

# *A Study in the Parables of Jesus*

## *The Two Debtors*

### **Lesson 1**

#### **Luke 7:36-50**

*Debt* = Something owed to another; a liability or obligation to pay or render. How do you view your debt owed to God? Do you see it as more than others, less than others? Luke 7:36-50 tells us a story of a Pharisee who didn't understand his debt and a woman who understood hers. The effect of their understanding was revealed in how they loved. Jesus' response to sincere love expressed to Him was forgiveness and peace. How do you view your debt owed to God?

#### **OBSERVATION: Read Luke 7:36-50**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
  
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. As you mark key words, mark any personal pronouns or other words that refer to the key word which represents a person (*Jesus, Pharisee, woman, and debtors*).

Mark words that are similar in the same way. Example: the text contains words similar to the key word *forgave*. They are *forgives* and *forgiven*.

Key Words: *Jesus, Pharisee, woman, debtors, forgave, and love*

- a. Terms of conclusion also aid in understanding a passage. Jesus used the term of conclusion *therefore* in Luke 7:42 and 47. Mark the word *therefore* in these verses.

b. The contrasting word *but* is used four times. Mark each time this word is used.

1.) Complete the chart below to expose the contrast between the *Pharisee* and the *woman*

<u>Verse</u>	<u>Pharisee</u>	<u>Woman</u>
44	<i>gave Jesus no water for His feet</i>	<i>washed Jesus' feet with her tears</i>
45		
46		
47		

Challenge: Read the text and record other differences between the *Pharisee* and the *woman*.

### CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What is an unusual way someone has expressed appreciation toward you or you have expressed appreciation toward another?
2. How do you tend to respond when someone does something "out of the ordinary"?
3. Describe a time when someone made you feel especially loved while you were visiting them in their home.

## THE INTRUSION: Read Luke 7:36-39

1. *Simon, the Pharisee asked Jesus to eat with him* at his house. Jesus accepted the invitation. Using verse 37, describe the uninvited guest.
  - a. According to verses 37 and 38, what did the *woman* do?
2. Placing the four gospel accounts together, we discover that just before this event, Jesus spoke words that we have learned to cherish. What are they? Matthew 11:28-30.
  - a. If the *woman* in this story heard those words, considering her background, what thoughts do you think she might have had?
    - 1.) What are your thoughts as you personally apply these words?
    - b. *Pharisees* did not even speak to *sinful women*; certainly, they did not *eat* with them. How might the words of Jesus embolden this woman to enter the *Pharisee's house* and *come to Jesus*?
3. Notice (Luke 7:39), *Simon* did not verbally express his thoughts. Rather, we are told that he *spoke to himself*. What was he thinking?
  - a. What does Isaiah 65:5 teach us about God's attitude toward attitudes like this *Pharisee's*?

## THE PARABLE: Read Luke 7:40-42a

1. Jesus, being so much more than a *prophet*, not only *knew what manner of woman was touching Him*, He knew the thoughts of *Simon, the Pharisee*. Rather than rebuke him, Jesus told him a story. We find it recorded in less than two verses. Summarize what Jesus *had to say to Simon*.

2. Let's identify the characters in the story. Who is represented by the:

*creditor:*

*debtor who owed 500 denarii:*

*debtor who owed 50 denarii:*

3. There were two *debtors*. What resources did they have to draw from to repay the *creditor*?
  - a. Many believe they can do something to repay God to make amends for their actions. What does this parable teach us about that?

1.) What does Ephesians 2:8-9 teach us?

4. Neither *debtor* could repay their *debt*. What did the *creditor* do?

- a. Behold the word *freely*. The *creditor* *freely* forgave them both. List some synonyms for the word *freely*.

1.) *freely* is an awesome word when applied to God's actions towards believers. What great news do these verses proclaim for us?

Romans 3:24

Revelation 21:6

- a.) Who has the power to *freely* give these to us?

**THE LESSON: Read Luke 7:42b-50**

1. In concluding the parable, Jesus asked Simon a question. What was it?
2. Consider a very wealthy creditor. How do you think he views a debt of \$50 and a debt of \$500 when he has billions and billions?
  - a. Yet, from the debtor's side, we see a vast difference – in money and in sins. Therefore, because we have this viewpoint, who tends to appreciate most the forgiveness of a debt?
    - 1.) According to Luke 7:42b, what is the response of one who appreciates forgiveness?
      - a.) Review the *woman's* actions towards Jesus. How did she express her *love*?
      - b.) Jesus did not rebuke her for her choice to express her love as she did. She did not allow the fear of man's rejection or opinion to intimidate her. How might you express your love to Him today?
3. Record Jesus' conclusion as stated in verse 47.
  - a. Read Luke 5:27-32. We discover the same self-righteous attitude. Record the words of Jesus in verses 31,32.

- 1.) The problem was not that the *scribes and Pharisees* had no need of a *physician*, but that they saw no need for one. The problem was not that they were *righteous* and others *sinners*, but that they did not see their *sin*. What do we miss out on when we are blind to our sin and our need for forgiveness?
4. Record the bold words of Jesus to the woman in Luke 7:48.
  - a. Jesus had proved that He was at least a *prophet* by being able to know Simon, the Pharisee's thoughts. What does Jesus claim by making the statement he did in this verse? See Luke 5:21.
5. Read the words of *those who sat at the table* in Luke 7:49. Now, read the words of Jesus to the *sinful woman*. What did He say to her?
  - a. *Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith* (Habakkuk 2:4). Who was the *just* one in this story – the *Pharisee* or the *woman*?

## REVIEW:

1. With whom do you most identify: the *Pharisee* or the *woman*? Why?
  - a. What have you learned about your *debt* to God?
2. In what ways do the *woman's* actions encourage or challenge you?
3. What do you appreciate about Jesus' comments and responses in this story?

4. If you were the *woman* in this story, how would the words and touch of Jesus make you feel?
  - a. We are that woman, aren't we? How do the words and touch of Jesus make you feel?
5. In what ways have you been challenged by this lesson?

