

A Better Way | Week 5

The Gospel isn't religion, and it isn't running from religion. It's something better: a loving relationship with the Father. When we understand His heart for us, our hearts begin to change.

Conversation Starters (10 minutes)

- When has a spiritual rhythm like prayer, worship, or a daily devotion felt less like a checklist and more like time with a friend?
- When did you first receive the gift of the Gospel? When did you first share it with someone?

Sermon Notes Review (15 minutes)

What caught your attention, stood out to you, or challenged you from this weekend's teaching?

Watch the Video (10 minutes)

- Prepare to watch the video by opening your Bible to [Luke 15](#).

Group Discussion (45 minutes)

Starter Question from the Video:

1. How do you connect with God's love?

Scripture Observation and Interpretation:

2. Read [Luke 15:20](#). Circle the word "compassion" in your Bible. What does the father do before his son says a single word?
3. Read [Psalms 103:13](#). How does seeing God as a compassionate Father change the way you approach Him when you've messed up?
4. Read [John 15:4-5](#). What is the difference between abiding in Jesus and just trying harder for Jesus? Which one describes your walk with God right now?

Personal Application:

5. The Father doesn't just forgive us and keep us at a distance. He runs to us with compassion and fully restores us as His children. Is there an area of your life where you still feel more like a hired servant than a loved child of God?
6. Who in your life needs to experience the Father's compassion, and how could you show it to them this week?
7. Our problem is not that we don't love God enough. It's that we don't realize how much He loves us. What is one truth about God's heart you need to let sink in deeper this week?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Close your time in prayer. You can use your own words or these words:

Father, thank You for running toward us with compassion and restoring us as Your children, not servants. Help us rest in Your love and share it with someone who needs to come home. Amen.

For Further Exploration

- Watch this [6-minute Bible Project video](#) to learn more about the Parables of Jesus.
- Start a [Bible Reading Plan on the Parables of Jesus](#).
- Read and apply Scripture that is connected to the weekend message and Group Notes every day in the SV app. Find “Daily Reading” at the top of the Weekly Guide page.

WEEK 3

When Being Right Is Actually Wrong

SYNOPSIS

The younger son repented of his badness, but the older brother needed to repent of trusting in his goodness.

Self-righteousness closes the door on love and keeps us outside the party of grace.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

...

1. Closes the door on love.
2. Increases pride.
3. Causes bitterness toward God and others.
4. Keeps you outside the party of amazing grace.

GETTING STARTED (10 MINUTES)

- Think of a time you felt fully welcomed by a group of people. What made you feel that way?
- “We are never more like Jesus than when we give, serve, and invite.” Looking back on this past week, when did you have a chance to do one of these, and what did you do with it?

DIGGING IN

Read Luke 15:1-2

¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” — **Luke 15:1-2 (NIV)**

1. What do you notice about who is drawing near to Jesus, and how the religious leaders respond?

Read Luke 15:28-32

²⁸“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹“My son,” the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’” — **Luke 15:28-32 (NIV)**

2. In your Bible, circle the word or phrase in the older brother’s words (vv. 29-30) that stands out to you most. Why did it catch your attention?
3. The older brother did everything “right,” yet he stayed outside the party. Why is it so easy for people who do the right things to end up with hard hearts?
4. The father went out to plead with his older son (v. 28), just as he ran to the younger. What does this tell us about how God responds to self-righteous hearts?

MAKING IT PERSONAL

The younger brother repented of his badness; the older brother needed to repent of trusting in his goodness.

5. Is there an attitude to change? Where are you tempted to quietly keep score, whether of what you have done for God or of who does not deserve grace?
6. Who is a “younger brother” you have been slow to welcome? What is one way you could celebrate with them this week instead of standing outside?

DIVING DEEPER (OPTIONAL)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. — **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)**

7. How do these verses speak to both the younger brother and the older brother?

PRAYER



A Tale of Two Sons Series Group Notes

SV.

Father, thank You for going out to meet both the runaway and the one who stayed home. Search my heart for self-righteousness, and give me joy in welcoming sinners the way You welcome me. Amen.