

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Luke by John Calvin, William Hendriksen and Kent Hughes, John MacArthur’s book, *A Tale of Two Sons*, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible (RSB)

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested, a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Luke 15:1-7 The Lost Sheep

Notes (See back page for authors) Jesus' ministry was one of welcoming sinners – even eating with them. But the self-righteous religious teachers were appalled. They would never do such a thing! Jesus shouldn't either, should He? Hughes points out that *not only did the Pharisees not care about the tax-collecting scum and their like—they were upset that Jesus cared, so that they were continually mumbling.* Should we? Do you?

In order to instruct them, Jesus told them three parables. Hughes notes that *these three coordinated parables—the lost sheep (vv. 4–7), the lost coin (vv. 8–10), and the lost son (vv. 11–32)—are...an “artistically constructed unit with a single theme”—namely, God’s joy when he finds a lost sinner.*

Here in this first parable we have a lost sheep. Jesus begins by appealing to their own compassionate care –not for sinners – but for their animals. They would go look for a lost sheep and rejoice when it is found. The joy, then, when a sinner repents is even greater! Joy in heaven itself. The RSB notes that *the rabbis taught that God would welcome a penitent sinner, but these parables teach that God seeks out the sinner.*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why did Jesus welcome sinners?
 2. Why does God have to seek out the sinner?
 3. Did the Scribes and Pharisees need repentance?



- Praise** Psalm 106a²
- Pray**
1. Rejoice with your family that you are a found sheep
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Luke 15:25-32 Almost everyone rejoices...

Notes (See back page for authors) Everyone rejoices when the lost is found, right? The man who found his lost sheep, the woman finding her lost coin, and the father who found his lost son call others to celebrate and rejoice with them.

But not everyone rejoices. The older brother, dutifully out working, hears the noise. When he hears of the reason for the noisy celebration he gets angry. Look how good I am but there are no celebrations for me! MacArthur points out that *now, for the first time in the story, the Pharisees were staying to themselves, Yes! That is exactly the right attitude. That is precisely what any self-respecting person ought to feel. He is right to be outraged. We are outraged. This whole story has described one atrocity after another, and it's about time someone in the story spoke up and said so.* Like the Pharisees, the elder brother was, in Hughes's words, *good on the outside, but something was missing.*

For the self-righteous, those who believe they dutifully earn God's favour, the idea of free, undeserved, forgiveness for sinners is a scandal. And though the forgiving father appeals to his elder son, the story doesn't end with appeasement. In fact, the story doesn't really end here. Jesus merely goes on to another parable (16:1). But we know the Pharisees killed the forgiving One. Thankfully, MacArthur notes, *when they did their worst, they accomplished God's best. (Acts 2:22, 2 Cor 5:21, Isa 53)*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Who is not rejoicing about the lost son being found?
 2. Why did the Pharisees not rejoice in lost sinners being found?
 3. What can we do to deserve God's favour? Explain.



- Praise** Psalm 106a
- Pray**
1. Rejoice with your family in free, undeserved, forgiveness
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

Reading

Luke 15:20-24 Back home to father

Notes
(See back page for authors)

So, the son heads for home. While still a long way off, the father sees him and ran to his lost, now found, son. The RSB notes that *the father was apparently watching intently for his son's return. It was undignified for an older man to lift up his robes and run.*

Calvin comments that *this is the main point of the parable. If men, who are by nature prone to revenge, and too tenacious of their own rights, are moved by fatherly love kindly to forgive their children, and freely to bring them back, when they are sunk in wretchedness, God, whose boundless goodness exceeds all the affection of parents, will not treat us more harshly...As this father, therefore, is not merely pacified by the entreaties of his son, but meets him when he is coming, and before he has heard a word, embraces him, filthy and ugly as he is, so God does not wait for a long prayer, but of his own free will meets the sinner as soon as he proposes to confess his fault.*

So, the celebration begins! Hughes notes that *the father had his servants bring out "the best robe"—a long, stately garment that reached to the feet. The kind worn by kings. Then a ring was thrust on the returned son's finger—symbolic of sonship. And finally new sandals were strapped to his callused feet. The father's slaves went barefoot—not his sons! This is the gospel—the good news of ... God who rushes to meet sinners with his love!*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What did the son say as he arrived back home?
2. What (and when) was the father's response to the son?
3. What do this son and this father represent?

