



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Series Theme: Stories of Jesus
Text for the Week: Luke 15:11-24
Story for the Week: The Prodigal Story I
Message for the Week: A Gracious Community

Week Five
Sunday, July 17

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

When did you leave home for the first time?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Luke 15:11-24](#) out loud.

[Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

What is conditional love? What is unconditional love? How are they different?

What is the most disrespectful thing you have done to your parents/family/friends? What was their response?

Do you know anyone like the Pharisees of Jesus day who thinks the church today is soft on sin? Do you agree or disagree with their assessment?

How do you understand/define repentance? What is it? What does it involve? How does this understanding correspond to the Father in Jesus' story, who filled with compassion, runs to his son, threw his arms around and kissed his son before his son could say anything?

What do you think brought the prodigal son to his senses? What brings you to your senses?

How are we using the blessings, spiritual gifts, and treasures that God has entrusted to us? How are we wasting or squandering them just like the prodigal son?

How do you identify with the prodigal son in this story?

What is your impression of the Father in this story?

"Try It!"

Find a few times this week to sit in silence and to simply focus on the image in our story for this week of the Father with outstretched arms ready to embrace and reconcile his younger son. As you do, be open to what the Spirit of God is telling you and how it makes you feel.

What would the posture of "open arms" change in your life?

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Father, we give you thanks and praise, that while we were still far off, at the edge of the village, you met us there in your son, Jesus Christ, and through your reckless extravagance, you brought us home. Father, you held nothing back. Jesus was willing to spend everything for us. And we, like the younger son, deserve none of it. Father, in Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of Your grace that you have lavished on us. (cf. Ephesians 1:7,8) In the name of Jesus our Teacher and Rabbi, Amen.

Missional/Spiritual Practice for the Month: Celebrating with Others

During the month of July, you are encouraged to "celebrate" with people that you don't know very well (Luke 15). It could be with a neighbor, a classmate, or a co-worker. Invite someone to join you for Wednesdays on the Lawn. Celebrate the birth of our nation, the sunshine and warm weather, an anniversary, National Slurpee Day (7-11), or just being neighbors. Eat at a restaurant close to your house, in your backyard or driveway, or at a nearby park. Be open to meeting and getting to know new people. Experiment with different ways to celebrate.