

THE POWER OF INVITATION



WEEK 1

STAND AT THE READY

“Love is what God is, love is why Jesus came, and love is why he continues to come, year after year to person after person...” - Rob Bell



READ LUKE 15:1-10

God is always standing at the ready to be a waymaker for you and me, for all we need, inviting us into deeper human flourishing and into relationship with the Divine. After reading this week's passage, consider how God has invited you into a deeper relationship with the Divine.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6TH

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Has there ever been a time when you judged people as unworthy of God's grace? What criteria do you place to determine who is "in" and who is "out"?
2. Have you ever felt like the tax collectors and sinners in the story? Have you felt the judgment of others about your worth to God? How did it make you feel?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The coin that was lost in verses 8-10 is a Greek Drachma, which would have been about a day's worth of pay. How does this change the importance of her search for the coin?
2. These parables are an analogy for God's mission in the world. What does this tell us about God's grace towards people? Does God show favoritism towards those of more "importance"?

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK:

FAITH MAP

Grab a piece of paper and something to write with. Draw a line from one end of the paper to the other. On the line, mark faith-shaping points of your life. Where are the places God showed up despite your own actions? Where are the moments God proved faithful even though you felt like the sinner who is too far off for God to meet with?

Take a moment to give God thanks for those very moments.

WEEK 2

“Conversion does not make us perfect, but it does catapult us into a total experience of discipleship that affects - and infects - every sphere of our living.” — Richard J. Foster



READ ACTS 16:11-15

“Changed people, change people.” The book of Acts is a perfect example of this, as they have experienced the radical welcome that Jesus invited people into and spread this welcome to others. After reading this passage, reflect on how you’ve experienced this radical welcome in your own life.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13TH

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Who are those people who have extended a radical welcome to you just as Lydia did? How has this impacted your faith?
2. How often do you extend a radical welcome to others? In what ways can you be more intentional with this practice?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Traditionally, husbands would have been the head of the household, but Lydia is described as having a household which means she is unmarried and wealthy. How does this change the way you read this passage? What does this tell you about who God's Grace is for?
2. Lydia "prevails upon them", a phrase only used one other place in the New Testament: in Emmaus on Easter evening, as the two traveling disciples urged the risen Jesus to stay with them. How does this show the irresistible power of God's grace?

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK: **LETTER WRITING**

Reflect on those people who helped change your life. These are the moments where God reveals the Divine through others. Write them a letter of gratitude describing how thankful you are for what they have done. You can either send the letter or keep it for your own formation.

WEEK 3

STAY IN THE FLOW

“The church is not a theological classroom. It is a conversion, confession, repentance, reconciliation, forgiveness, and sanctification center, where flawed people place their faith in Christ, gather to know and love him better, and learn to love others as God designed.”

— Paul David Tripp



READ EPHESIANS 2:8-10

God invites us to continue the humble work of constantly answering God’s invitation to remember and live this grace reality: “it is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Consider how you have previously lived into this reality.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20TH

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Has there been a time when you felt your own personal actions (works) have disqualified you from God's Grace? Has there been a time when you felt that just "going to church more" or "reading your bible more" was the answer to faith?
2. Do you ever feel a need for excessive control of things? In what ways is taking ownership of your life helpful and in what ways does this limit God's work in your life?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. In what ways do you tend to live the Christian life on your own? What does this passage tell you about this effort?
2. In what ways do you boast about your faith? Is this helpful or a hindrance to inviting others into a life with Christ?

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK:

INVITATION

God partners with us as people and asks us to simply take the first step. Pray to God to reveal someone to you who needs to be radically welcomed. Invite this person to either church or dinner, depending on their comfort levels. Pray for this person after, regardless of whether they accept the invitation or not.

