CoMission

LEADER BOOK

Restarting My Faith

For anyone who once walked with God and walked away. You don't fix yourself first. You come home, obey the next thing, and let the Holy Spirit do the changing.

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Print it, write in it, and take it to the group.

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Close

Pray for them by name, and thank God for what He has done. Then set the next meeting, even if the book is finished.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Cover the passage and retell Luke 15:31–32 in your own words.

2. What does this passage teach you about God? About people, and about you?

3. Write down what you will do, step by step, the next time you fall.

4. "I will start reading every ____ at ____, and the person I'll call when I fall is ____."

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
1	The far country	2
2	Coming to yourself	5
3	No longer worthy	8
STUDY SHEET	The Father ran to receive you — Luke 15:11-24	12
4	The Father running	13
5	A son, not a servant	16
6	The elder brother	19
7	Living in the Father's house	22

The far country

REMEMBER

> You can start from where you actually are.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, SLOWLY

> **Luke 15:13–16**
>
> Not long after, the younger son gathered all he had and journeyed to a distant country, where he squandered his wealth in reckless living. After he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He desired to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one provided him with anything.
>
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Jesus told this story to people who were complaining that He "welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). Keep that in mind: the whole story is His answer to that complaint.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 30–45 minutes, one-on-one

Before the session Read Luke 15:11–16 twice and be ready to retell it without notes. Know how you would say your own road, briefly, if they ask.

Watch for

- An apology for being here. Receive them; do not accept the apology as if one were owed.
- A story of church hurt. Stop and receive it now — it outranks the rest of the session.

Note

1. Let them name it before you say anything. Most people's road is a mix; do not make them pick one.
2. Listen for the season, not the verdict. A move, a death, a job — these tell you what the distance is made of.
3. Do not ask to read this. If they offer, read it and say thank you. Do not correct a word of it.
4. A day, and a name. You can be the name this week, but ask whether there is someone else too.

You are not running a class. You are sitting with one person who has come a long way to sit across from you, and this first session decides whether they come back for the second. Almost everything below is about that.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

Look back before you look forward

Ask how last week went, including the prayer for the person who hurt them; go gently there. Then take out every date they have given you across the seven chapters and walk through them together. Some happened. Some did not. Be glad about the first kind out loud. For the second, the question is the same one it has been all along — *what got in the way?* — and never a verdict. What you are showing them is that the whole book has been obedience, one step at a time, and that the Father has been doing the changing underneath it.

Do the rhythm, do not explain it

Use the passage in the panel. Read it twice. Ask them to retell it without looking. Then ask the four questions and wait for their answers. Do not chew their food for them: if you answer the first question yourself, you have taught them that the rhythm needs you. It does not. The Bible and the Spirit are the teachers; you ask.

Be careful with the third move. Grow is not a step they perform. It is the growth God gives, and 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 is where to point when they ask what they are supposed to do to grow. The answer is: eat, digest, obey, tell — and watch Him.

Plan the fall before it happens

The third question asks them to write what they will do the next time they fall. Read it with them. A good plan is short: confess to God, tell the person they have chosen, do the next thing He has said. Listen for a plan that is really a hiding place — *I'll deal with it myself and tell someone once I've got it under control.* That is the far country again, by a quieter road. Come back the same way, every time: honestly and quickly.

If they choose you as the person they will call, say yes out loud, and mean it. Then answer the phone when it rings. Nothing in this book will teach them more about the Father than how you answer that call.

Keep walking

This book ends; the relationship need not. The natural next class is **Walking with Jesus**, and walking it with them is the obvious next step. Ask whether they want to. And ask the fourth question seriously: who near them is still in the far country? A returner's honest story, told plainly, is often the first thing that reaches someone else on the same road.

NOTES

Living in the Father's house

REMEMBER

Come back the same way, every time.

A DAILY LIFE ANYONE CAN KEEP

> **Luke 15:31–32**
>
> 'Son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. But it was necessary to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was as if he was dead but now he is alive again; he was lost and is found.'
>
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1. Eat	Read a short passage. Read it again. Retell it in your own words, without looking.
2. Digest	What does this teach me about God? About people, and about me? What will I obey? Who will I tell?
3. Grow	The growth God gives, not a step you perform (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 45 minutes, one-on-one

Before the session Ask how last week went, including the prayer for the person who hurt them. Bring every date they have given you across the seven chapters.

