

“Regret and the Love of the Father”

Black Sheep week #2

INTRODUCTION

The parable of the Prodigal Son reaches a turning point when the prodigal “comes to his senses.” Maybe you’ve experienced that wakeup call yourself when you ask, “What am I doing here?” This study focuses on what it takes to recognize where we are in our relationship to the Father and returning to where we ought to be.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Have you ever traveled a long way in the wrong direction? How long did it take you to recognize and turn around?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Q1. Read Luke 15:13-15

Sometimes we travel a long way down the wrong road before we realize how far we’ve gone wrong. The prodigal son traveled not only many miles from home, but in doing so he had also broken his relationship with his family and his faith. What were the first signs that signaled he was headed in the wrong direction (Luke 15:14)? This “alarm” could have sent him back, but it didn’t. How did the son attempt to handle the situation himself? What are some of the reasons we ignore the warning signs that we are headed the wrong way in our lives?

Q2. Read Luke 15:16; Proverbs 18:12; 1 Peter 5:6

In verse 16 the son finally heeds the alarm when he finds that the pigs he feeds are better off than he is. What attitude has replaced the arrogance he previously displayed (Proverbs 18:12)? What are some modern scenarios that might be the equivalent to “finding yourself in the pig sty”? Humiliation may be thrust upon us, but humility comes from within. What do we enable God to do when we choose to humble ourselves? (1 Peter 5:6) Have you ever found humility from a “humbling” situation?

Q3. Read Luke 15:17-20; John 8:34; 1 John 3:1a; James 4:8

The son had a revelation, or as the Bible puts it, he came to himself. But how did he see himself in relationship to his father at this point?

(v. 19) The son saw himself as a servant because that was what he had made himself into by running after his own lustful desires. Jesus tells us we can do that to ourselves when we choose to sin (John 8:34) What did the son fail to understand about the heart of his father (v. 20)? In the light of our sinfulness we might not feel worthy of the Father’s love but what does 1 John 3:1 tell us is true of the Father’s heart for us? Just like the prodigal, when we make a move toward God we find Him running toward us. Perhaps there is an area of your life that you have kept distant from God. Perhaps there are alarms you might need to hear. What do you feel would be a good first move for you to draw close to God?

WRAP-UP

The prodigal son had to travel far before he came to his senses and realized that he was going the wrong way. We may find that events in our own lives are signs that we too need to stop and turn around to return to our loving heavenly Father. Today our “pig stys” may be large like addiction, divorce, or financial ruin or small like an attitude or wastefulness. But we need not go that far down the wrong path before we return to the Father. When we heed the warnings early and make a move back to Him, we find He is running toward us to lavishly display His love for you His child.

Memory Verse

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. Luke 15:20 NIV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space)

Challenge- Take a personal inventory this week to see if there are any early warning signs that you are going the wrong way.

