

MASTERCLASS #7
Looking for the Lost*Word***Scripture Reference**

Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:1-10

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever lost something that is important to you? How did you look for it, and what did you feel after finding it? Share with the group.
2. Every day, God deals with lost and wandering people like you and me who need to find direction in life but are rudely demanding answers from God. How does God view and help the lost and the wayward people? It is important that we understand God's perspective in how He deals with these types of people, because God has given a mandate to all believers to reach out to the lost (the Great Commission). Jesus uses the Parable of the Lost Sheep, told in two different contexts in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, to give us a picture of how He views and deals with those who are lost:
 - a. **God's Perspective: Every person is individually important (Matthew 18:10-12).** In Matthew 18, Jesus is teaching His disciples about having a childlike faith and warning about causing children to sin. In verse 10, Jesus tells the disciples that they should not look down on the little children because they are important to God. It is in this context that Jesus shared this parable to illustrate God's loving care for people, especially for those who are viewed as insignificant, like children. How did Jesus say the owner of the 100 sheep would respond if one of his sheep wandered off? What does it tell you about how the Shepherd cares for his sheep? The sheep in the story represent people. How do

people stray from God? Share how God has protected you in your low moments when you wandered off from His care. Do you believe that you as an individual are important to God?

- b. **God's attitude: Rejoices with great joy when the lost is found (Matthew 18:13-14).** The shepherd finding the lost sheep is overcome with joy. His excitement over finding the lost sheep is even more than his excitement over the sheep that did not go astray. His joy in finding the lost in no way means He does not love the other 99 sheep as much. Do you know of anyone who has returned to God after turning his/her back from Him? Share how that made you feel. Discuss how God accepts a person who returns to Him regardless of that person's offence.
- c. **God's effort: "All-In" as He pursues us, never giving up (Luke 15:1-4).** In the context of Luke 15, we see the effort God puts in to find His lost sheep. The Pharisees (religious leaders) complained why Jesus would dine and fellowship with sinful people like the tax collectors. Jesus responded by telling the same parable, but notice how Jesus added, "until he finds it" in verse 4. God spares no effort in trying to reach out to the lost and wandering child. Discuss the possible ways God would pursue you if you wander off. How valuable are you to God? Knowing how God values you, how does that change the way you should live for Him?
- d. **God's mindset: Celebrating when the lost is willing to be found (Luke 15: 5-7).** The shepherd carrying the sheep on his shoulder (v. 5) is a picture of the sheep's surrender to the shepherd. What happened after the shepherd returned home with his lost sheep? In the same way, how does heaven react when a sinner turns to God? What does it tell you of the value of a lost soul who is willing to be found? Discuss why you should not feel that it is unfair when God forgives and accepts back a repenting person.

- e. **God's timing: Immediate searching for the lost (Luke 15:8-10).** Jesus also gave the parable of a lost coin to express how He views the lost. Focus on the action of the woman who lost the coin. There was immediate action. What does the story tell you about her immediate reaction when she lost her coin? What have you learned about God from this parable? Discuss why God cares so much about remorseful sinners.

Walk

Are you far away from God? Remember that He is looking for you. Regardless of what you've done, He is willing to accept you back. Surrender and be willing to be found. Would you thank Him for His patience and His resolve in bringing you back to Him? Is there anyone with whom could you share God's steadfast love and encourage them to come back to the Lord?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I cannot thank you enough for your persistent love. You not only sent Your Son Jesus Christ to die for my sin, but You look for me when I wander off from You. Give me the desire in my heart to go out into the world to reach out to those who do not have a personal relationship with You yet, or to people I know who have wandered off in their faith. May you give me Your perspective, Your attitude, Your effort, Your mindset, and Your timing in my effort to find the lost with Your help. In Jesus' name. Amen.