

Week 18: Sheep, Silver, Prodigal – Luke 15:1-32



TRANSITION:

Jesus moved from the cost of discipleship to the task of a disciple—seeking the lost. The scribes and Pharisees had just criticized Jesus for eating with sinners. He told three stories to set them straight on what mattered to Him. Here is the story from God's Word:



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. How important to God is your lost family member or relative who is lost?
2. How important is it to you?
3. What is our part in finding the lost?
4. Which of the characters in the story do you most clearly resemble? Why?



DISCIPLESHIP TIPS:

- Are you modeling how to go after the lost by calling your people when they are absent?
- How do you let those people that don't want to be a part of your group go? (*Go back to "God's part, my part, their part" training*)
- Do the people in your group know that they are also responsible for the others?

SMALL GROUP COMPONENTS

WELCOME

This makes new believers; visitors and members feel valued and welcomed. This begins with your phone calls and continues as they enter your home and all throughout the evening. A warm welcome establishes a foundation for relationships, makes every one aware of what is going on, and brings focus to the group.

OPENING PRAYER

Invite God's Holy Spirit into your presence. This prepares your hearts for what God has for you and shifts your attention from individual fellowship to the group.

PURPOSE

Express your purpose behind meeting as a small group (e.g. making disciples, reaching the lost). This helps prepare your hearts and minds for the discussion.

**This must be in alignment with the Vision and Mission of your church.*

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

(Listed on following page) Small group guidelines Establish and agree upon boundaries for a healthy group. Establish a safe environment where everyone can share openly and honestly. This provides Biblical guidance for healthy conflict and resolution.

ICEBREAKER/WARM-UP

Do an activity that sets the stage for transparency and trust and helps create a safe environment. This may involve low-risk participation. *(eg; small game, testimony, a 'hook' question, or worship)*

TOPIC/STORY

This is the "business" of the group. This section is where you will look at God's Word together.

TAKEAWAY/RECAP

How can we apply what we learned to our lives? Paraphrase what happened in your group's discussion. You may even choose to issue a challenge for your group.

CELEBRATION

Spend time recognizing what God accomplished in the group. Thank and praise God and encourage each other.

CLOSING PRAYER

Refocus your attention on God and His provision. This is the time for personal prayer requests, group needs, and to praise God.

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

SAFE GROUP

This is a safe group. We will all do our part to create an environment where everyone can be real, open & honest with their struggles and victories.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is key. What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN

Be sure to listen well. Let's value one another during our discussions by really listening to what is being shared.

Try to avoid thinking about how you're going to respond or what you're going to say next.

PAUSE

Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares to give the personal sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE

Allow silence in the group. It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO 'CROSSTALK'

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

NO FIXING

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Give encouragement, speak truth, and point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

NO RESCUING

When people are sharing something deeply personal there can be a tendency to try and make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

BE SELF-AWARE

Be self-aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions and non-verbal communication.

"I" STATEMENTS

Use "I" statements. It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but we want to share with each other. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "they", "we", "us", "the church", etc.

SHARING

We want everyone to have a chance to share. Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scripture references regarding conflict resolution (*there are many others*).

- Someone has sinned against you
(Matthew 18:15-20)
- Restoring someone who is in sin
(Galatians 6:1-5)
- Forgiving a sinner
(Colossians 3:12-13)
- Reconciling differences
(Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 7:1-5)