

**LOST**PARABLES OF A
GOD WHO PURSUES**Highly Valued**villagebible.church/lost

DEVOTIONAL

In Luke 15:8-10 (MSG), we find the story Jesus told about the lost coin. Jesus said, "Or imagine a woman who has ten coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and scour the house, looking in every nook and cranny until she finds it? And when she finds it you can be sure she'll call her friends and neighbors: 'Celebrate with me! I found my lost coin!' Count on it - that's the kind of party God's angels throw every time one lost soul turns to God."

Maybe you feel like that lost coin, discarded and worthless. If so, you need to look up because God is searching diligently for you and longs for you to return to Him. When I think of the woman in the previous story, I compare her to a woman who lost her diamond earrings. If you have seen this happen before, you know what goes on. She will search around relentlessly looking in all of the places she can last remember seeing the earrings. Yes, she loves the earrings for their diamonds and gold; but more importantly, she wishes to have them back because she loves the one who gave them to her.

In the same manner, you should value the life God's given you because of your love for Him. You shouldn't hesitate to release your life over to God, since He never hesitated in releasing His Son, Jesus, over to death so you could have eternal life (see John 3:16). God not only looks upon you as His beloved child, He also regards you as highly valued. Remember, your value isn't found in who you are or what you do. Your value is only attainable through Jesus Christ. He alone can fulfill the yearning in your hearts for true significance. You can search high and low for other ways to fill the void, but in the end, all of those attempts will fail to satisfy.

The saddest thing to me is seeing Christians who know the truth, but after continually making bad choices they find themselves falling away from the Lord and living a life of deception. My friend, Jason, saw it happen first-hand to this guy who had attended college with him. The man was a devoted follower of Christ; however, after a number of poor decisions, he got tangled up in having some promiscuous relationships with several women. Obviously, it had a terrible effect on the man's conscious because Jason said his friend would sometimes be intoxicated when he called. I guess the alcohol helped to ease his mind and make the sin he was living under less of a burden to carry. The truth is, he'd probably still be walking down that same path if it were not for a heart attack at age 31. The traumatic experience totally turned his life around and has caused him to begin living for God with a new passion. Today, he has his own ministry and has even written a book.

The true testimony of Christ's love is displayed in the way Jason has treated his friend after everything he did in the past. Jason is following in accordance with what Paul told the Corinthian church to do with those who fell into sin. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 (CEV), "When people sin, you should forgive and comfort them, so they won't give up in despair. You should make them sure of your love for them." In closing, it is my prayer that you will come to a new awareness of Christ's love and the realization that you are valued and adored by your Father in Heaven.

As Ephesians 3:18 (NLV) says, "I pray that you will be able to understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep His love is." ¹

OPEN IT

1. If your home was engulfed in flames and you had time to retrieve the one possession that means the most to you, what would it be and why?

READ IT

Luke 15: 8-10

EXPLORE IT

2. What is lost?

3. Who lost it?

4. What does she do to find it?

5. How does she respond when she finds it?

¹ Devotional by Byron Bohnert entitled Highly Valued found @ <https://www1.cbn.com/devotions/highly-valued>

APPLY IT

The interesting thing is that the parable of the lost sheep and lost coin are very similar, almost to the point of being redundant. Both involve the loss of something the owner would consider valuable, a sheep and a coin. Both put the responsibility on the owner to find what is lost. In the parable of the sheep, Jesus doesn't say that the sheep wanders away, but that the shepherd lost the sheep. In the parable of the coin, Jesus doesn't specify how the coin was lost, simply that it was lost. And unlike a sheep, a coin doesn't have the ability to get up and walk away. Both parables have the person searching until they find what was lost. And both culminate in joyful celebration that what was lost has been found with Jesus equating the joy the person would feel with how God, angels and all of heaven feel when a sinner repents.²

6. While there are similarities, what are some of the differences between the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin?

SILVER WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD

What was the significance of the 10 silver coins? Why did Jesus use them to illustrate an important parable? What was the big deal of losing just one coin? Why would a woman take all the troubles to light a lamp, sweep the whole house, and search high and low for it? And after finding it, why was she so joyful that she would be delighted to tell her friends and neighbours about it? **What were these 10 coins?**³

These 10 silver coins were bound together as a dowry and headdress for a woman to wear on her forehead for her wedding day and thereafter. She would wear this piece of jewelry daily even while she slept. This dowry then became the bride's personal property. It formed a financial support for her new family as it could be changed into money in times of need. The silver ornaments on the headdress served as an indicator of the woman's status, showing her wealth and faithfulness.



That's why she was so anxious to ensure that every coin was intact and in place. If the bride used any one coin for any financial transactions without the husband's knowledge or approval, it would reflect very badly on her character. Her husband would take this lost coin to be a good reason to divorce her.⁴

Image⁵

7. What types of possessions are indicators of our status of wealth and faithfulness? Which would you rather have more of, wealth or faithfulness? Why?

