

Story 6: The Lost Son

This Bible study focuses on a passage in the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament.
Stories that Make You Think:

Luke 15:11-32

Objective:

To understand that God gives us the freedom to accept or reject him; to understand that God loves each of us as a son and rejoices when we turn away from our sins and turn to following him; to understand that God wants us to feel joy when others turn away from evil to following him.

Introductory Questions:

The concept of repentance is very important in Christianity. Repentance literally means turning around. In Christian terms, it means turning away from the wrong path, recognizing our sin and selfishness, and turning to God, who forgives our sins and empowers us with his spirit to live a life that pleases him. Is the idea of repentance important in your culture?

Can a son who leaves his family and disgraces them with bad behavior be forgiven and restored if he turns from the bad path?

Introduction:

Many lower class people, outcasts, and sinners came to hear Jesus' teaching. The religious leaders of Jesus' time complained because Jesus welcomed and associated with these people. In response, Jesus taught that there is joy in heaven whenever a sinner turns away from evil and returns to God. Jesus told a story about a father and two sons to illustrate this point. The sons represent two different kinds of people. As we read the story, think about which son is most like you.

Reading the Passage:

Have the group read the story as a role play. Assign the following parts:

- Narrator
- Father
- Younger Son
- Older Son

Have the group read the story silently to become familiar with their lines. Then read the story out loud as a play.

Discussion Questions:

v 11-20 - Focus on the Younger Son

1. What is your opinion about the younger son?
2. Why does he want to leave home?
3. What do his actions tell about his attitudes toward his father's wealth? his father? life?
4. Is he the kind of person you would like to be with? to manage your money?
5. What stages does the boy go through?
6. What causes him to come to his senses?
7. What was his attitude like when he returns to his father?

v 21-25 - Focus on the Father

1. Do you think the father understood what was likely to happen when he gave the younger son his inheritance?
2. Why do you think he did it?
3. What do you think he did while his son was away?
4. How do you think he felt?
5. The father saw the son returning while he was still a long way off - do you think that this was by chance?
6. How does the father treat the son on his return?
7. What is the father's primary attitude toward his son?

v 25-32 - Focus on the Older Son

1. How does the older son feel about the return of his younger brother?
2. Do you think the father loves the younger son more? Why or why not?

3. Do you think the older brother is justified in his behavior? Why or why not?
4. What does the father want for the older son?
5. What are the results of the older son's resentment?
6. What other options does the older son have?

Thought Questions:

1. Which son do you identify with? Why?
2. Whom does the father represent in the story?
3. Whom do the sons represent?
4. Why do you think is the main point of Jesus' story?
5. What kind of behavior pleases God the most?
6. What kind of person needs to hear this story the most?
7. What lessons did you learn from the story that you can apply to your own life?

Closing:

Close with a short prayer asking God to help us see clearly the path he would like each one of us to take in our lives.