

LOST & FOUND

A Prodigal's Journey

The Believer's Battle

Focus *“A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living” (Luke 15:11–13).*

Prodigal means “lacking restraint.” Although he was indulgent and far from home, the son remained a *son* while lost. Because it’s possible for each one of us to lack restraint in an area, the son’s battle is also every believer’s battle.

Fun Tell the group about a time you got lost (e.g., at a fair, in a mall, on the roads of a new city).

Review *“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).*

Dust: our body—the means by which we relate to creation.

Breath: our spirit—the means by which we relate to God.

Soul: our mind, will, and emotions—the means by which we interpret creation and God.

When Adam and Eve chose to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, they died just as God said they would—their spirits died, and they lost their way to God. Each of us is born with a dead spirit, left to interpret God and His creation using only our fallen mind, will, and emotions.

Our spirit is made alive when we are born again, but our soul becomes whole, healed, and restored over time. Every believer experiences an internal battle between soul and spirit. This is the believer's battle.

The soul is selfish.

Our soul wants to be in charge; it is self-protective and self-focused.

The soul must submit to the spirit.

"Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me" (Psalm 131:2).

Our soul must be weaned off self-sufficiency by submitting to the spirit and developing a taste for the Word of God.

The soul must die.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

We are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) and die to soul-appetites by feeding our spirit the Word of God.

Discuss

1. Read Luke 15:11–13. What did you think about Pastor Robert's analysis of the son as a lost believer? How does that make you feel?
2. Genesis 2:7 teaches that we are created body, spirit, and soul. Our bodies will be saved. Our spirits have been saved. Our souls are being saved. How do you feed your spirit and wean your soul?
3. How does believing the truth about the finished work of grace in our spirit assist in the process of transformation taking place in our soul? (Hebrews 10:39)
4. Strongholds reside in the soul and are often called a "house of thoughts." Have you experienced freedom from a stronghold? Would you mind sharing how the Lord showed you His truth about a stronghold?

5. Scripture is clear: we are to die to self (self-protection, self-sourcing, self-dependence, self-soothing, etc.). Read Matthew 16:25 and consider this question: what does it mean to die to self?

Take Home Remember, our soul throws fits, just like a baby does, when weaned off what it *thinks* it needs and given what it *truly* needs—our soul must feed on the Word and presence of God. Spend time with the Lord this week with an open heart, ready to receive from His Word and presence.

Prayer Lord, thank You for feeding our soul exactly what we need. We submit our minds, our desires, and our feelings to Your Spirit and trust that You are transforming us. We die to self-reliance and throw ourselves on Your altar as a sacrifice, trusting You with our lives and futures. Thank You for the peace that comes to guard our hearts—and provide true protection—as we sit in Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.