

**SEASONS OF THE SOUL | Autumn—Time to Let Go | Week 1 | January 4 & 5**

Luke 15:1-13

*These study guides are designed for individual or group study but highly encouraged to be experienced in community with a small group or other friends on the journey with Jesus.*

**Controlling the Dream:** Consider your dreams, your aspirations, maybe even your fantasies. We “mind-play” things because it’s aspirational: the high school basketball player watching the NBA or the conscientious college political science junior watching a political debate. Once conceived, there is an insidious desire to control life into that outcome. Until a new reality hits us.

- What kinds of things have you dreamed about achieving?
- What was the result? Did you succeed? If not, what happened?
- Talk about the process. What was instrumental to change your thinking?

**A LOST Son:** Read Luke 15:1-13. This familiar passage highlights many aspects of life. Read it from the perspective of each character.

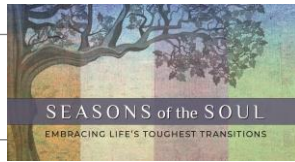
- What is the younger son’s dream? How does he seek to control it?
- What is the older son’s dream? How has he endured to attain it?
- What is the father’s dream? How can he let go like this in the face of the son’s foolishness?

**A God willing to let go:** Pastor Dan draws us to consider the way God has demonstrated his willingness to let go - season of release. Adam and Eve, the wandering Israelites, the rich young ruler, are all examples of God not controlling but letting go during a season of release. Pastor Dan then shared a few reasons for entering into a season of release:

- We need to let go to let others fly.
- We need to let go to let others fail.
- We need to let go in order to be free.
- Share how you have experienced these reasons: either someone releasing you or you releasing someone?
- Which one is hardest for you? Why?

**Transferring the Need:** Pastor Dan quotes from Henry Cloud’s book, *Necessary Endings*. “A plan that has hope is one that limits your exposure to the foolish person’s issues and forces him to feel the consequences of his performance so that he might have hope of waking up and changing.”

- Talk about this idea in the story of the younger son. What is motivating the Father? What does the son need to learn and how does he learn it?
- Is there another way he could learn?
- What ways have you experienced change in your life? What consequences have influenced you or motivated you to become different?



**Misplaced responsibility:** Again, quoting Henry Cloud, the terms “inappropriate loyalty” and “delayed ending” are used. Consider our prodigal son.

- What wisdom did the Father use to let his son go? What loyalty was he using?
- What relationship wisdom are you practicing now? Is there a circumstance you have been inappropriately loyal? Is the circumstance persisting—a delayed ending?
- Pray with each other about the circumstances that come to mind. What is wisdom? Where is endurance required? Where is “letting go” the best answer?

This is complicated and challenging. Consider your emotions and your motivations before taking any actions. Pray and listen.

**Practice of the Week:** As you enter the New Year look back and recognize the blessings you are grateful for. Thank God. Looking forward consider the coming year. Specifically, take inventory of your relationships. Consider the characterizations of:

- Open, wholesome, natural.
- Giving, enduring, assisting to maturity.
- I’m feeling their need, I need them to see it.

Healthy relationships flow both ways. There is a time for nurture and there is a time to receive but “inappropriate loyalty” is damaging to both sides. Consider if it is time to modify or “let go” of any of your relationships to enter a season of release.

**We’d love to hear from you!**

If you have thoughts, questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you or your small group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these study guides in your lives.

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