

Warm Up

What's the most expensive thing you have lost? What is the most valuable thing you have found?

Background and context

The fifteenth chapter of Luke's gospel is a short chapter packed with meaning. In it, we read of the symbolism between lost things of value and sinners, and the symbolism between a community rejoicing over lost things found and the joy in heaven when a sinner repents. Most of us can see ourselves in at least one of the "lost" parables. The chapter opens with a familiar scene in the gospels: Jesus is surrounded by sinners who are eager to hear His words. In this particular scene, Jesus welcomed His listeners and wants to dine with them. In contrast to this group of sinners stood a group of legal experts — Pharisees and scribes — who watched and grumbled against Jesus.

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



READ Luke 15:11-20. What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

1. **Read 11-13.** The younger son asks for his inheritance. Why is this culturally shocking?
2. What might have prompted the son to leave home? What does the son get up to when away from home?
3. How do **v11-13** represent human relationships with God? How and why do people walk away from God today?
4. **Read v14-16.** Describe the trajectory of the son's life. What spiritual message lies behind this part of the story?
5. Why does it sometimes take hardship for people to recognise their need of God?
6. What 'famine' moments have there been in your life, spiritually or emotionally?
7. **Read v17-19.** What does it mean, "he came to his senses"? What do we do when we 'come to our senses'?
8. How would you describe genuine repentance?
9. Why does the son believe he can only be a servant and no longer a son? What quality is he displaying? Why is this quality essential if we are to return to God?
10. **Read v20-24.** Why is the father's reaction surprising? What does it reveal about God?
11. Why should the Father's reaction give hope to the worst sinner?

Discipleship and Application



12. When you fail, how should you respond? When others fail, how should you react?
13. What can we learn about God's grace and our sin?
14. Are you the rebellious son, the repentant son or are you acting as the father to others?



Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.

There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.