4.     

Praise Pray

Psalm 106a

1. Rejoice with your family that God welcomes and rejoices in repentant sinners
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading

Luke 15:8-10 The Lost Coin

Notes
(See back page for authors)

The next parable is very similar. This is a lost coin, and would have been more valuable to the woman than the lost sheep. Ten percent of her wealth was missing. A thorough and careful search began.

Hughes comments that *the lost coin is of such value to the woman that she is a whirlwind of organized persistence. Ancient homes were traditionally windowless and dark. Since the only light came in through a low door, a lamp was always shining. Straw that normally covered the dirt floor was swept away, and she searched every nook and cranny. Nothing was left unturned as she searched upon her knees. She must find the coin!*

And she did find it! Like the one who finds his lost sheep, she calls others to share her joy. That joy, Jesus said, is similar to the joy in heaven when a sinner repents – is converted. Calvin notes that *If angels mutually rejoice with each other in heaven, when they see that what had wandered is restored to the fold, we too, who have the same cause in common with them, ought to be partakers of the same joy.*

Are you praying for specific sinners to repent? Are you seeing sinners repent? May God grant you this great joy.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How were these 2 parables similar? different?
2. What is the woman's joy similar to?
3. How can we look for lost sinners?

4.     

Praise Pray

Psalm 106a

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to seeking lost sinners, with God's help.
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Luke 15:10-13 The Lost Son

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Calvin comments that *this parable is nothing else than a confirmation of the doctrine which we have just now seen*. Of course, much more detail is given. Here we are presented with a man with 2 sons. Not yet introduced to the older, we see the younger who desires the benefits of his father (his inheritance) but not the presence of his father.

So, he asks for his inheritance early. The RSB notes that *the firstborn son was entitled to two-thirds of his father's property (Deut. 21:17). Sometimes the father would give the rights to the property (which meant that he could not dispose of it himself, though the son could sell it) and retain the income (if the son sold the property, the buyer could not take possession until the father's death). But to give the property to one of the sons as in this parable was unusual*.

Unusual that it may be, the son gladly takes the inheritance, heads for "freedom" and lives for his pleasures. He spends freely what he has on foolish, wasteful, riotous, prodigal living. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that the *original sense is "incurable"; then we have the ideas of dissipation, gluttony, voluptuousness, and indiscipline*.

To the Scribes and Pharisees, this lost son perfectly illustrated the sinners Jesus was welcoming. Guilt by association.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What did the younger son want/not want from his father?
2. Getting what he wants, what did he do with it?
3. Why do sinners sin?

4.     

Praise Psalm 106a

Pray

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to praying lost sons and daughters may be found.
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Luke 15:14-19 The money runs out

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Those who have studied lottery winners find that often when the lottery is won by poor people they often find themselves in greater poverty within not very many years from winning a fortune. Even a fortune, when spending wildly, doesn't last. So it was with this young man. The money ran out. So did his "friends." Then a famine came and the food ran out too.

Hughes comments that *he "glued" himself to a Gentile as a servant—a horrible humiliation for a Jew. He was a day laborer, the very lowest of servants. His master "sent him to his fields to feed pigs"—an unspeakable degradation for a Hebrew—a Jewish swineherd!* In this low position, he longed for food, then he began to long for home. Again from Hughes, *a well-traveled outline of this parable goes like this: I. Sick of home, II. Sick, III. Homesick, IV. Home. At this point he was homesick*.

But like one whom God awakens to their sin, he knew he didn't deserve home. He could only hope that in his father's favour, he might be allowed to "attach" himself to his father as a servant. He knew that his father would be a kind master. Calvin notes that *as this young man, therefore, is induced by confidence in his father's kindness to seek reconciliation, so the beginning of our repentance must be an acknowledgment of the mercy of God to excite in us favourable hopes*.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Why did the money run out?
2. How did the lost son seek to live?
3. How does God show his kindness to sinners?

4.     

Praise Psalm 106a

Pray

1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God's kindness leads men to repentance
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member