*"Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; But  
the just shall live by his faith. "*  
*- Habakkuk 2:4*

## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 7:36-50

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. <sup>37</sup>And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, <sup>38</sup>and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. <sup>39</sup>Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." <sup>40</sup>And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." <sup>41</sup>"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" <sup>43</sup>Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." <sup>44</sup>Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. <sup>45</sup>You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. <sup>46</sup>You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. <sup>47</sup>Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." <sup>48</sup>Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." <sup>49</sup>And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" <sup>50</sup>Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."



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*A Study in the Parables of Jesus*  
*The Rich Fool*

**Lesson 2**  
**Luke 12:13-34**

Luke 12 begins informing us that *an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together*. Our story today begins with the words: *Then one from the crowd said to Him* (Jesus). He then asked Jesus to *tell his brother to share his inheritance with him*. Ever the *Teacher*, Jesus grabbed the moment to teach about *riches*. May this valuable lesson be one that we learn to live. If it is, we will find ourselves worrying less as we realize the care of our heavenly Father and the value of storing *treasures* not in barns or banks, but in heavenly storehouses.

**OBSERVATION: Read Luke 12:13-34**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
  
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. As you mark key words, mark any personal pronouns or other words that refer to the key word which represents a person (*God, Jesus, and rich man*).

Key Words: *God, Jesus, rich man, life, things, treasure, worry/anxious, consider, seek, and the phrase I will.*

- a. The contrasting words *but* and *yet* are used four times. Mark each time these words are used. Choose one of the times and record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.

- b. Three terms of conclusion are used in this passage: *So* (verse 21), *therefore* (verse 22), and *if then* (verse 28 - better translated as *since then*). Mark these words and record the conclusions stated.
3. The man in the parable was not *rich toward God*. Using Jesus' instructions in Luke 12:29-33, list what we are to do if we desire to know true riches.

### CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. How did your family regard possessions while you were growing up?
2. In what ways do we act like we will live for many, many years?
3. Over what *things* do you tend to *worry*?

### THE REQUEST: Read Luke 12:13-15

1. *One from the crowd* approached Jesus with a request. What did he want Jesus to do?
  - a. Prior to the man's outburst, Jesus was teaching the people about confessing or denying the Savior before others. What do you think the man's abrupt change of topic revealed about him?

- 1.) Jesus often cried out to the people, "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*". What does this man's request after Jesus' teaching teach us about having *ears to hear*?
  
2. What was Jesus' response in verse:
  - 14:
  
  - 15:
  
  - a. Using Jesus' response in Luke 12:15, what sin did He link the man's request to be granted his *inheritance*?
    - 1.) Using synonyms, define the word *covetousness*.
  
3. Read Job 31:24-28. What was Job's conclusion regarding making material things his hope?
  - a. Explain this truth as you would to a believer who has lost sight of what is important.
  
- Challenge: Record other verses that refer to *covetousness*.
  
4. Complete the last phrase of Luke 12:15: *for one's \_\_\_\_\_ does not \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ he \_\_\_\_\_.*
  - a. In what ways do our check books and calendars reveal what our *lives consist in*?

## THE PARABLE: Read Luke 12:16-21

1. Following His warning to *take heed and beware of covetousness*, Jesus told a parable about a rich fool. Read through the parable and answer the following questions:

What was the financial status of the man in the parable? (verse 16)

What did he think *within himself*? (verse 17)

What was his solution to his question in verse 17? (verse 18)

What would he say to his soul? (verse 19)

What did God say to him? (verse 20)

2. Review your markings of the phrase *I will* in this parable. What do you think this reveals about how he viewed his possessions and good fortune?
3. In this parable, unlike some others, God is not depicted as a character, but as a divine Being. Why did God call the *rich man* a fool?
  - a. Consider God's question to the *rich man*. This rich man was doing more than saving; he was stockpiling. What is the difference?
4. Record God's conclusion (verse 21) in your own words.

5. What does Hebrews 13:15-16 challenge us to do?

a. Rather than call the person who is obedient to these verses a *fool*, what is God's reaction?

6. Jesus used the phrase *rich toward God* in Luke 12:21. How is it possible to be *rich toward God*?

### THE LESSON: Read Luke 12:22-34

1. Luke 12:22 begins with the term of conclusion *therefore*, based on the parable of the *rich man*. Using the lesson of this parable, Jesus asked several questions, stated several facts, challenged us to *consider*, and set forth several instructions. In an effort to learn the lessons God has for us, fill in the blanks below:

### CONSIDER:

a. ... *the ravens, for they neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_, which have neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_; and God \_\_\_\_\_ them.* (verse 24)

b. ... *the lilies, how they \_\_\_\_\_; they neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_; and yet I say to you, even \_\_\_\_\_ in all his \_\_\_\_\_ was not \_\_\_\_\_ like \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.* (verse 27)

1.) What thoughts do you have as you consider these things?

## QUESTIONS:

- a. *Of how much more value are you than the \_\_\_\_\_?* (verse 24)
- b. *...which of you by \_\_\_\_\_ can \_\_\_\_\_ one cubit to his \_\_\_\_\_?* (verse 25)
- c. *If you then are not \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, why are you \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_?* (verse 26)
- d. *If then \_\_\_\_\_ so \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, which \_\_\_\_\_ in the field and \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ into the \_\_\_\_\_, how much \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ you...?* (verse 28)

1.) Which of these questions is most thought provoking for you? Why?

## THE FACTS:

- a. *Life is more than \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ is more than \_\_\_\_\_.* (verse 23)
- b. *For all these \_\_\_\_\_ the nations of the \_\_\_\_\_ after, and your \_\_\_\_\_ knows that you \_\_\_\_\_ these \_\_\_\_\_.* (verse 30)
- c. *...for it is your \_\_\_\_\_ good \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ you the \_\_\_\_\_.* (verse 32)
- d. *For where your \_\_\_\_\_ is, there your \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_.* (verse 34)

1.) What do you think verse 34 means?

