

Growing Deeper
Ride the Air

State of the Mission
Luke 15

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. To begin the week, read Luke 15:1-7, The Parable of the Lost Sheep. Notice who Jesus was speaking this parable to (verse 1). But who else was listening to Jesus (verse 2)?
2. Who do you think Jesus really intended this parable for?
3. Does this parable make sense to you? Suppose you are a shepherd. Does it seem wise to you to leave 99 of your sheep to go after the one lost sheep?
4. In verse 7 Jesus says, “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” How does that make you feel? Comforted? Disappointed? Something else?
5. Spend the rest of your FIFTEEN in prayer today. Thank God for his love and his endless pursuit of each one of us. Ask him to always remind you that his ways are not our ways; we cannot understand how he works or why he does what he does.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

6. To start your FIFTEEN for today, read Luke 15:8-10, The Parable of the Lost Coin. This parable comes right after the previous parable. It’s part of the same conversation Jesus is having with the tax collectors and Pharisees. Why do you think Jesus wanted to tell what seems to be the same story, but in a different context?
7. Why do you think the woman who found her lost coin called her friends and neighbors to rejoice with them? Doesn’t one coin or one sheep sound pretty insignificant?
8. It’s often easy for us to see the one lost sheep or the one lost coin as insignificant, and then we use that to express how much God loves each and every one of us, no matter how insignificant we may feel. But likely, that one lost sheep or that one lost coin was a huge deal in Jesus’ day. That one lost coin was likely ten percent of all the money that woman owned. Now does it seem a little more significant?
9. Knowing how much one coin would have meant to the woman who lost it helps us understand how much God values each one of us. When we go astray or are lost, that’s a big deal to God!

10. To close your FIFTEEN, spend time in prayer again. Ask God to help you better understand how much he hurts when we wander from him. Ask him to fill you with more of his Spirit to give you the power to better follow and serve him.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

11. Today, read Luke 15:1-10 again. Remember that Jesus was spending time with people who Luke describes as “tax collectors and sinners” when he told these parables. Who are the “tax collectors and sinners” in your community who you may avoid or look down on in your day-to-day life?
12. Also remember that Jesus said in verse 7, “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” Do you often view those “tax collectors and sinners” in your day-to-day life like Jesus does?
13. Think of two to three specific people in your life who you view as “tax collectors and sinners.” Maybe it’s someone you always see at Starbucks or a parent of someone on your child’s soccer team.
14. It can be so easy to compare ourselves to them and act as if we are more important to God than they are because we go to church regularly or we give an offering regularly, can’t it? Why or why not?
15. Now spend some time in prayer, being honest and asking God to reveal those times in your life, maybe every now and then or maybe often, when you have looked down on others because you think God loves you more than them. Also, ask God to forgive you for those times and forgive you for those thoughts.
16. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Thank God for loving each and every one of us SO much. Ask him to empower you to view and treat others more like he views them.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

17. To start your FIFTEEN for today, read Luke 15:11-32, The Parable of the Lost Son. When the younger son asked for his share of the estate in verse 12, how do you think the father felt? Do you think he expected it? Was he surprised? Hurt? Angry?
18. Especially in those days, for a son to ask his father for his inheritance before the father’s death was worse than a slap in the face. It was as if the younger son was saying, “Dad, I wish you would die. I don’t want any kind of relationship with you, just give me my inheritance so I can leave.” And still, the father gave his son exactly what he asked for!
19. Verse 13 tells us that the younger son “squandered his wealth in wild living” in a distant country. After running out of money, he had to look for a job just to eat. In fact, he was so hungry that he wanted to eat the food he was feeding to the pigs in order to keep from starving to death. Do you think that sounds a lot like us? How often do we choose to do

things our own way and end up needing someone to bail us out? Can you think of a time when something like that happened to you?

20. The son eventually realized he needed to return to his father. Verses 18 and 19 tell us what he planned to say: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." He understood what he had done to his father and all he hoped for was a chance to work for him to make some money. Think of a time when you really messed up and knew you were going to be punished severely. How did that feel? Was it scary?
21. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, pray for faith and trust. Pray that God would help you better trust him and be confident that his way is best. Also thank him for continually watching over you and welcoming you back again and again.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

22. To start your FIFTEEN for today, read Luke 15:20-32. Verse 20 says that while the son was still a long way from his father's house, the father ran to his son and kissed him. Then, in verse 21, the son apologizes to his father. How does the father respond? Does he punish him? Is he angry?
23. The father tells his servants to prepare a feast, "For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Does it make any sense for the father to respond this way, especially after his son essentially wished for him to die?
24. Verse 25 mentions the older son for the first time. He was coming in from the field and heard the party. When he found out what was happening, how did he respond?
25. The older brother became extremely angry and refused to join the party. He wanted his younger brother to pay for what he had done and he wanted his father to give him what he thought he had earned. And how does his father respond?
26. This parable ends similar to the previous two. Verse 32 says, "We had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Isn't it amazing that no matter what's happened in the past, no matter how many times we've run away, no matter how bad we've messed up, God is always ready to welcome us back? Isn't it amazing that even when we don't love him, he still loves us? How does that make you feel?
27. Use this prayer to end your FIFTEEN, "God, it's so hard to even try to comprehend how much you love us. Even the best love we can show to one another cannot compare to the love you show to every single one of us. Help us to better appreciate that love and live in that love. And help your love to lead us to love others more like you do. Help us to also do whatever it takes, whatever you call us to do, to reach the lost. We also ask that you would empower us to rejoice as you do when the lost is found, when those living apart from you finally return to you. And when possible,

allow us to be used by you to return the lost to you. We ask this all in your precious name. Amen.”