

# GIG 4: Luke 15



## Icebreaker

Have you ever had an incorrect perception of someone? Maybe someone you met during recruitment and were later surprised by after they became your brother/sister? Maybe it was someone you weren't excited to have as a brother/sister but with whom you later became great friends?

## Read Luke 15: 1-3; 11-32

Feel free to read this passage aloud as a group or silently to yourselves.

## Some Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think the son asks for his inheritance? What do you think he is communicating to his father by asking for the inheritance?
2. Describe what you think the son did while he was in the distant country. What things in your fraternity/sorority and on your campus would represent life in the distant country today?
3. How would you describe the son's character?
4. Why do you think the son desires to return home? What makes him "come to his senses"?
5. Have you ever had a time of "coming to your senses" and making a radical life change (dui, flunking class, death in family, etc)?
6. How does the father greet this son? How would you expect him to greet him?
7. Describe what the older brother might be feeling/thinking.
8. How does the Father respond to the older brother?
9. How are the younger and older brother similar/different?
10. Do you relate to either of the brothers? If so, which one and why?
11. Jesus told this story to a group of people comprised of some that were "not too interested in religion" (tax collectors/sinners) as well as the "very religious" (Pharisees) types. What do you think he wants to communicate to each of these groups of people?
12. Describe the character of the Father. What do you think Jesus wants us to see about himself and about how he sees us through this image of the father?
13. Where would you say you are in your spiritual journey? In a distant country? At home but not feeling like a son/daughter? Coming to your senses? Partying with your father?...And, where do you want to be?

# GIG 4: Luke 15

## Leader's Notes



### Icebreaker

*Be prepared to share a story for the icebreaker.*

### Read Luke 15:1-3;11-32

**NOTE:** make sure you have a printed version of the scripture or extra Bibles in the same translations to pass out; after the reading, if it is a group, you might want to summarize the passage after the reading just to make sure everyone knows the gist of what's going on

### Background Summary

*The story we are looking at today is one that Jesus told in response to a group of religious people who were critiquing him. These were people who obeyed all the "rules", whose lives, at least on the outside, looked pretty well put together. They are agitated that Jesus doesn't seem to be playing according to the religious rules.*

### Parable Summary

**NOTE:** It can be helpful to summarize after the general reading, just to make sure everyone is tracking

*A wealthy father has two sons. One is asking for his inheritance early. He spends all that he has on "wild living" and gets to such a desperate place he starts thinking that even the life of the pigs is better than his. He realizes life with his father was better so he returns to see if his dad will take him back and let him just be a servant on father's estate. Rather than being rejected or even scolded by his father, his father is running to meet him when he's returning and throws a party for him. Meanwhile the other son who never left his father's estate becomes angry and doesn't want to be at the party for his brother. The father goes out to get him as well, inviting him to join him and reminding him he has access to everything of his as well.*

### Notes on Discussion Questions

**NOTE :** Do not limit yourself to these responses, this is only to help you start facilitating conversation if you are having difficulty and to provide extra information

- 1. Why do you think the son asks for his inheritance? What do you think he is communicating to his father by asking for the inheritance?**

*the son must think that life on his own would be better than with his father, that maybe he's missing out on s'thing by staying with the father, wanting independence from his father/ asking for the inheritance basically communicates his life would be better if his father were dead, no*

*concern for his father, disrespect; no concern for how it might affect others-changing in ownership of the land, those who worked it affected, etc*

**2. What things might represent life in the distant country on your campus?**

*Grades, busyness, body image, relationships, reputation, money, etc.*

**3. How would you describe the son's character?**

*Independent, self-focused, selfish, prideful, unsatisfied, etc*

**6. How does the father greet this son? Does this surprise you?**

*"runs" to meet his son-eager, Jewish men never run, too child-like, excited not mad at son; looking for his son...didn't forget about him, wanting him to come home; rings, robe-treated him like royalty*

**7. Describe how the older brother might be feeling.**

*Angry at father b/c feeling unjustly treated (thinking that work was needed to "earn" the Father's favor and younger son hadn't earned it); not liking that there is not a direct return for his labor; confused at lavishness of the father toward younger brother; realizing he didn't really know his father's character all this being at home, etc*

**8. How does the father respond to the older brother?**

*Pursues him, notices he's not there as well; wants him/pleads with him to enjoy life at home with him as well; saddened that the older son doesn't get it, doesn't realize what the Father wants to give him*

**9. How are the younger and older brother similar/different?**

*(similar: both are missing out on what the Father wants to give them; they both have an incorrect perception of the heart of their Father; different: younger son is desperate, comes to his wits end and returns with nothing to offer, realizes he can't "earn" favor with his father but must rely on his mercy; older son sees his relationship with father as works-based...favor earned through working for father/acting appropriately)*

**13. Where would you say you are in your spiritual journey?**

*You will need to be vulnerable as well in responding to this question. Hopefully you are enjoying living in the merciful and loving relationship God offers you, but where might you struggle sometimes? Let your brothers/sisters in this GIG see that you are on a journey as well, that we are always growing deeper in knowing the heart of God and how he sees us.*

## Conclusion/Follow-Up

May I share with you a brief illustration of how Christians believe God extends this kind of relationship to each of us? (Share gospel diagram)