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- a. *Do not \_\_\_\_\_ about your \_\_\_\_\_, what you will \_\_\_\_\_; nor about the \_\_\_\_\_, what you will \_\_\_\_\_.* (verse 22)
- b. *... do not \_\_\_\_\_ what you should \_\_\_\_\_ or what you should \_\_\_\_\_, nor have an \_\_\_\_\_.* (verse 29)

- c. ... \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_, and all these \_\_\_\_\_ shall be \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 31)
- d. Do not \_\_\_\_\_, little \_\_\_\_\_, (verse 32)
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ what you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ alms; \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ which do not \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ in the heavens that does not  
 \_\_\_\_\_, where no \_\_\_\_\_ approaches nor \_\_\_\_\_. (verse 33)

1.) Which instruction most challenges you? Why?

### REVIEW: Read Luke 12:13-34

1. In what ways do the parable of the *rich man* and the conclusions that followed relate to the request of the man who asked Jesus to tell his brother to *divide his inheritance*?
2. Why do we too often live as if we will live for many, many years?
3. In what ways do the truths of Luke 12:22-34 challenge your tendency to worry?
4. What are some *treasures* that you can personally store in heaven?
5. How has this lesson encouraged or challenged you about your attitude towards:
  - a. what you feel is rightfully yours



- b. your possessions
- c. worrying
- d. storing up treasures in heaven

*"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above,  
where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.  
Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.  
For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."  
- Colossians 3:1-3 NIV*

## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 12:13-34

Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." <sup>14</sup>But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" <sup>15</sup>And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." <sup>16</sup>Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. <sup>17</sup>And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' <sup>18</sup>So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" <sup>20</sup>But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' <sup>21</sup>So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

<sup>22</sup>Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. <sup>23</sup>Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. <sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? <sup>25</sup>And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>26</sup>If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? <sup>27</sup>Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup>If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>29</sup>And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. <sup>30</sup>For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. <sup>31</sup>But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

<sup>32</sup>Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup>Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.

<sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

*A Study in the Parables of Jesus*  
*The Lost Sheep and The Lost Coin*

**Lesson 3**  
**Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:4-10**

The Biblical description of those who do not know Jesus Christ is not "unsaved" but lost. The parables of the *lost sheep* and the *lost coin* reveal to us the heart of God as it amplifies on Jesus' purpose for coming: *to seek and to save that which was lost* (Luke 19:10). As believers, we should not only be in awe of the value God has placed on us, but we should follow His example in caring for those many consider to be *the least*.

**OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 18:10-14 and Luke 15:4-10**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
  
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of these parables. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Mark any words similar to the key words in the same way. Mark any personal pronouns that refer to *Jesus* in the same way you mark *Jesus*.

Key Words: *Father, Jesus, sheep, seek/go after, lost/astray, found, rejoices/joy, coin(s), repent, and heaven/presence of the angels of God*

3. *Even so* and *likewise* are words of comparison. Mark them.
4. Notice the words *rejoice* and *joy*. Make a list of what was being celebrated.

## CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. How does it feel to be lost and have no idea where you are?
2. To what lengths would you go to recover: a lost piece of jewelry? a missing wallet? an important misplaced document? a missing child? your missing child?
3. What emotions do you feel when you find a valuable item that was lost?
4. What thoughts come to your mind when you think about someone rejoicing over finding you?

## WHO IS IMPORTANT? Read Matthew 18:1-9

1. Jesus told the parable of the *lost sheep* in response to a question posed by the disciples. What was it? Matthew 18:1
  - a. What did Jesus do to illustrate His answer to their question? Matthew 18:2
  - b. According to verse 4, to what quality did Jesus identify *greatness*?
    - 1.) Define *humility*.
    - 2.) Read the words of David from Psalm 131:1,2 and describe his attitude. Note: A *weaned child* is content to be by his mother, no longer demanding milk from the breast, yet knowing she will take care of him

2. Jesus expressed the importance of the *little ones* (the ones who, to many, are of little significance) in Matthew 18:6-9. What was His warning?

- a. Jesus used a little child to prove His point regarding those others did not value. Using the beginning of Matthew 18:10, fill in the blanks to reveal Jesus' next warning.

Take \_\_\_\_\_ that you \_\_\_\_\_ (despise = to not care for, neglect or think lightly of) *one of these* \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.) Read the reason Jesus gave for His warning in this verse. God has angels watching over *these little ones*. How does this strengthen Jesus' warning in both verse 6 and verse 10?

- b. The parallel parable of Matthew's account of the lost sheep is found in Luke 15:4-7. Notice Jesus does not mention *little ones* but broadens His concern to include all *sheep*. Accordingly, who is important to Jesus?

- 1.) What lesson can we learn from this?

### SEEKING LOST SHEEP: Read Matthew 18:10-14

1. Jesus reached a conclusion in Matthew 18:11. What was it?

- a. Jesus made statements similar to this in response to the judgmental attitude of the Jews, expressing their views of superiority over sinners and people they deemed to be insignificant. Describe someone who is spiritually *lost*.

- 1.) What types of people can fit that description?

2. Using Matthew 18:12-13, summarize the parable of the *lost sheep*.
3. Jesus often used *sheep* to describe His children and *Shepherd* to describe Himself. Read the following verses and describe the care of the *Shepherd* for His *sheep*:

John 10:7-17

Ezekiel 34:12-16

4. In the parable of the *lost sheep*, one of the *one hundred sheep* had gone *astray*. What are some examples of *straying*?
5. How did Jesus say the owner of *one hundred sheep* would react if just *one* of his sheep went *astray*?
  - a. Describe the care of a shepherd that would search for one lost sheep.
6. According to Matthew 18:13, what did the man do when he found his *sheep*?
  - a. Mark the word *assuredly* in this verse. What does this word say to you?
7. Record the conclusion of the parable as stated in verse 14.

- a. What is the *will of the Father*? John 6:40

### SEEKING LOST SHEEP: Read Luke 15:4-7

1. The parable of the *lost sheep*, as related in Luke, is very similar to that of Matthew 18. What differences do you see?
2. Notice the phrase in verse 4 *until he finds it*. What does this say to you about the persistence and care of God?
3. *And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders...*(verse 5). Record the words of Isaiah 40:11.
  - a. How do you view God's care for you after He has brought you back from *straying*?
4. Record the conclusion of the parable as stated in Luke 15:7.
  - a. To what is the *lost sheep* compared?
    - 1.) In what ways is a *lost sheep that has been found* similar to a *repentant sinner*?