Watch for

- A comeback moment treated as the finish line. The goal is a daily life in the house.
- A plan for falling that is really a plan for hiding. Come back quickly, the same way.

Note

1. Have them retell it aloud before they write. If they cannot yet, read it again. No shame in that.
2. Ask, then wait. This is the rhythm they will keep alone; do not answer for them.
3. Confess, tell someone, do the next thing. Listen for a new probation hidden in their plan.
4. A time of day and a name. If the name is yours, say yes out loud and mean it.

This is the last session in the book, and the easiest one to turn into a graduation. Do not. The chapter is about a daily life, not a finish line, and the most useful thing you can do today is practice that life together once, start to finish, so they leave knowing they can do it without you.

Watch this chapter

Before anything else, let them tell it

Read the passage together twice — ideally they read it aloud once and you read it once — and ask them to retell it in their own words. Then turn to the first question and wait.

Most returners have never told the whole of their road to anyone. It may come out in pieces, out of order, with the worst part left until the end or left out entirely. Let it. Your job this week is to hear it, not to understand it well enough to fix it. If you catch yourself forming the answer while they are still talking, you have stopped listening.

Name the roads without ranking them

The chapter names four roads so that every returner finds theirs before anything else is said. Resist the urge to sort them into better and worse reasons for leaving. Drift is not more respectable than sin. Disappointment with God is not a lack of faith to be corrected. Church hurt is not a grudge. If you rank them, they will hear which road you think they should be ashamed of.

When church hurt comes up, stop

If what surfaces is harm done by a church or by Christians, set the rest of the session aside and receive it. Do not explain what the church was trying to do. Do not say "not all churches are like that." Say, and mean: *I'm sorry. That was wrong, and it is not how Jesus treats people.* Chapter 6 comes back to this in depth; this week it is enough not to defend anyone.

If what you hear is abuse, or anything that suggests they are not safe now, that changes what you do next. The leader guide says how.

The prayer is theirs

The third question asks them to write to God where they actually are. Do not ask to read it, and do not improve it if they read it to you. An angry prayer is still a prayer; the Psalms are full of them. The chapter is teaching one thing — that honesty is the first obedience — and a mentor who edits the prayer has just taught the opposite.

Close the way every session closes

Take the “I will” with a real day and a real name. Then pray for them briefly, by name, in plain words. Do not pray a sermon at them. And tell them when you will meet next, so the second session is already on the calendar before they leave the table.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Drift, sin and hiding, disappointment with God, hurt from church or Christians. Which roads brought you here? Say it in your own words.

2. When did you first notice you were far off? What was going on in your life around that time?

3. Write to God where you actually are right now. Not where you should be by now. Don’t tidy it up.

4. “I will tell God honestly where I am on ____, and I will tell ____ that I’ve started.”

If what they describe is abuse, stop the chapter. That is not something to work through in a workbook; it is something to get real help with. See the leader guide.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Whose reaction to your coming back are you dreading? What do you expect them to say or do?

2. Where, if anywhere, do you hear the elder brother in yourself — toward the church, or toward someone who hurt you?

3. Who is one believer you could meet with regularly on this road? What would make it hard to ask them?

4. “I will meet with ____ on ____, and I will pray for ____ by name.”

That is harder than it sounds, because the reflex is strong and it feels like fairness: *that church wasn't doing it right; that pastor wasn't typical; not all Christians are like that.* Every one of those sentences defends the church at the expense of the person in front of you. Say none of them. Do not explain what the people who hurt them probably meant, and do not balance their story with a better one of your own.

Listen all the way to the end. Then say the apology you rehearsed, and mean it: *I'm sorry if Christians have ever made you feel judged. That's not how Jesus treated people.* Change the words to fit what you have actually heard — "I'm sorry that was done to you" — but keep its shape: an apology, not an explanation. It separates Jesus from the wound, which is exactly what they need in order to look at Him again.

Never rush them back to where it happened

A returner who was hurt in a church does not owe anyone a date for being back in one. Their return is to the Father first. Hebrews 10:24–25 is real, and nobody is meant to walk alone — but that is why you are meeting. You are the "meeting together" for now.

