

SEASONS OF THE SOUL | Winter—Realization | Week 2 | January 11 & 12

Luke 15:11-13; John 10:10

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.

Context: We are looking at one of Jesus' most famous stories. Last week we explored the Father's letting go—his release of his son. This week we will watch as the son realizes what he has done.

- What story from your own life comes to mind when you read this parable?
- What or how did you release? What realization helped/prompted/inspired you to be able to release as we talked about last week? Maybe your realization is you haven't yet - share or journal through that the best you can.

Blindness: We live with definitions. We have what some call "lenses" that we see through or "filters" that we use as we measure and receive life. Read Luke 15:11-13.

- What was the son's "lens" on life?
- Why do you think he had that view? Speculate on what might have caused it in his Father's house?
- Where have you experienced "blindness" in your life? Share or journal through it.

Wealth: Pastor Dan said, "At this point, he thinks his wealth is the cash he is carrying with him and what that cash can do for him."

- What are the alternatives to wealth being "cash he is carrying"?
- What does "squandered wealth" mean to you? Where have you experienced it?

Incurable Illness: Pastor Dan draws us to consider the real meaning of "wild living." He says the phrase literally translates as "Incurable Illness", actual self-destructive behavior.

- Why would this BLINDNESS, this distorted lens, seem to us like an incurable condition?
- How can we get help for something that we can't see?

The Contrasts: Read John 10:10. God's intention is that we have life and have it more abundantly. More abundantly than what? Pastor Dan describes our blindness in "the Christian spiritual tradition calls a "FALSE SELF" -- a self that is defined by our varying appetites and anxieties rather than by our true identity".

- In all honesty, how aware are you to when your false-self is in control?
- Where have you experienced and discovered (realized) the appetites of the false-self?

Realization: “there was a severe famine”. Famine is a condition of need. Read Luke 15:14-16.

- Through what lens is the younger son seeing his need?
- How does he respond to the challenge? What is the result?
- Reflecting on the list below which one are you're most susceptible to?

FALSE SELF/WEALTH

1. To be perfect
2. To be lovable
3. To be successful
4. To be special
5. To be knowledgeable
6. To be secure
7. To be playfully content
8. To be in control
9. To be at peace

FORMS OF FAMINE

- I didn't get it right
- I'm not liked
- I failed
- I'm not recognized
- I can't figure this out
- I'm in danger
- I'm not satisfied
- I'm being overcome
- I'm caught in conflict

Two different worlds, the realization: Pastor Dan describes the situation “We have no awareness of how foolish we've been, how lost, how alone, how hopeless we are...” Comparing life at home with the Father with life in pursuit of my satisfaction, triumph, control...

- What did the son realize?
- How would you describe in terms of the “True-Self” and “False-Self”?
- Review your stories from the opening “Context” section above. What do you learn?

Practice of the Week: Depending on our particular false-self lens and the corresponding forms of famine listed above, continue to reflect on which one you particularly struggle with? Pray and ask God to show you what false-self definition of wealth might be behind that. The crux of the exercise is to REALIZE where you are trying to live outside of the Father's world—outside your relationship with the Father. Give thanks for what you learn and share it with your small group, or friend who is with you on the way of Jesus.

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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