### SEEKING A LOST COIN: Read Luke 15:8-10

1. This parable is about a *woman having ten silver coins who loses one coin*. How do we know that the *lost coin* was valuable to her?
  - a. How do you know you are uniquely valuable to God?



2. What did the woman do when she *found the coin*?

a. What occurs in *heaven over one sinner who repents*?

b. Ponder the word *likewise* in verse 10. Note that there is *joy in the presence of the angels of God*. This is in comparison to the woman's friends and neighbors rejoicing with her. *Likewise*, those in heaven are rejoicing with the Lord over a *sinner who repents*. Envision the scene in heaven. What do you see?

c. How is the valuation of a person different in heaven than it is on earth?

**REVIEW: Read Matthew 18:1-14 and Luke 15:4-10**

1. What have you learned from this lesson about being great?

2. Unlike the man who did not know where his *lost sheep* was or the woman who *lost her coin*, God has never lost sight of you. How is a person in need of being *found* spiritually?

3. How have you been blessed by:

God's persistence?

God's valuation of you?

The effort God made to *find* you?

The **fact** that God rejoices when you repent?

4. How have you been challenged by:

God's persistence?

God's valuation of others?

The effort God makes to *find* others?

The **fact** that God rejoices when others repent?

*"For you were like sheep going astray,  
but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. "*  
- 1 Peter 2:25

## Observation Worksheet

### The Lost Sheep

#### Matthew 18:10-14

"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. <sup>12</sup>What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? <sup>13</sup>And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. <sup>14</sup>Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

#### Luke 15:4-7

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' <sup>7</sup>I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

### The Lost Coin

#### Luke 15:8-10

"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' <sup>10</sup>Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

[illegible]

*A Study in the Parables of Jesus*  
*Wise and Foolish Servants*

**Lesson 4**

**Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-48, and Matthew 25:1-13**

Jesus is coming again! As Christians, we believe that. Yet, how many of us live in the daily expectation of His coming? How many of us live as the servants He has called us to be? How many of us will be ready when He comes? How many of us will hear Him say to us "*Well done, good and faithful servant*"? Jesus intends for the stories of this lesson to challenge us to *watch and be ready*. May His intentions for you be fulfilled.

**OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-48, and Matthew 25:1-13**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last pages of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of these parables. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. As you mark key words, mark any personal pronouns or other words that refer to the key word (i.e. words used to refer to *Jesus*, *servant*, or *master*).

Key Words:

**The Faithful Servant & The Evil Servant**

*Jesus (Son of Man, Lord), faithful/wise, evil, servant(s), master, watching/watched/ready, and hour*

**The Wise & Foolish Virgins**

*Son of Man, virgins, bridegroom, wise, foolish, watch/ready, lamps, and hour*

3. The contrasting word *but* is used nine times in these three portions of Scripture. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one of the times this word is used. Record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.

4. The term of conclusion, therefore, is used twice (Luke 12:40, Matthew 25:13). Mark each use and record the two conclusions stated.
  
5. The *servants* described in the two records of the parable of *the faithful servant and the evil servant* have markedly different behaviors. Contrast the two by making a list of what each does and doesn't do.
  - a. In the same way, behavior reveals the difference between the *wise and foolish virgins*. Summarize the behavior of each.

### CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What sort of preparations have you been involved in making for an upcoming event?
  - a. What did you discover was important in those preparations?
  
2. Consider a time when you have been found not ready. What were the consequences?
  
  
3. What would you do if you hired a house sitter to watch your home and children, left for a week-long vacation, and then returned a day early only to find that your caretaker had neglected your kids, destroyed your property, and ignored all your other instructions?

## THE FAITHFUL SERVANT & THE EVIL SERVANT: Read Matthew 24:45-51

1. Jesus told this story in response to the disciples' question *What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?* (Matthew 24:3). Read a portion of His answer in verses 36-44. Who knows the *day and hour*?
  - a. What will the days *before the coming of the Son of Man* be like?
  - b. What instructions did Jesus give in verses 42,44?
2. In the story of the *Faithful Servant and Evil Servant*, what responsibilities were they given? verse 45
  - a. Write Jesus' response to their obedience in your own words. verse 46
    - 1.) For those of us who have declared Jesus to be our Master, we each have responsibilities, some common to us all, some distinct to each individual. When you consider what responsibilities your Master, Jesus, has given you, what are some of them?
  - b. Record Jesus' joyful proclamation to His obedient servants from the following verses:  
  
Matthew 24:47  
  
Matthew 25:21  
  
Matthew 25:34
3. This story is also about a servant who was not obedient. Using Matthew 24:48, describe his attitude.

- a. This servant was so occupied with doing *evil* that he was not doing what the master had called him to do. Although you may not be *beating your fellow servants* and *eating and drinking with the drunkards*, what are some things that distract us or prevent us from doing our Master's will?
- b. *The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of* (verse 50). According to the next verse, what will the master then do?

Challenge: Look up other verses that use the phrase *weeping and gnashing of teeth* and note what you learn.

- 1.) Record Paul's warning in 1 Thessalonians 5:2,3.
- 2.) Now record the comforting words of the next two verses, 1 Thessalonians 5:4,5.

### **WATCH AND BE READY: Read Luke 12:35-48**

1. The words of this portion include instructions and warnings which are contained in Matthew's account of the *faithful servant and the evil servant* and the account of the *wise and foolish virgins*. According to verse 37, what will the *blessed* servant be found doing when the *master comes*?
  - a. What actions and attitudes would this kind of *watching* entail?
2. Note Jesus' instruction in verse 40. What does He expect of His servants?
  - a. Are you *ready*? When you consider your readiness for Christ's return, what are your thoughts?



3. The *evil* servant is occupied with the same attitude and actions as the one described in Matthew 24. His punishment is described in a little more detail. Describe that punishment.
  - a. Note the phrase in Matthew 24:51 *appoint him his portion with the hypocrites* and the phrase in Luke 12:46 *appoint him his portion with the unbelievers*. In what way can an *unbeliever* be like a *hypocrite*?
  - b. Jesus' teaching in these verses indicates that the *evil* servant is one who appears to belong to the master but does not. As a believer, you have escaped stripes and weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those punishments have been reserved for those who have denied Jesus. What does Matthew 13:41-43 teach that confirms this?
    - 1.) 1.) Does this truth motivate you to be a servant that is *blessed* by Jesus or are you content with simply escaping His judgment? Selah (meditate on this one for a while).