So when the third question comes, do not steer it toward a service or a building. Ask about one more believer who could walk with them. A spiritual family will come, in time and with wisdom, and when it does it may look very different from the place they left. If they want to go back to the church where the harm happened, go gently, and ask what would need to be true for it to be safe.

The elder brother inside

The second question can go two ways. Some returners find the elder brother in themselves at once, toward the church or toward the person who hurt them. Some find nothing. Do not supply him. If he is there, you do not need to scold it; naming it is enough, and the Father went out to the elder brother too.

Praying for the person who hurt them

The "I will" includes praying for someone who hurt them, by name. Be clear before they write it: praying for someone is not reconciling with them, trusting them, or being alone with them again. Sometimes reconciliation is neither safe nor wise. If all they can pray is *Father, You deal with them*, that is a prayer.

Coming to yourself

REMEMBER

> He didn't clean up. He got up.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, SLOWLY

> **Luke 15:17–20a**
>
> When he realised his situation, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am perishing with hunger! I will arise and go to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am not worthy to be called your son any longer; treat me as one of your hired servants.' So he arose and went to his father.
>
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Read it a second time and look for what is missing: everything he did not do before he stood up.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 30–45 minutes, one-on-one

Before the session Ask last week's "I will" first, warmly. Read Luke 15:17–20 and list, for yourself, everything the son did not do before he got up.

Watch for

- A new self-improvement plan presented as repentance: "First I'll stop, then I'll come back."
- An "I will" too big to keep. Help them shrink it before they leave.

Note

1. Most people have a list. Let them say all of it before you point out that the son had one too, and left it behind.
2. Do not supply the conclusion. If they see that the plan kept them in the pig field, they will believe it.
3. Push toward smaller, not bigger. A heroic step that does not happen does more harm than a small one that does.
4. The step, a day, and a name. If the name is yours, say when you will ask.

Open by asking how last week's "I will" went. If it happened, be glad out loud. If it did not, ask one question — *what got in the way?* — and listen to the answer. Then recommit to it or to something smaller. Never scold. A returner who is scolded in week two has just been handed the reason to stop coming.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

The chapter is an untraining

Almost everyone who comes back has already tried to come back at least once, and almost always the same way: fix myself first, then return. When it failed, the conclusion they drew was not "that was the wrong plan" but "I am the problem." This chapter goes after the plan.

So do not rush it. Read the passage twice, have them retell it, and then ask them what the son did not do before he stood up. Let them make the list. It is far more persuasive when they notice for themselves that he was still dirty on the road.

Listen for the plan, restated

The most common thing you will hear this week is a fresh version of the old plan, sincerely offered as repentance: *I'm going to stop, give it a month, and then I'll really commit.* It sounds humble. It is the same plan.

You do not need to argue with it. Ask what happened the last time. Then point back to the passage: he got up in the pig field, not after leaving it. If they push back — "but surely I have to stop the thing?" — agree that turning away from it may be exactly the right step. The difference is whether they are turning their feet toward the Father, or trying to earn the right to go.

Keep the step small

The third question is where people overreach. They name a step that would take a better week than they have ever had: pray an hour a day, read the whole Bible, be at church every Sunday. Help them choose the real one instead — one honest prayer, one short story, one conversation. Small steps that happen build the road. Big ones that do not happen build shame, and shame is the thing that kept them away.

If they choose telling you as the step, receive it as a real step and not a formality. Saying *I want to come back* out loud to another believer is, for many returners, the first time the return has been anything more than a thought.

The elder brother

REMEMBER

> The party doesn't wait on the elder brother.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, SLOWLY

> **Luke 15:28–30**
>
> The older brother was upset and would not go in. So his father went out and entreated him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been serving you and have never disobeyed your commands, yet you never gave me even a young goat to celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours returns, who has squandered your property with prostitutes, you kill the fattened calf for him!'
>
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FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 30–45 minutes, one-on-one

Before the session Ask how last week's obedience went. Rehearse the apology aloud until it sounds like you: "I'm sorry if Christians have ever made you feel judged. That's not how Jesus treated people."

Watch for

- Your own reflex to defend the church, or to explain what the people who hurt them meant.
- Pressure, yours or theirs, to be back in a service by a date. Father first, then family.
- Abuse, in any form. That is not a chapter to work through; it is help to get.

