

“DIGGING DEEPER”

For personal or small group study Week of March 30, 2008

There are no prepared sermon notes this week. The message is primarily an interview/testimony of a past prodigal. Small group or personal study will focus on the interview questions as well as Luke 15.

NOTES: Sermon/Testimony

“If people really knew me, they would reject me.” To avoid this risk, we often wear masks we think people will like. We hide who we are, putting ourselves under constant strain.

We often feel this same way about God. We think we are rejected and condemned rather than welcomed and loved. We do our best to please Him, but feel that we will never measure up.

In the three parables about lostness -- the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son -- Jesus sets us straight about God’s attitude toward sinners.

Read Luke 15:1-32

1. In these three parables, compare the way the Pharisees see “sinners” to the way Jesus says God sees them. How do you imagine God sees you? What does your description tell you about your image of God?
2. Put yourself in these stories as the lost sheep and the lost son (either son). Allow yourself to experience God’s response to you. What thoughts and feelings do you have as you take in God’s love?

How do these stories motivate you to love those who are lost?

3. Discuss your personal thoughts or feelings about the questions listed below [shaded box]. How did you relate to Jason’s responses to these questions? How do you relate to them personally? How have you been motivated to draw closer to God?

1. What was going on inside of you that led you to do some of the things you did? Where did your feelings come from?
2. What did it take, and when did you “come to your senses” and recognize you needed to go back home? What did that look like? How long did it take? Did you have fears or shame? Did you meet an older brother? Do you feel fully accepted by God the Father?
3. Where do you see yourself on that spiritual journey today?

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