### THE WISE & FOOLISH VIRGINS: Read Matthew 25:1-13

1. In the story of the *wise and foolish virgins*, we find both similarities and differences. Those who claim to know Jesus and really don't know Him do have similarities with those who truly belong to Him. What are the similarities in this parable?
  - a. What have you discovered to be some similarities of those in the church who are believers and those who are not?
    - 1.) What differences have you observed?
2. In this story, all ten virgins had *lamps*, but only the wise had *oil*. Oil, in Scripture, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. How important is it to have the Holy Spirit? Romans 8:9

3. The bridegroom came, the wise virgins entered the wedding feast, and the door was shut. *Afterward the other virgins came also.* What did they say? verse 11
  - a. They called the *bridegroom* (Jesus) the right words, yet what was His response to them?
    - 1.) Write the awesome words of John 10:27 and 2 Timothy 2:19 regarding Jesus *knowing* those that are His.
      - a.) What is your response?
4. Go back to the beginning words of the story of the servants in Luke 12 (verses 35-37). What are the similarities to the parable of the *wise and foolish virgins*?
  - a. Notice the additional blessing as recorded in verse 37. What are some of your thoughts as you reflect upon the idea of Jesus serving you, possibly at the great wedding feast?

**REVIEW: Read Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-48, and Matthew 25:1-13**

1. What if you were tipped off that a burglar was surely coming? What would you do?
2. From your study of these stories, what did you learn about:

Jesus' expectations of His servants

Jesus as Master

Jesus as the Bridegroom

3. In what ways have you been challenged by this lesson?

*“...And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
so shall your God rejoice over you.”*

*- Isaiah 62:5*

# Observation Worksheet

## The Faithful Servant and The Evil Servant

Matthew 24:45-51

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? <sup>46</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. <sup>47</sup>Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. <sup>48</sup>But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' <sup>49</sup>and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, <sup>50</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup>and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 12:35-48

"Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; <sup>36</sup>and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. <sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup>And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. <sup>39</sup>But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup>Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." <sup>41</sup>Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?" <sup>42</sup>And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? <sup>43</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup>Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. <sup>45</sup>But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, <sup>46</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is

not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. <sup>47</sup>And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. <sup>48</sup>But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

## **The Wise and Foolish Virgins**

Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. <sup>3</sup>Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup>but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. <sup>6</sup>And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' <sup>7</sup>Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup>But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup>And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' <sup>12</sup>But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' <sup>13</sup>Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## *A Study in the Parables of Jesus*

### *The Prodigal Son*

#### **Lesson 5**

#### **Luke 15:11-32**

This parable is often called *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*. Yet, it is not the son upon which our focus should lie, but rather, on the loving kindness and mercy of the father, the joy of the father in his son's return. We may identify with the younger and older sons in this story and learn much from them. But may the impetus of this story in our lives be an adoration of our heavenly Father who adores us and will not rebuke us when we return to Him. Instead, with all of heaven, He will celebrate.

#### **OBSERVATION: Read Luke 15:11-32**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus*, the *father*, the *younger son*, and the *older son* *merry/glad*, and the phrases *was dead and is alive again*, *was lost and is found*

3. The contrasting word *but* is used six times. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one of the times this word is used. Record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.
4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, is used once. Mark it as a key word and record the conclusion stated.

## CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. In what way did you and your siblings compete with each other?
2. How do you feel when other people get rewards greater than they deserve?
3. How do you normally react when you feel you have been treated unfairly?

## THE REBELLION: Read Luke 15:11-16

1. At the request of his younger son, the father *divided his livelihood* to his sons. The older son used his inheritance responsibly. What did the *younger son* do with *his possessions*?
2. An antonym to the word *prodigal* is "using restraint". In what way is *prodigal* living evidence of a life without restraint?
3. According to verse 15, what was the result of the younger son's *wasting of his possessions* and *spending all*?
  - a. To whom did this young man go to seek help?
    - 1.) Record the warning of Isaiah 31:1
    - 2.) Read Psalm 107:11,12 and record the consequences of Israel's rebellion.



4. Using verse 16, describe how bad it got for this *prodigal*.
  - a. Ponder the phrase *and no one gave him anything*. What do you think that was like for him?

#### THE REALIZATION: Read Luke 15:17-19

1. Luke 15:16 ends with the phrase *and no one gave him anything*. Many in this situation would blame others, blame God, or sink into self-pity. This young man did not. Rather, we see a young man *who came to himself*. What does a person realize when he *comes to himself*?
  - a. According to Luke 15:17, what did the younger son realize?
    - 1.) Read the words of the Lord to Ezekiel in Ezekiel 18:27-28. What does God call the *wicked* to do?
    - 2.) Although, as we read in Psalm 107:11,12, there was no *help* for Israel while they were *rebellious*, what happened when they cried out to God for *help*? Psalm 107:13,14
2. After *coming to himself*, the younger son decided to *arise and go to his father*. According to Luke 15:18, 19, what three things did he determine to say to his *father*?
  - a. *I have sinned against heaven and before you*. What was his sin against heaven?
    - 1.) Consider the words of the Lord regarding rebellious Israel in Leviticus 26:40-42. What can we learn about God's attitude regarding rebellion and confession?
  - b. In what ways do the son's statements in Luke 15:19 reveal a repentant heart?

3. The God of the Old Testament has been mistakenly viewed as a God of vengeance by many. Yet, the Old Testament is filled with God's cry to His people to return to Him. This young man probably knew those promises. How does it help you to know Scripture when you are hurting and have lost your way?

### **THE RETURN: Read Luke 15:20**

1. *And he arose and came to his father.* Stop. Meditate on those words. What are your thoughts?
2. The son might have been taking a risk, returning to his father. He might have been facing rejection and retribution. What do you think this younger son knew about his father?
  - a. What do you know about God, that causes you to know it will be a good thing to return to Him, when you have gone astray?
3. Read Psalm 32 and record some of David's conclusions as he realized the pain of sin and the joy of forgiveness.