Note

1. Receive the fear as real. It often is. Do not promise them a warm welcome you cannot guarantee.
2. Neutral ground. Some find him at once; some do not. Do not supply him.
3. This may be you already. Ask about one more, but do not push toward a church building.
4. Praying for them is not reconciling with them. Say so before they write the name.

Ask first how last week's obedience went, the usual way: glad if it happened, *what got in the way?* if it did not. Then read the passage twice and let them retell it.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

If church hurt is in their story, this is its session

Not everyone who comes back was hurt by a church or by Christians, but many were, and this chapter will bring it to the surface even if it has not come up before. When it does, your one task is to receive it.

Close

Take the “I will”. Then ask them to say, in their own words, why they are doing it. If the answer is “to become His”, gently turn it around: because they are His. Pray, and set the next meeting.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What does your own hired-servant plan look like? The ways you have tried, or planned, to earn your place back.

2. Read Ezekiel 36:26–27 in this chapter. Who does each verb? What does that leave for you?

3. Read a short passage of Jesus’ teaching, such as Luke 6:27–36. What is one thing He is telling you to do?

4. “I will obey Jesus by ____ on ____, and I will tell ____.”

Do not preach the speech yet

The son is still carrying his rehearsed speech in these verses, and you will be tempted to deal with it now. Wait. Chapter 3 is built around it. This week, it is enough that he went anyway, still carrying it — and so can they.

Close

Take the “I will” with a day and a name, pray for them by name, and set the next meeting.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What have you been waiting to fix, finish, or feel before coming back to God?

2. Think of the last time you tried to get your life in order first and then come back. What happened?

3. What is the smallest real step toward the Father that you would actually take this week?

4. “I will ____ on ____, and I will tell ____ that I did it.”

No longer worthy

REMEMBER

The Father never let him finish the speech.

THE SPEECH, REHEARSED AND INTERRUPTED

> **1 John 1:9**
>
> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, so that He will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
>
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1. Rehearsed — verse 19	I am not worthy to be called your son any longer; treat me as one of your hired servants.
2. Said — verse 21	The son addressed him, 'Father, I have done wrong against heaven and against you. I am not worthy to be called your son any longer.'
3. Interrupted — verse 22	But the father told his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him; place a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 45 minutes, one-on-one; do not rush this one

Before the session Read Luke 15:18–24 and 1 John 1:9 until you can put verse 19 beside verse 21 from memory. Pray for them by name before you meet.

Watch for

- "I've let God down" or "I'm such a hypocrite." This is the moment the class exists for. Slow down.
- The urge to relieve shame by shrinking the sin. Do not. Forgiven, not minimized.
- Anything that means they, or someone else, is not safe. Confidentiality ends there.

Note

1. Let them write it in full. The hired-servant line is usually there in their own words: "just let me...".
2. The confession stays; the terms go. If they cross out the confession too, ask what the son did say.
3. Listen. Do not argue it away and do not agree with the verdict. Take them to verse 21.
4. A trusted believer of their own gender. It may be you. Keep what you hear.

Where self-repair comes back

By this point the returner has come home, confessed, and heard that the Father ran. And very often, right here, the old plan returns in new clothes: *Now that I'm back, I'd better really try this time.* It sounds like gratitude. It is the hired-servant speech again, delivered after the robe instead of before it.

Listen for it in the first question. Ask them what their own earning plan has looked like — promises, stretches of good behavior, a probation they set for themselves. Do not mock any of it. It came from wanting to be right with God. It is simply not how the house works.

Who does the verbs

The heart of this session is the second question. Read Ezekiel 36:26–27 aloud together and ask them to underline every verb with God as its subject. *I will grant. I will take away. I will put My Spirit within you. I will cause you to follow.* Then ask what is left for them.

Let them answer before you do. What is left is not nothing; it is obedience. But it is obedience as a child who is already home, not as a servant trying to stay employed. That is the line to draw, and it is worth drawing more than once: **the Spirit does the changing; they do the next thing He says.**

Romans 8:15–16 carries the same thing from the inside. A spirit of slavery leads back to fear. The Spirit of adoption is the one who tells them they are God's child. If they are still waiting to feel like a son or daughter, that verse says whose job the telling is.

Keep it concrete

Galatians 5 lists the fruit, and a returner will often read it as a to-do list: now I must produce patience. Point out whose fruit it is. Then turn to the third question and help them find one thing Jesus says to do in a short passage — Luke 6:27–36 works well — and choose one, for this week.

