GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**As your group time begins, revisit last weeks idea of being fully devoted to Jesus. Process that word, “devotion”, again together as a group. What does it mean to be devoted? What does it look like to live a life of devotion?**

Frame the discussion of Luke 15 and 16 in the context of devotion and you will find that Jesus makes it clear that devotion leads to being about the Father’s business and that the Father’s business is results in joy and demands zeal.

 Have a volunteer read Luke 2:49 from any translation and then from the King James (sorry!). Briefly discuss the three parables in Luke 15 about the lost “things”.

**In your personal Bible study, what were some of the themes in these parables that you saw? What were some of the points of commonality in them? What were some of the differences you found?**

Based on these parables, it is clear that part of the Father’s business is finding lost things. It is also clear that this business results in joy. Discuss the sources of this joy and the sharing of it with others that is mentioned in each parable, as each person invited others to rejoice with them. The Father’s business seems to also be one that invites community and connection in the rejoicing. Discuss some of the ways your life group can find rejoicing in the Father’s business together with connection and as a community.

 Have a volunteer read Luke 15:11-32.

**Put yourself in the place of the father in this story. How would you have felt? What would you have done in response to your son’s request?**

**In your spiritual journey, what do you identify as your time in a “far country”? Where are you right now in your spiritual journey?**

Forgiveness is our greatest need and God’s greatest provision. Forgiveness is the Father’s business. It is God’s joy to welcome us. The prodigal reminds us of how gracious God has been to all forgiven sinners. Regardless of the depth of sin, every Christian is a product of amazing grace.

The older son was jealous of the younger. The older son had been faithful to their father while his brother ran off, but his little brother was the one being honored. The older son wanted the gifts of the father as well and felt he deserved them. Grace, though, is not about deserving; it is impossible to deserve. Grace is about trusting and receiving.

Self-righteousness is a dangerous sin. If allowed to run its course, it convinces us that we don’t need God. The elder brother is the poster child for self-righteousness. We need to constantly examine our attitudes, for an elder-brother attitude can develop in each of us. Struggling against becoming self-righteous is a constant battle.

 Have a volunteer read Luke 16:1-10

**As a group, discuss some of the things that seem like “hard” teachings in this story. Discuss the style of presenting a point by presenting the contrast (the unrighteous are shrewd in their ways but believers are not shrewd in their ways, verse 8). What do you think Jesus is trying to instill in His followers in this story, trying to get them to realize and seek?**

Really focus in on the ways of the world, understood and utilized by the unrighteous, and the ways of the Kingdom, understood and utilized by believers. There seems to be a call to zeal and shrewdness in understanding the ways of the Kingdom and living them out as believers. As you move the discussion forward, read Luke 16:19-31 for greater insight into the ways of the Kingdom – specifically about the need to pursue it with zeal while you are alive and have the chance. Also examine the idea of the need to trust God’s word with zeal, as opposed to seeking a “miracle” or sign, as highlighted in verse 31.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What does God do with lost sinners? He focuses His attention on them. He seeks them out. He pours His love on them. He waits patiently for them to repent of their sins and come back to Him. When a sinner repents and becomes a part of God’s kingdom, heaven erupts in joy. God is joyful because of us and is always ready to receive us. Jesus also exhorts us toward zeal in following Him and being about the business of the Father. When we are about the Father’s business there should be joy in the doing and zeal in our approach.

**What are some ways that are feel you are already “about the Father’s business” and how can you be more zealous in it and find more joy? Examine your motives when you are busy and serving but are not finding joy. Examine you sense of zeal in your approach to the Father’s business that you are participating in.**

Pray

Thank God for revealing Himself to us and inviting us into an eternal relationship with Him through His Son. Ask God to give us a passion for His glory, so we might find joy in serving the needy and sharing the gospel with the lost people around us.