### **THE RECEPTION: Read Luke 15:20-24**

1. *But, when he was still a great way off...* Reflect upon the pain this son had caused his father. List just a few thoughts and reactions the father "could have" had.
2. According to Luke 15:20, what did the *father* do?

- a. Define the word *compassion*.
3. Psalm 86:5,15 reflect the heart of our heavenly Father. What do they teach us?
4. Record the promise of 1 John 1:9.
  - a. How have you personally experienced the forgiving love of the Father?
5. The *father* in this story was taking a chance in accepting the son so unconditionally. What was his risk?
  - a. From your perspective, is it best to err on the side of grace or on the side of caution? Why?

Personal: Is there a relationship in your life where you may need to rethink your reaction?  
Take a moment and ask the Lord what He sees.

6. Using Luke 15:22-24, record the father's response to the son's return.
  - a. Describe the thoughts and emotions each may have been experiencing:  
  
the *father*  
  
the *younger son*

### THE REJECTION: Read Luke 15:25-32

1. Back in the field, the older son *heard music and dancing*. Curious, he asked a servant *what these things meant*. What did the servant tell him?
2. Summarize the response and interaction of the *older son* with his *father*. Luke 15:28-32
  - a. What words would you use to describe the attitude of the *older son*?
  - b. Notice, the statements made by the *older son* were true statements. Yet, his heart was not in a good place. Read and record the attitude God is looking for as stated in Luke 17:10.
    - 1.) How did the older son's attitude differ from the attitude of Luke 17:10?
3. This parable followed the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin, parables directed at the Pharisees. In what ways were the Pharisees like the *older son*?
4. Think about the contrasts in Luke 15:24, 32, *dead and alive; lost and found*. How do you relate to them?

### REVIEW: Read Luke 15:11-32

1. What can we learn from the example of:

*the younger son*

*the father*

*the older son*

2. What does this parable reveal to you about God's love and forgiveness?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What have you learned about extending mercy?

*"I acknowledged my sin to You,  
And my iniquity I have not hidden.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"  
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. "  
Selah - Psalm 32:5*

## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 15:11-32

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. <sup>12</sup>And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So, he divided to them his livelihood. <sup>13</sup>And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. <sup>14</sup>But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup>Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup>And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup>and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' <sup>20</sup>And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And bring the fatted calf here and kill it and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup>for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry. <sup>25</sup>Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup>And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' <sup>28</sup>But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore, his father came out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup>So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' <sup>31</sup>And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. <sup>32</sup>It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "

[illegible]

*A Study in the Parables of Jesus*  
*The Pharisee and the Tax Collector*

**Lesson 6**  
**Luke 18:9-14**

*Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar* (Psalm 138:6). The distance between heaven and earth does not limit God's vision. He sees both the *lowly* and the *proud*. This parable is a story describing what He saw in men 2,000 years ago – conditions of the heart that still exist today. He has pronounced His judgment on each condition. How does He see you?

**OBSERVATION: Read Luke 18:9-14**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus*, *God*, the *Pharisee*, the *tax collector*  
*humble* and *exalts*

3. Underline or highlight (using different colors) the statements made by the *Pharisee* and the statement made by the *tax collector*.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. The contrasting word *but* is used once in this parable. What is being contrasted?



## CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. How does it feel to be in the presence of someone who thinks they are better than you?
2. What feelings or attitudes do you have toward proud people?
3. How does our society regard the quality of humility?

## THE AUDIENCE: Read Luke 18:9

1. Although God *knows the proud afar off*, He sees them very clearly; He notices those filled with pride and does not ignore it. This parable was directed at a specific audience. Who were they?
  - a. *Trusting* in self can seem to be a good thing to do. What do the following verses teach us about this?

Psalm 9:10

Psalm 118:8

Challenge: Using a concordance, look up the word *trust* and record your favorite verses.

- b. Define the word *pride*.

- 1.) In what ways are *pride* and *trusting in ourselves* similar?
2. What were the two effects of *trusting in themselves*? (Luke 18:9)

- a. According to Psalm 64:10, what will those who are truly *righteous* do?
- b. What is the warning of Proverbs 21:2?
- c. How does Isaiah 64:6 describe *our righteousness*?
- d. How can *self-righteousness* lead to *despising* or thinking less of others?

### **THE PHARISEE: Read Luke 18:10-12**

1. *Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.* What action did the two men have in common?
  - a. Read Zechariah 7:5. What is God's desire for us when we *pray* or *fast*?
  - b. Why is it sometimes easy to commend ourselves for doing the right thing, not recognizing our intentions have not been right?
2. The *Pharisee's* prayer first focused on what he viewed as how he was *not like* others. Who was he *not like*?
  - a. Who do Christians tend to judge today?
3. Next, the *Pharisee* focused on his own good deeds. What were they?

- a. What do we learn about the way *Pharisees fasted* from Matthew 6:16-18?
  - b. What do we learn about the way *Pharisees tithed* from Matthew 23:23?
4. What were the two components of the *Pharisee's* prayer?
- a. God was not looking for a prayer that judges others or justifies ourselves. What components were missing from this *Pharisee's* prayer?

### THE TAX COLLECTOR: Read Luke 18:13

1. Both the *Pharisee* and the *tax collector* went up to the temple to pray. However, the *tax collector* stood afar off. Describe his actions.
  - a. Record Job's conclusion in Job 42:6 after God confronted him with a series of questions reminding Job of His power and wisdom.
2. Record the *tax collector's* seven-word prayer in Luke 18:13.
  - a. What did he recognize about himself?
  - b. Record the glorious truths of 1 John 1:8-10.
    - 1.) Why do you think realization and confession of *sin* must come prior to God's forgiveness?
  - c. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter delivered a powerful sermon, condemning the Jews for their part in crucifying their Messiah. Record the reaction of the Jews from Acts 2:37.

- 1.) What was Peter's answer for them? verse 38
- 2.) Why must we move from being *cut to the heart* to *repentance*?
3. Look again at the *tax collector's* prayer. What attribute of God did he call upon?
  - a. This *tax collector's* prayer was similar to that of King David. Record David's prayer in Psalm 25:7.
    - 1.) Describe God's *mercy*.
    - b. When you confess your sins to God, what attribute of His do you depend upon? Why?