Do not choose it for them. If they pick something vague ("be more loving"), ask what it would look like on a particular day with a particular person. An obedience with a name and a date is one they can actually keep, and one you can ask about next week without it becoming a test.

NOTES

A son, not a servant

REMEMBER

Sons don't earn the house. They live in it.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, SLOWLY

Luke 15:22–24

But the father told his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him; place a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and slaughter it. Let us eat and celebrate. For this son of mine was as if dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

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1. The robe	Covering and honor. Nobody in the village sees the rags.
2. The ring	Belonging and authority. Not what you give a hired hand.
3. The sandals	Servants went barefoot. Sons wore shoes.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 30–45 minutes, one-on-one

Before the session Ask what they noticed praying to God as Father. Read Ezekiel 36:26–27, Romans 8:15–16 and Galatians 5:22–25, and count who does the verbs.

Watch for

- "Now that I'm back, I'd better really try." Self-repair returning in new clothes.
- Obedience heard as the price of the house. It is how a son lives in it.

Note

1. Promises, months of good behavior, a self-imposed probation. Name them without mocking them.
2. God grants, takes away, puts His Spirit, causes. Theirs is to keep in step.
3. One thing, concrete, this week. Not the hardest thing in the passage; the next one.
4. Ask them to say it back in their own words: obeying because they are His, not to become His.

Begin with last week's prayer. Ask what they noticed talking to God as Father. Some will say nothing changed; that is honest, and fine. Some will describe a small shift. Either way, do not grade it. The picture moves slowly.

Watch this chapter

This is the chapter the class was built around, and the session where a mentor does the most good or the most harm. Give it the full time, and more if they need it.

What you are listening for

Two sentences, in whatever words they come: *I've let God down* and *I'm such a hypocrite.* Often they come with a pattern attached — the same sin, confessed and returned to, many times. When you hear them, stop moving through the questions. This is the conversation.

There are two wrong answers, and both feel kind.

The first is to argue the shame away: *you're being too hard on yourself; it wasn't that bad; everybody struggles with that.* That shrinks the sin to relieve the feeling, and they know it. It leaves them with a smaller sin and no forgiveness.

The second is to agree with the verdict, however gently: *well, it has been a pattern, so maybe it's time to really commit.* That hands them the hired-servant speech back, with your signature on it.

The right answer is neither. Take them to the page. Read verse 19, then verse 21, and ask: *What did he plan to say that he never got to say? Why not?* Let them find the interruption. Then ask what the father called for instead. You are not arguing with their shame. You are showing them what the Father did with the son's.

"I'm such a hypocrite"

Do not deny it and do not confirm it. Ask what a hypocrite is. Someone who pretends. Then ask whether what they are doing right now, sitting here telling the truth, is pretending. Hiding made it hypocrisy. Coming back honestly is its opposite, and they are in the middle of doing it.

Recurring patterns

Name Proverbs 24:16 plainly: the righteous fall seven times and rise again. The count of falls is not what defines a child of the Father; the getting up is. Do not promise that this time it will be different because they are trying harder. Point them to 1 John 1:9: they confess, He forgives and He purifies. The cleaning is His work, not a project they have failed at again.

Watch this chapter

NOTES

When they confess to you

James 5:16 is the step most people skip, and you may be the person they choose. If they confess to you, receive it quietly. Do not react, do not ask for details they do not offer, and do not tell them how serious it is. Thank them. Pray for them by name, then and there, that they may be healed.

What they tell you stays with you. It does not go to your spouse, your pastor, or a prayer list. The one limit: if what you hear means a child or a vulnerable person is being harmed, or that they intend to harm themselves or someone else, safety comes before confidence. Tell them so, gently, before it ever comes up, and follow the guidance in the leader guide.

The exercises

Let them write the speech in full, then cross out what the Father never let the son say. Most people find the confession survives and the terms do not. That is the whole chapter, discovered with a pen.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Write the speech you have been rehearsing for God. Every line of it, including the terms you would ask Him to take you back on.

2. Now read Luke 15:20–24. Cross out every line of your speech that the Father never let the son say. What is left?

whether the picture has begun to move.

Close

Pray for them, and this time consider starting your own prayer with the word *Father*, out loud, where they can hear it. Modeling it plainly teaches more than explaining it.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Describe the picture of God you have carried while you were away. Where is He standing? What is His face doing?

