



# Life Guide applying God's Word to life

## We Have to Celebrate! March 31, 2019

(Luke 15:1-3, 11-32)

<sup>1</sup> Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him.

<sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” <sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>11</sup> “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. <sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ <sup>20</sup> So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup> The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup> ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and

everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

1. **FOR KIDS!** Before you read, divide the group in half. Half are tax collectors; half are Pharisees. Without talking, show how you would react after hearing v. 11-16. Why did you react that way? Repeat with v. 17-24. Repeat with v. 25-28. Repeat with v. 29-32.
2. **Icebreaker:** What’s the best celebration you’ve ever been to?
3. Can you imagine some elements of your celebration at the Father’s celebration in Jesus’ parable?
4. What things prompted the younger son’s turn around? How similar is it to Christian repentance?
5. List at least 4 ways the father showed undeserved love.
6. Often when a person hears of God’s no-strings-attached grace for the first time, their first reaction isn’t “Wow! Thank God!” It’s “Wait, even child abusers/mass murderers/sexual predators/ etc.?” Is that reaction surprising to you? Why or why not? (Check out 1 Cor. 1:22-31 for more discussion fodder.)
7. Read this section again and circle any references to eating. What does each reference to eating tell you about the characters? What does each reference to eating communicate to the sinners and Pharisees who gathered around Jesus to hear the story?
8. List 8 “younger brother” type sins and 8 “older brother” type sins. (HONESTY CHALLENGE: Can you make a whole list of sins someone in your group has actually struggled with?)
9. If you met someone like the younger brother, how would you speak God’s grace to him/her?
10. If you met someone like the older brother, how would you speak God’s grace to him/her?
11. How do you celebrate God’s amazing grace in your life?