**THE LESSON: Read Luke 18:14**

1. Although David's prayer in Psalm 27 may have been more "flowery", we can see from Jesus' response that it is the *heart*, not the *words*, that matter. What did Jesus declare about the *tax collector* in Luke 18:14?
  - a. Use synonyms or phrases to define the word *justified*.
  - b. What is the promise of Romans 4:5?
2. What reasoning did Jesus give for His statement at the close of this parable?

- a. This is not the first time Jesus taught this principal. Read Luke 14:7-11 and describe those to whom Jesus directed this truth.
  - b. Why do you think *pride* was such a struggle for the religious leaders?
3. God *humbles* the *prideful* and *exalts* the *humble*. Which truth surprises you more? Why?
4. Notice, in Luke 18:14, *humility* is not just an attitude, it is an action. What are some examples of *humbling ourselves*?

**REVIEW: Read Luke 18:9-14**

1. What does this parable teach us about:

outward appearances

trust

prayer

pride

humility

God

2. Describe how God would like to be approached when we pray.
3. What truths enable you to be confident before God?
4. Why does God honor the prayers of a humble person?
5. In what ways have you been challenged or comforted through your study of this parable?

*"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves,  
and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I  
will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

*- 2 Chronicles 7:14*

## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 18:9-14

Also, He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <sup>10</sup>"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' <sup>13</sup>And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

[illegible]



*A Study in the Parables of Jesus*  
*The Unmerciful Servant*

**Lesson 7**  
**Matthew 18:21-35**

Peter, in focusing on the debt owed to him by others, rather than the debt he owed to God, or the debt he himself had incurred with others, came to Jesus with a question: *Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?* Each of us has probably longed for an answer to that same question, wondering what God expects of us, when someone has hurt us – especially when it has happened more than once. Jesus was not invoking careless or shallow forgiveness, but a forgiveness provoked and revealed by Christ Himself. May we follow His lead.

**OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 18:21-35**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of these parables. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus, God, the master, the (unmerciful) servant*  
*forgive/forgave/released, owe/debt/due/trespases, pay/payment,*  
*compassion/patience/pity, and the phrase kingdom of heaven*

3. The contrasting word *but* is used four times in this parable. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one of the times the word is used. Record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.

4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, is used twice. Mark each use and record the conclusions stated.

### CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What are some misconceptions people have about forgiveness?
2. Why is forgiveness difficult?
3. What are some examples of mercy that someone has extended to another that have impressed you?

### PETER'S PERSPECTIVE: Read Matthew 18:21-22

1. Matthew 18:21 records a question that Peter asked of Jesus. What was it?
  - a. Peter's perspective of *forgiveness* was that it had a limit; there was a time when we refused to forgive. What was your perspective of *forgiveness* before you became a Christian?
    - 1.) What is your perspective of *forgiveness* now (as revealed in how you relate to those who have hurt you)?
2. Use synonyms to define *forgiveness*.

a. List antonyms of *forgiveness*.

b. If someone asked you, "what does it mean to *forgive*", what would you say to them?

3. What was Jesus' response to Peter's question? verse 22

a. Do you think Jesus also placed a limit on *forgiving*, raising it from 7 to 490 times?

1.) Why or why not?

### **THE SERVANT AS DEBTOR: Read Matthew 18:23-27**

1. Jesus illustrated His answer to Peter by telling a parable. Read the entire parable (Matthew 18:23-34) and summarize it.

Challenge: Using a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the story as you would tell the story to a child.

2. The servant was *not able to pay* the debt owed to his master. What did the master *command* of him? verse 25

a. What did the master do in response to the servant's plea for *patience*?

- b. Consider the heart of God as you write the words of Nehemiah 9:17.

- 1.) What does this verse reveal about God's desire to show *compassion* and *forgive*?

### **THE SERVANT AS LENDER: Read Matthew 18:28-31**

1. This section begins with the contrasting word *but*. Although the servant was shown *compassion* and *forgiveness*, how did he react to his *fellow* servant?
  - a. We do not *throw* our *fellow servants* into *prison*. However, we have our own ways of demanding payment. What are some ways we exact payment from those who have offended us or "owe us"?
2. It has been estimated that the servant *owed* his master about thousands of times the amount his fellow servant *owed* him. What do you owe God?
  - a. Compare your debt to God to the debt of someone who has offended you. How does it compare?
3. ...*even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do* (Colossians 3:13). Describe how Christ has *forgiven* you. Challenge: Use scripture to support your answer

- a. Record the portion of the prayer Jesus taught the disciples that relates to forgiveness.  
(Matthew 6:12)

1.) What can we learn from this?

### **THE REACTION: Read Matthew 18:31**

1. What was the reaction of *his fellow servants* when they *saw what had been done*?

- a. Read Psalm 119:136 and 158 and record David's reaction.

2. Why should another's disobedience to God's will *grieve* us?

3. How do you tend to react when your actions have grieved a *fellow servant*?

### **THE RETRIBUTION: Read Matthew 18:32-34**

1. The master responded to the news brought to him about his *servant*. Record his reaction by filling in the blanks.

Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, \_\_\_\_\_ servant! I \_\_\_\_\_  
you \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_ because you begged me. Should \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ fellow \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ on

\_\_\_\_\_? And his master was \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ him to the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ he should \_\_\_\_\_ that was \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. What did the *master* expect of the *servant*?
2. *and delivered him to the torturers...* (verse 34). This parable is not about salvation, it is about *forgiving* others. What have you learned from this parable about God's viewpoint of a believer who does not *forgive*?
  - a. Another word for *torturers* is "tormenters". How can refusing to *forgive* be a source of torment?

