

**SHIFT | From SECURING SELF to SECURING OTHERS | Week 2 | September 14 & 15**

Luke 15

*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.*

**Opening:** Pastor Dan Meyer makes this statement when talking about our need to “SHIFT” our focus in life, “Because God made us, God understands the essential shifts human beings need to make in order to live into life’s full potential. Do we? What are those transitions? How do we go about making them?” This provocative series will center on the Parables of Jesus and reveal the crucial changes that lead to a greater life.

**Setting:** Seeking the John 10:10 abundant life we have looked at Vision for that life, declared an Intention to seek that life and are opening ourselves to the Means by which that might happen for each of us. Pastor Dan called us to consider the SHIFT from Dabbling to Disciple. This week we are discussing our motivations.

- As you consider your week, how much of your time and energy goes into securing yourself, your life and/or your family? How much would you say is prudent and essential? Is there anything that you might say is “just to make sure” security?
- In the midst of these life essentials, how much of your thought and action concerns others? Where do you give to yourself? Where are you given to by others? Journal or share an event this week that illustrates one of these.

**Jesus Teaches:** Read Luke 15:1-10. Consider the audience. Inject yourself into the story.

- What comment prompts Jesus to tell these three parables in a row? Share or journal why you imagine Jesus was prompted this way?
- What attitude and motivation do you see in the Pharisees? Recount a story that you have experienced that illustrates this.
- What attitude and motivations do you see in the parables?

**Four Elements:** Pastor Dan states “the stories in this chapter have four elements in common”:

- Something missing
- A “normal” response (implied)
- Main character response in parable
- A celebration of gratitude

Pick one of the parables and journal or share as a group to discover these elements.

**The Heart of God:** Pastor Meyer describes our “securing self” world with this quote: “I don’t get it. Why get so excited over the reclamation of a stupid sheep, an ordinary coin, a lousy son?”

- What is Jesus illustrating? What difference in attitude and motivation is Jesus highlighting to us?



**Grace vs. Religion:** Read Luke 15:25-32. Pastor Dan said “God’s grace doesn’t make sense from the vantage point of Religion. Religion says that it’s the people who appear to do the “right” things that matter. It’s the ones who stay in the fold, who remain in the purse, who don’t stray from home that are the valuable ones.”

- Here is a crucial (and difficult) question—what is your attitude toward the “lost things” you encounter? How do you regard homeless at the traffic light or belligerence in the workplace? Consider and then share your attitudes and motivations and even more your fears and judgements.
- If our Intention is to live with the heart of God, what Means can you describe to move in that direction? What action next week comes to mind? Journal or share with the group (knowing we are all seeking and need to grow in discipleship).

**Honest Self-Awareness:** Use this “quiz” to honestly self-evaluate where you are at and where you hope to be. For each description ponder the following formational points:

- What are you more likely to do? Why? (Self-Awareness)
- What do you hope to do? (Vision)
- What steps will you take to live into your preferred future? (Intention)
- Who can help? (Means)

A. When you walk into the church building, school, or workplace, is your main thought: “I wonder what I’ll get here?” Or have you shifted to thinking: “I wonder what I can give here, who I can welcome, guide, help or encourage here?”

B. When you leave church on the weekend, are you thinking: “Well, glad I got my tune up and fill up for another week.” Or are you thinking: “Now, how can I use what I heard and learned here to better serve others? Whose life can I impact for good? Who can I share this with?”

C. When God blesses you with a promotion or a financial windfall or greater prominence in some sphere, do you think: “Wow, this is great for me!” Or is your thought: “Wow, thank you Lord; now I can help or encourage even more people in Your name.”

### **Practice of the Week: Groove the SHIFT**

Pastor Dan challenged us with this, “If you want to groove the SHIFT I’m talking about even more fully this week ahead, here’s a concrete idea: Identify someone in your path ahead who bears some resemblance to the lost sheep, coin, or kids we meet in Christ’s parables and do something to build a redemptive relationship with them.” Journal this out in your own words:

- My vision is to find someone in my path who \_\_\_\_\_.
- My intention is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- My means is to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Additional Resource:** If you are in a small group consider using the study by Timothy Keller entitled, *The Prodigal God*. It’s a great way to more fully understand the parable of the lost son. Ask Heather Franklin ([hfranklin@christchurch.us](mailto:hfranklin@christchurch.us)) how you can check it out from our Small Group Resource Center.