

Derwin Gray | Luke 15:11-24 Sermon Discussion Leader's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To see that God's grace and mercy is our greatest hope, but also that it radically reorients and transforms our lives when we accept it.

Icebreaker: When you hear the word "father," what comes to mind? Why?

Discussion:

Introduction: For many of us, "father" is a loaded term - often one that comes with a lot of baggage. And yet, in the parable Jesus tells in Luke 15, the picture we are given of God is that he is like a "father that runs to us."

Read:

15:11-16

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.

1. What, to a first century audience, would have been so shocking about the son's request?
2. How does the father respond to his son's insult? What is surprising about this?

Read:

[Luke 15:17-19](#)

¹⁷ "When **he came to his senses**, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants 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 servants.'

3. In his disgrace, we're told that the son "comes to his senses." What do you think that means? Why does he say he's sinned against his father *and* God? Why is this important to recognize?
4. Derwin mentioned that "coming to your senses" is a good thing. How have you experienced this to be true in your own life?

Read:

[Luke 15:20-24](#)

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.

5. What is surprising (again) about the father's response? What does this show us about God?
6. Derwin said in his sermon that, "*Our Father in heaven runs toward us with a love that is compassionate, forgiving, and restorative.*" How have you experienced this in your own life?
7. If this is true about God, why do we often live with so much guilt and shame? How does Jesus's forgiveness encourage you today?

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Sharing and Prayer:

Spend time thanking God for his love and mercy and compassion. Ask him to help you increasingly “come to your senses” with respect to sin. Praise God for his forgiveness and grace.