### THE LESSON: Read Matthew 18:35

1. Record Jesus' conclusion based on this parable.
  - a. What do Matthew 6:14,15 teach that complements this?
2. God's *forgiveness* towards us is rendered not only in saving us, but in our continual need to restore our relationship with Him when we have sinned. In what way is *unforgiveness* a sin?
3. Although the following verses may not relate directly to *forgiveness*, how might they apply?
  - a. Proverbs 21:13
  - b. Matthew 7:2

- c. James 2:13

**REVIEW: Read Matthew 18:21-35**

1. What have you learned from this lesson about:
  - a. the limits of *forgiveness*
  - b. God's *forgiveness*
  - c. our responsibility to *forgive* others
2. What do you appreciate about being *forgiven* by:
  - a. God
  - b. others
3. What have you learned about *forgiveness* from God's viewpoint?
4. In what ways have you been challenged by this lesson to *forgive*?

*"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" - Ephesians 1:7*

## Observation Worksheet

### Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. <sup>23</sup>Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup>But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. <sup>26</sup>The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' <sup>27</sup>Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' <sup>29</sup>So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' <sup>30</sup>And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved and came and told their master all that had been done. <sup>32</sup>Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' <sup>34</sup>And his master was angry and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. <sup>35</sup>So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."



[illegible]

## *A Study in the Parables of Jesus*

### *The Unprofitable Servant*

#### **Lesson 8**

#### **Luke 17:5-10**

Is it time for an attitude check? Why do you do what you do? What do you think you deserve from God because you have obeyed Him or even faithfully served Him? We long to hear "well done" but should never think we deserve to hear it. In this parable, Jesus challenges servants to view all they do as *unprofitable*. May we learn, as we study this parable, what Jesus meant by that.

#### **OBSERVATION: Read Luke 17:5-10**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus*, *apostles*, and *servant(s)*  
*faith*, *commanded/duty*, and *unprofitable*

3. The contrasting word *but* is used once in this parable. What is being contrasted?
4. The term of comparison, *likewise*, is used once in this parable. What is being compared?

## CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. How do you feel when you have done something good for another person?
2. What expectations do you have when you help someone or do something good?
3. What are some examples of God's commands that sometimes seem to be "beyond the call of duty"?

## THE PRELUDE TO THE PARABLE: Read Luke 17:1-4

1. The parable recorded in Luke 17:5-9 was preceded by a warning from Jesus. These four verses in the beginning of Luke 17 remind us of two sides of sin – sinning against others and being sinned against. What did Jesus say about people who *offend* others?
  - a. Consider Jesus' rebuke to Peter in Matthew 16:23. What is often the reason behind *offenses*?
2. Jesus began His second warning with the words *take heed to yourselves*. What do you think He meant by this? (Luke 17:3)
3. What was Jesus' command regarding our response to a *brother who sins against us*?
4. What do you find to be more difficult – refraining from *offending others* or *forgiving* those who *offend* you? Please explain.

## THE NECESSITY OF FAITH: Read Luke 17:5,6

1. In response to Jesus' warnings, the disciples found themselves falling short of His requirements. What are some ways people deal with failure?
  - a. Rather than look to themselves, what did the disciples ask Jesus to do?
    - 1.) Why do you think Jesus' commands caused them to see the need for *increased faith*?
2. What is the result of *increased faith* according to 2 Thessalonians 1:3?
  - a. How does *love for others* cause us to walk in obedience to Jesus' warnings in Luke 17:1-4?
3. What example does Jesus give of *faith* in Luke 17:6?
  - a. What is our part according to Matthew 17:21?
    - 1.) How does prayer and fasting help to *increase our faith* and thus enable us to step out and act in *faith*?
4. In what way does *faith* enable us to obey God's commands?

## THE PARABLE: Read Luke 17:7-9

1. Although the disciples viewed Jesus' commands as difficult, Jesus responded with a story about servanthood. Tell that story as you would relate it to a child.
  
2. In this story, who is represented by the:  
master:  
  
servant:
  
3. What scenario did Jesus place before them in verse 7?
  - a. How do the following verses refute the idea that a master is not to serve a servant?  
  
Mark 9:35  
  
Mark 10:42-45
  
4. According to Luke 17:8, what did the *master* command the *servant* to do?
  
5. In response to the servant's obedience, *does he* (the master) *thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him?* What was Jesus' answer?
  - a. Note: this is a parable told to *servants*, not to *masters*. From the *master's* side, appreciation should be expressed. However, from the *servant's* side, appreciation should not be expected. Considering the disciple's response to Jesus' commands at the beginning of Luke 17, why do you think Jesus told them this parable?

6. Did the servant in this parable express *faith* or *obedience*?
  - a. We have the privilege of knowing the heart and intentions of our Master. The servant of a human master does not. Faith is not required of that servant, only obedience. What do you know about your Master, Jesus, that helps you to *obey* Him?

**THE POINT OF THE PARABLE: Read Luke 17:10**

1. What is to be our attitude when we *have done all those things which we are commanded*?
  - a. Consider the paraphrase of this verse from the New Living Translation: *In the same way, when you obey me you should say, 'We are not worthy of praise. We are servants who have simply done our duty.'* How does the phrase *simply done our duty* help you understand the intention of the word *unprofitable* as it is used in this verse?
  - b. What does the *unprofitable servant* understand from 1 Corinthians 4:7?
2. According to the following verses, what does the *servant* of the Lord understand?

Psalms 25:10

Psalms 119:76

Psalms 119:129

Proverbs 16:3

Luke 11:28

John 14:15

John 15:14

3. We, like the disciples, often find God's commands to be difficult to obey. What do we need to believe when confronted with a command that seems contrary to our thinking or provokes fear in our lives?
  
4. How would you counsel a believer who:  
  
excuses his/her disobedience by saying, "I just don't have the faith"?  
  
says "To obey God when I don't feel like it is hypocrisy"?
  
5. ... *We have done what is our duty to do* (Luke 17:10). What is our primary duty? Luke 10:27

**REVIEW: Read Luke 17:5-10**

1. What are some common hindrances to obedience?
  - a. How does a true *servant* ignore those hindrances?

2. Explain the attitude of an *unprofitable servant*.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are some attitudes of a servant who views herself as *profitable*?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In what ways have you been challenged by this lesson?

*“O my soul, you have said to the LORD,  
You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You.” -Psalm 16:2*



## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 17:5-10

And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." <sup>6</sup>So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. <sup>7</sup>And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? <sup>8</sup>But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? <sup>9</sup>Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. <sup>10</sup>So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "

[illegible]