

# Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

## SSBC Luke Bible Study #57

*Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.*

Passage: Luke 15:11-31

Sermon Date: Oct 22, 2006

### **Still Hiding? The Father Says “Come Home”**

Because of their shame, Adam and Eve hid from God in the garden. Many of us hide from God the same way.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” (Gen 3:8-10)

Are you hiding from God? Perhaps you have never felt the loving embrace of your Heavenly Father. God longs for you to turn to him, to accept him, ... to come home.

Or perhaps you are already one of God's children, but you have grown stagnant in your relationship with him. Maybe you sulk jealously, and stubbornly hide and refuse to join the “party” God has for each lost one who comes home and enters God's eternal kingdom.

Whatever your situation, God wrote the parable of the prodigal son (and his brother) specifically for you ... to see yourself in it ... and find your way (back) home.

*These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and posting at [www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/](http://www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/). Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact [studieditor@southshorebaptist.com](mailto:studieditor@southshorebaptist.com)*

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**Bible Study:**

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the chart below to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p><sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.</p> <p><sup>13</sup> "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. <sup>14</sup>After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup>He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.</p> <p><sup>17</sup> "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup>I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' <sup>20</sup>So he got up and went to his father.</p> <p>"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.</p>	

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p><sup>21</sup> "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'</p> <p><sup>22</sup> "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup>For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.</p> <p><sup>25</sup> "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup>'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'</p> <p><sup>28</sup> "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup>But 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. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'</p> <p><sup>31</sup> "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"</p>	

2. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

a. Select a few of your observations & questions from pages 2-3 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it say?	Interpretation What does it mean?

3. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
- **P**romises to believe
- **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- **C**ommands to obey
- **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?

**Unpack the Parable:**

4. Consider the following observations about the father. Assuming that this father represents God, use the chart below to note what each of these observed behaviors tell us about God and about ourselves.

Observation:	What does this tell you about God?	What does this tell you about yourself?
The father let his son leave and take his inheritance.		
The father saw his son returning while he was still a long way off.		
The father did not rebuke or punish his returning son.		
The father embraced his returning son and “had to” rejoice and throw a party for him.		

5. After the prodigal son hits bottom he says (twice) “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” Has there been a time in your life when you have especially felt this way about yourself? What led you to feel that way? How did you work through it? What did you learn from the experience?

6. When we have doubts about our value in God’s eyes, we can look to God’s Word for affirmations and reminders of God’s unconditional love for us. How does the prodigal son’s father exemplify God’s view of our value and importance?

Here are some helpful verses to review to remind ourselves of  
**Our Identity, Through Christ, as God Sees Us:**  
We Are ... Adopted Sons, Chosen Ones, Friends of Jesus

In love, he predestined us to be **adopted as his sons** through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will ... (Eph 1:5)

You did not choose me, but **I chose you**, and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. (John 15:16)

**You are my friends** if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, **I have called you friends**, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:14-15)

7. How did the older brother feel about his father’s reaction to his prodigal brother’s return? Why do you think he felt that way?

8. How did the older brother welcome his lost younger brother home? What does this reveal about the older brother’s attitudes and priorities?

9. Which son do you identify with most closely these days? Why?

10. What response does this parable ask from:

a. Sinners?

b. Pharisees?

c. You?

11. Lord willing, you have yet another day, week, month, and year ahead of you. How will you take advantage of this gift of time which God has given you, and apply what you have learned in this study?

There is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents, one lost one who is found and returns to God! (theme of Luke 15:7, 10, and 32) Whatever your situation, God wrote the parable of the prodigal son (and his brother) specifically for you ... to see yourself in it ... and find your way (back) home. Still hiding? Your Father says "Come home."