

Lesson 24: The Parable of the Lost

Objective: To learn that God is a loving Father who seeks and waits for the return of His "lost" children.

Background: Jesus likes to use parables in His teaching. In fact, most of His teaching during the last few months of His ministry is by parables and illustrations. The purpose of Jesus' parables, in all four Gospels, are either (a) to teach us about the Kingdom of God (God's dealing with man and the world) or (b) to show good behavior for us to follow and bad behavior to avoid (means not to follow the bad ones)

Instructions: Read carefully Luke 15:1-32 so that you can act out these parables. Again, Jesus upset (offended) the Jewish religious leaders in Judea, as He did in Galilee, by His friendship (association) with people who were despised (looked down upon) and rejected (having nothing to do with) by the Pharisees and the Scribes as "sinners" (Luke 15:1-2). Jesus then told three simple stories (parables) to show them what God is really like (the nature of God).

The twin parables of "The Lost Sheep" and the "Lost Coin" (Luke 15:4-10)

1. Did the shepherd care about the sheep that got lost? How about the woman with the lost coin? Give evidence to your answer (Luke 15: 4-6, 8-9). And how did the Shepherd and woman each feel when the sheep and the coin was found?

2. Now, how is God like the shepherd and the woman? Did God care about the "sinners" (people who got lost)? How do you know? (Luke 19:10, Lesson 1) Was the religious leaders' attitude toward the "sinners" right or wrong? Why?

The parable of "The Lost Son" (or the parable of "The Loving Father") (Luke 15:11-31)

3. Was the younger son going "up" or "down" hill after He left his father's house? Give evidence (Luke 15:11-16) What made him come home? Did he repent? Explain (Luke 15:17-20a)

4. Had the father forgotten and disowned his younger son? Give evidence (Luke 15:20) Did the father forgive his son? By the way, how was the son treated? Explain. How is God like the father and yet much, much more? Explain

5. Was the older son happy that his younger brother came home? Give evidence (Luke 15:25-30) Did he understand his father's heart – how his father felt? Explain (Luke 15:31-32) How are the Pharisees like the older son? Read carefully Luke 15:1-2.

6. Why did Jesus, God's Son, come into the world? Read Luke 19:10. Does it explain why Jesus made friends with the sinners? (Luke 15:1-2)

Are your good friends at school the "lost" children that God is looking for? How could you share what you are learning with them?

Let's Remember: Jesus said, "For the Son of Man (means Jesus) came to seek and to save the lost (means sinners)." (Luke 19:10)