2. Read Luke 15:20 again. List everything the father does before the son says a word.

3. Put your picture beside the father in verse 20. What, if anything, would change about how you talk to God?

4. "I will pray to God as Father every day, starting ____, and I will tell ____ what I noticed."

This chapter is about their picture of God

Every returner carries one. It was formed long before they met you — by a parent, a pastor, a church, a season when God was silent — and it decides how they approach Him now. You will not change it by describing a better one. The passage changes it, a phrase at a time, if you let them read it slowly.

So read verse 20 together twice, have them retell it, and then take the first question seriously. Ask them to describe the picture honestly. Where is God standing? What is His face doing? What does He say first?

Some pictures are harsh. Let them be. If the picture is plainly their own father, or someone who hurt them, you are hearing something tender. Receive it. Do not defend their father and do not diagnose him. You are not trying to win an argument about God; you are about to read a verse together.

Let them find the verbs

The second question asks them to list what the father does before the son says a word. Do not list it for them. There are five: he saw, he was filled with compassion, he ran, he embraced, he kissed. If they stop at three, ask whether there is anything else. The finding is the teaching.

Then, if it helps, add the one thing the page cannot show: in that culture a grown man did not run. He would have had to gather up his robe in front of the whole village. The father chose the indignity so the son would not have to walk the last of the road alone.

Why Jesus told it

Point them to Luke 15:1–2. This is not a nice story about a generous dad. It is Jesus answering people who were complaining that He welcomed sinners. He is saying what God is like toward the one coming home. That matters to a returner who suspects the gentle picture is wishful thinking. It is not their wish. It is His claim.

Prayer is the obedience

The "I will" this week is daily prayer to God as Father: short, honest, often. Some will want to promise an hour a day. Steer them back to something they will actually do on a bad day. And next week, ask what they noticed, not how many times they managed it. The point is not a streak. It is

3. Which do you carry more: "I've let God down," or "Who am I to come back?" Where did it start?

4. "I will confess to God, and to ____, by ____."

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY

CoMission

The Father ran to receive you

Luke 15:11-24

1 Eat

Read the passage slowly, read it again, then retell it in your own words. If you can't retell it, read it once more.

☐ Read ☐ Reread ☐ Retell

2 Digest

Answer from what the passage actually says — stay in the text.

1. **What does this passage show me about God?**

   What does the father do the moment he sees his son far off?
   What does his running toward the son show you about God?

2. **What does it show me about people — and about myself?**

   How does the son see himself as he returns, and how does the father treat him?

3. **What will I obey this week? (a concrete step, with a day)**

4. **Who will I tell?**

   Who do you know who feels too far gone to come home?

3 Grow

Growth is God's part, not yours. Do the cycle faithfully and trust Him to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

✦ Pray

> *Father, thank you for running to meet me when I came home.*
> *Help me believe I am truly received, and not on trial.*

This study online

The Father running

REMEMBER

> He was watching the road.

THE PASSAGE — READ IT TWICE, ONE PHRASE AT A TIME

> **Luke 15:20**
> So he arose and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.
> The Open Translation Bible (OTB), openbible.uk, CC BY-SA 4.0.

Jesus told this story because religious people were complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). The father in the story is His answer to what God is like.

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Time 30–45 minutes, one-on-one

Before the session Ask how last week's confession went, gently, and do not press for details. Read Luke 15:1–2 and 15:20 and notice who Jesus was answering.

Watch for

- A picture of God borrowed from a hurtful parent. Receive it; do not argue with their father.
- Relief that sounds like "so it doesn't matter what I did." It mattered; He ran anyway.

Note

1. Let the picture be as harsh as it is. Do not correct it yet; the verse will.
2. Saw, was filled with compassion, ran, embraced, kissed. Let them find all five.
3. Listen for prayer as performance: getting the words right, sounding sorry enough.
4. Daily, short, honest, beginning with "Father". Ask next week what they noticed, not how often.

Start with last week. Chapter 3 asked them to confess to God and to one person. If that person was you, you already know. If it was someone else, ask only whether it happened and how it felt — not what was said. If it did not happen, ask what got in the way, and be gentle; confession is the hardest "I will" in the book.

Watch this chapter

NOTES