

LOST & FOUND

A Prodigal's Journey

The Father's Battle Robert Morris

Focus Our heavenly Father yearns for us to change our hearts toward Him because He treasures each of us as precious, valuable, and unique. The father of the prodigal son battled with the wait for his son's heart to change. He wanted nothing more than to bring his son home and eagerly watched and waited for his precious, valuable, and unique son to return by his own free will.

Fun What makes you unique? Share a unique fact about yourself most people wouldn't know about you.

Review Key Scriptures: Luke 15:1–20

You are precious.

Luke 15:1–7; John 10:11; Hebrews 13:5

The shepherd had many sheep but grieved over losing just one and went to find it. Jesus knows every one of His precious sheep. He came to this earth as a sacrifice for His children because each one is precious to Him.

You are valuable.

Luke 15:8–10; James 4:5

The silver coin that belonged to the woman was valuable. She yearned for the lost coin just as the Holy Spirit yearns for us because we are valuable. Value is determined by what someone is *willing to pay*. Jesus valued each one of us with His life, the most costly payment of all.

You are unique.

Luke 15:11–20

It's easy to think of God loving us as a group, as His children, but God loves each of us as a unique person. There is no one else in the world—past, present or future—with our individual fingerprint. We are each uniquely designed by God.

Group Dynamics Idea Homelessness is a tragic and harsh circumstance to endure as we saw in the story of the prodigal son. Consider taking your group to help those in need during the holiday season. Sign up for a time your group can work in a soup kitchen or food pantry or make an organized delivery of blankets to a homeless shelter.

Discuss

1. Have you ever lost something extremely valuable that was found or returned to you? Describe how it felt to lose something precious and valuable and to retrieve it back again.
2. What might have happened if the father had brought his son home while the son was willfully sinning and using the inheritance for his pleasure? How does that compare to the son's heart at the end of the actual story?
3. Describe what a prodigal might look like in our day and in our society. How can you minister to a person living a prodigal life? How would you pray for them?
4. How do you recognize a thought or behavior that is rebelling against God and His ways? What are some honest questions we can ask ourselves in regard to our own prodigal behavior?
5. What must a person do to change their prodigal behavior, whether it is one behavior or an entire lifestyle?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Regardless of the number of God's children, the Lord considers each one precious to Him.
- The Lord gave His life for you because He did not want to be without you.
- Jesus came to save you.
- The Father made you so unique; there is no one like you!
- No matter what we've done or where we've been the Lord wants us to return to Him.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for creating each one of us in such a uniquely marvelous way and for treasuring each of us as a precious child. You are a good Father, Lord, and we love You. Draw us near to You this week and show us any part of our heart that is not turned toward You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip One way to make your group members understand and know they are precious, valuable, and unique is to acknowledge them in some way outside of the group setting to let them know they're important. Consider sending cards or emails on their birthday!