

Back to Basics Conference

Bible Study Outline “The Pursued Life”

Text: Luke 15:1–32

Introduction (5 mins): God is not a finish line we reach at the end of spiritual effort. He is the Shepherd who comes after the lost sheep — not waiting for it to find its way home but leaving the 99 to pursue the one. The “pursued life” is the basic reality of every believer: you are not here because you found God; you are here because He found you. Back to Basics calls us to return to the foundational truths of the Gospel. Luke 15 anchors us in the most vivid picture of those basics: God’s relentless, joyful pursuit of the lost. Before we can run for God, we must first receive the truth that God has run for us.

Group 1: The Lost Sheep — One is Worth Everything (20 mins)

Lesson Focus:

Jesus opens Luke 15 in response to the Pharisees’ accusation that He received sinners and ate with them (v. 1–2). The Parable of the Lost Sheep is His first answer — not a defense, but a revelation of the Father’s heart. A shepherd who has one hundred sheep and loses one does not shrug and enjoy the ninety-nine; he leaves them, searches relentlessly, and throws a party when the one is found. This is the God we serve.

Scriptural context: Luke 15:4–7

“If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it?” — Luke 15:4 (NLT)

Discussion Questions

“I myself will search and find my sheep.” - Ezekiel 34:11–12

- How does knowing God personally reframe your understanding of your own worth before Him?
- Isaiah 53:6 “all of us, like sheep, have strayed away.” In what ways have you found yourself wandering from the Shepherd this season? What does “straying away” look like in everyday campus life?

- The shepherd leaves ninety-nine. What does this cost him? What does it say about God that he considers the cost and pursues anyway?

“And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ — Luke 15:5–6 (NLT)

- The sheep is carried — not driven — home on the shepherd’s shoulders. What does this image tell you about how God restores the wanderer? (1 Peter 2:25: “Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.”)
- Heaven celebrates over one sinner who repents (v. 7). Have you ever celebrated the return of someone who wandered? What does it look like to reflect heaven’s culture of celebration in your fellowship community?
- Matthew 18:13–14 adds that God is “not willing that any of these little ones should perish.” How does this sobering truth shape the way you engage with peers who seem spiritually distant?

Group 2: The Lost Coin — Searched for with Diligence (20 mins)

Lesson Focus:

The second parable shifts the imagery from a vast open field to the intimate space of a home. A woman has ten silver coins and loses one. She does not dismiss the loss as minor because nine remains. She lights a lamp, sweeps the entire house, and searches carefully until the coin is found. The coin cannot find itself — it is entirely passive in its lostness. Yet it is still diligently sought. This speaks to God’s grace reaching us even when we are unaware of our need to be found.

Scriptural context: Luke 15:8–10

“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? — Luke 15:8 (NLT)

Discussion Questions (Part A):

- Romans 5:8 declares: “But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” The coin did not call out to be found. In what ways were you spiritually still a sinner — oblivious or even resistant — when God’s grace first reached you?
- Psalm 139:1–3 tells us: “O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.” God’s search for you is not casual but thorough — every corner swept. Does this change the way you approach Him in prayer?

- The woman lights a lamp to search. John 1:9 calls Jesus “the true light who gives light to everyone.” How does the light of the Gospel expose places in your life that have been hidden in darkness? Is there something the lamp is currently illuminating that you have not yet surrendered?

“In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.” — Luke 15:10 (NLT)

Discussion Questions (Part B):

- Zephaniah 3:17 says: “The LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness... He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.” How does this image of a singing, celebrating God challenge a performance-based relationship with Him? Do you believe God rejoices over you, not just your achievements?
- The woman called her friends and neighbors to celebrate (v. 9). Repentance and restoration are not meant to be private events. Who in your life knows your story of being found? Is there someone whose testimony of being found you can celebrate today?
- Going “back to basics” means returning to this simple, profound truth: God’s grace is not triggered by our effort. How do you practically rest in a grace you did not earn and cannot lose?

Group 3: The Prodigal Son — The Father Who Runs

Introduction:

The third and longest parable in Luke 15 is the crown of the chapter. A younger son demands his inheritance early, travels to a far country and wastes everything in riotous living. Reduced to feeding pigs in a foreign field, he finally comes to his senses and resolves to return home. But the father, who has been watching the horizon, sees him “when he was still a long way off,” runs to him, and throws a lavish celebration before the son can even finish his rehearsed speech. The older brother’s reaction reveals a second kind of lostness — one that never left home but never truly understood the father’s heart either.

Scriptural context: Luke 15:17–24; 28–32

“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you...’” — Luke 15:17–18 (NLT)

Discussion Questions (Part A)

- “When he finally came to his senses” is one of the most profound phrases in Scripture. Repentance begins with a moment of honest self-awareness. Is there a “far country” you are currently living in — a compromise, a habit, a relationship — where you need to come to your senses?
- The son compares the abundance of his father’s house to his current hunger. Are you running on spiritual fumes? What does your “father’s house” — the fellowship, the Word, the community of believers — offer that the world cannot?
- He rehearses a speech of self-downgrade: “I am no longer worthy of being called your son.” Galatians 4:6–7 says God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and we are no longer slaves but children — heirs of God. How does the lie of unworthiness keep believers from fully returning to the father?

“So, he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.” — Luke 15:20 (NLT)

Discussion Questions (Part B)

- The father ran — filled with love and compassion. Romans 8:15 says we have received a Spirit that leads us to call out “Abba, Father!” What does a God who runs toward you — not away — do to your theology of repentance and your daily life of prayer?
- The father restores him fully: the finest robe, a ring, sandals, and a feast. Joel 2:25–26 promises God will “restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten.” Do you believe God can restore what your season of wandering has cost you?
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 declares: “Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” The father’s restoration is not grudging rehabilitation — it is full identity renewal. How does understanding your new-creation identity affect how you live your daily life on campus?

“The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him... ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours.’” — Luke 15:28, 31 (NLT)

Discussion Questions (Part C)

- The older brother was physically present but spiritually distant. He served out of duty, not delight. Is your relationship with God characterized by joyful sonship or

exhausted performance? (cf. Hebrews 12:2 — Jesus endured the cross “because of the joy awaiting him”)

- The father says “everything I have is yours” — yet the older son lived as if he were a servant. Are there blessings and privileges of your relationship with God that you have not yet accessed because you have never truly come home in your heart?
- Which son do you most identify with right now? The one who left and is still far off? The one who has returned but carries shame? Or the one who has stayed but lost the joy of the Father’s house?
- Joel 2:25 is your promise: the years lost in the far country are not beyond God’s power to restore. Trust the father with the time, the relationships, and the opportunities you feel you have wasted.

Closing Reflection: The Pursued Life

Luke 15 is a single, unified answer to one accusation: “This man receives sinners.” Three parables. One Father’s heart. The most basic truth of the Christian life is not what we do for God — it is what He has done, is doing, and will continue to do to bring us home. The Pursued Life is the foundation from which all else in the Christian walk flows.

Going back to basics means answering three personal questions:

- Have I truly received the truth that God pursues me — not as a theological fact, but as a personal, lived reality?
- Am I living as a found person — in the joy, freedom, and identity of one who has been brought home — or am I still functioning from a place of lostness?
- Because I have been pursued, am I becoming someone who pursues? Is the love of the Father overflowing through me toward the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost sons and daughters around me on this campus?

Memory Verse: “For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.” — Luke 19:10 (NLT)