. How do you explain the older brother's reaction to his father's lavish reception of the younger son?
5. How does the father explain his reason for the feast celebrating the return of the younger son?
6. Read Luke 15:21 and 15:29 and describe how the attitude of the younger brother contrasts with the older brother.

Illustrations:

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Took: *Applying the message to our lives.*

1. How do you identify with the younger brother?
2. How do you identify with the older brother?
3. How do you see these parables pointing toward the gospel message?
4. How does the joy over the lost being found compare to other joys in your life?
5. Is the Holy Spirit pointing out anything in your heart or in the way you think that He wants to change?

Prayer: In addition to praying for one another please:

- Pray for someone you relate to who is currently lost without Jesus.
- Ask God to give you an opportunity in the coming week to have a gospel-centered conversation with someone who does not yet know Jesus.
- Pray that you will see the opportunity and that the Spirit will enable you to be a witness to the gospel.