

# Welcome to New Life!

We are very pleased you are here. We sincerely hope you will be especially aware of God's presence as we worship. If this is your first time to worship with us, here is what you can expect:

## Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship, you are free to connect with God in whatever biblical way that expresses your heart's adoration. Some may remain seated, others stand, kneel, clap or lift their hands.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

## Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

## Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

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We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{over for sermon notes}

February 24, 2008

Pastor Roger

## Reality of the Prodigal

*There comes a day when we all must come to our senses ...*

Luke 15:13-19

### FOCUS FOR THE DAY... "The prodigal faces a reality check"

Could you use a reality check? When we are forced to face reality — we are forced to make choices.

**Luke 15:13-16** "13 A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there **he wasted** all his money in wild living. 14 About the time his money ran out, **a great famine** swept over the land, **and he began to starve**. 15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. 16 The young man **became so hungry** that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

### 1. What is REALITY ... really?

• Reality is when we see things and ourselves as they really are -- not as we perceive them to be -- good or bad.

**"Reality is what happens when things go wrong."**

• We don't find reality until we are forced to "hit the wall", and we are jarred to our senses. That is a reality check.

• **"If you plant stupid – you will reap desperation!"** - Dave Ramsey

### 2. Reality Brings About Examination.

• What has happened around us drives us to realize and examine what has happened in us.

• The prodigal learned — *Life without the Father is no life at all.*

**Luke 15:17** "When he finally came to his senses, [This means when he saw himself as he really was] he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!'"

• **Coming to our senses implies that ... we see ourselves for what we are** — what we could have been — and what we may become if we don't change. **It's called reality.**

- Right thinking is critical to our reality ...

Our thinking must:

- a) Be aligned with the **truth**.

**2 Timothy 4:3** “For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teachings. They will follow their own desires and they will look for teachers that will tell them what they want to hear.”

**Proverbs 23:7** “For as he thinks within himself, so he is.”

**John 8:32** “... the truth will set you free.”

### Our thinking impacts our reality!

b) Have **hope** for the future.

- Without hope there will never be an attempt to change.

### 3. Reality Often Forces Change.

**Luke 15:18-19** “I will go home to my father and I will say, ‘Father I have sinned against both heaven and you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Please take me on as a hired man.’”

- True **heart change** involves three things:

**1) A plan of action ...** Answers the question: “*How am I going to do it?*”

**2) Proper humility ...** We must humble ourselves. There needs to be a breaking of our self-centeredness.

**3) Follow through ...** Procrastination or failure to follow through, even when our thinking is right, won’t change our life or circumstances.

### How Can I Put This Into Practice?

It is so easy for us to say ... I want to be like Jesus ... I want a great marriage ... I want to be a good student ... I want to handle money better ... I want to live life with purpose. “**Hello! It is reality check time!!**”

**STOP!!** God doesn’t want us to end up in the pig pen. But He loves us too much to keep us out if we are on the run to a “distant country” away from the father’s heart -- like the prodigal.

**Be open** — **Be honest** to what God may be saying to you. There is hope for your future. Humble yourself before God and man and make a plan right now to come back to the Father on a dead run — He is waiting with open arms!!

## “DIGGING DEEPER”

For personal or small group study

Week of February 24, 2008

**QUICK REVIEW:** Which point or scripture passage most challenged, confused, or caught your attention in this week’s message? Why?

### TODAY’S FOCUS

1. Were you ever at a point in your life where you knew the decisions you were making were wrong or foolish, but you rationalized them to yourself? What kind of reality check did you have that caused you to change?

Why do we sometimes ignore the warnings we receive and walk headlong into sin?

2. As you review the story of the prodigal in Luke 15:11-19, what part does pride, humility, grace and the breaking process play in this story? Identify where each of these takes place. Can you relate to any of these areas in your life?

### GETTING THE POINT

1. Read Galatians 6:7-8. In what ways can you sow to please the Holy Spirit instead of your own sinful, selfish nature? How can this help keep you from becoming a prodigal ... or in helping someone who is a prodigal?
2. Read Galatians 6:1-5. Thinking about your attempts to have a positive effect on the prodigals in your life, why do you think Paul gives this warning to the one who is restoring the wayward brother or sister?
3. From the parable of the prodigal son, why do you suppose it was not until the son was at the low point – eating with the pigs – that he “came to his senses?” Luke 15:14-19

### A LOOK INSIDE

1. In what ways were you personally challenged by the “Reality of the Prodigal”?
2. Remember, God doesn’t want you in the pig pen. What are you doing to keep out of it?