² Sermon excerpt from The Lost Coin by Pastor Paul Vanderkooy found @ <https://milfordfaith.com/sermon-archive-1/2017/8/27/lost-found-the-lost-coin>

³ Devotional by Joshua Ong entitled The Parable of the Lost Coin found @ <https://www.thejoshlink.com/article289.htm>

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Image found @ <https://www.preceptaustin.org/sites/www.preceptaustin.org/files/images/luke15coin1.jpg>

8. What types of things do you own that carry far more value because of their symbolism or sentimentality?

TURNING THE HOUSE UPSIDE DOWN

William Barclay describes a typical Palestine house to give us a sense of the difficulty of the woman's searching for the lost coin - The houses were very dark, for they were lit by one little circular window not much more than about eighteen inches across.⁶

9. The Bible describes unbelievers living in darkness. (cf 1 Peter 2:9) Why do lost people choose to live in darkness? How does shedding light over a world of darkness help sinners to be found?

10. How can we practically shine light to the lost around us? What types of responses should we expect?

The floor was beaten earth covered with dried reeds and rushes; and to look for a coin on a floor like that was very much like looking for a needle in a haystack. The woman swept the floor in the hope that she might see the coin glint or hear it tinkle as it moved.⁷

11. The woman used a broom to sweep away any obstacles that kept the coin from being found. What types of obstacles do unbelievers have that keep them from God?

⁶ <https://www.preceptaustin.org/luke-15-commentary>

⁷ *ibid*

"Seeks diligently"...The greek word Luke uses (**epimeleomai**) means to have an urgent sense of care. This was not an erratic or haphazard approach to searching, but rather one of great thoughtfulness and precaution. Clichés, one liners and platitudes will prove ineffective and fall on deaf ears.

12. How do we as Christ-followers help to remove these obstacles? How did the Pharisees and Scribes fail at this in verses 1-2?

Light...sweep...search!!! These three verbs indicate the great effort and zeal undertaken in order to find what is lost. She left nothing to chance. She left no stone (no speck of dust) unturned. When God searches for the lost, He does so with a holy zeal, leaving no stone unturned!⁸

13. How did God seek after you? What obstacles and darkness has He had to overcome to find you when you were lost or struggling with sin?

14. How would you rate your zeal and effort when it comes to seeking the lost? What things keep Christians from imitating the heart of God when it comes to evangelism? How does a Christ follower grow in their zeal?

⁸ <https://www.preceptaustin.org/luke-15-commentary>

HEY GIRLFRIENDS....YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT

Let's have a party. Friends and neighbors, by the way, different than back in verse 7...or verse 6, where the shepherd calls his friends and neighbors. Here, the word "friend," philos, and the word "neighbor," geitnas, are both in the feminine. She calls her lady friends. She calls her lady friends. That was pretty typical. Men stayed with men in that culture and women with women. They were very close in the little village. They all knew each other. Everybody's suffering would be everybody's suffering and everybody's joy would be everybody's joy. And so she calls her lady friends together and they have this wonderful little party because she has found what she lost.⁹

15. Jesus gives us a glimpse into ancient Jewish community life....one of transparency and ownership. How can we as Christ followers be more open about the losses in our lives? When is it wise to keep our struggles to ourselves?

16. How well do you do at celebrating with people? What things can keep us from joining in other people's joy?

17. The woman had others with whom she could share her struggles and successes? Likewise, with whom do you feel comfortable sharing your struggles and successes?

⁹ Sermon excerpt by John MacArthur entitled Recovering The Lost Coin found @ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-199>

CEL-E-BRATE GOOD TIMES...COME ON!!!!

The particulars of this story are different from the first, but there is one section that is virtually identical. It just so happens to center on the same term that Jesus repeated in the first story: Joy. Did you hear the refrain? When he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders... Rejoice with me, I have found my lost sheep...there will be more rejoicing in heaven... rejoice with me I have found my lost coin...there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God. Why does Jesus hang out with losers? For joy! Because when one of these sinners repents (is found) and is made safe again, it delights Him, and it delights His Father. Finally, it delights everyone who loves them. Jesus hangs out with sinners for joy.

18. What happened when 1/3 of the angels rebelled against God during Lucifer's rebellion? (cf 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 1:6)

What does their response to man's repentance say about the love God has for humanity?

No Pharisee had ever dreamed of a God like that. A great Jewish scholar has admitted that this is the one absolutely new thing which Jesus taught men about God--that he actually searched for men. The Jew might have agreed that if a man came crawling home to God in self-abasement and prayed for pity he might find it; but he would never have conceived of a God who went out to search for sinners. We believe in the seeking love of God, because we see that love incarnate in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to seek and to save that which was lost.¹⁰

19. Who are the "coins," lost around you? Is there someone close to you that you sense Jesus calling you to "seek and find"?

Closing Prayer: Ask God to give you a heart that sees the lost as He does. A heart that refuses to limit love only to notable or "perfect" people.

¹⁰ Barclay, William. "Commentary on Luke 15:4". "William Barclay's Daily Study Bible". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dsb/luke-15.html>. 1956-1959.

Note: This study was compiled and questions were written by Pastor Tim Badal, Village Bible Church. www.villagebible.church/smallgroups