

AN ENCOUNTER THAT BRINGS JOY

¹ Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

LUKE 15:1-2 ESV

IF I FIND MYSELF:

1. LOST THROUGH NEGLECT, HE SEARCHES FOR ME IN LOVE

³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. ⁸ “Or what woman, having ten silver coins,[a] if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

LUKE 15:3-10 ESV

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM THE LOST SHEEP?

- **I wandered away through neglect, not outright rebellion.**
(Social media, entertainment, and the busyness of life slowly pulled me away.)
- **I lost my closeness to God through routine, not by conscious choice.**
(I once served with passion, but now I rarely read, pray, or pursue Him.)

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM THE LOST COIN?

- **I am lost in the darkness, even though I am still in the house.**
(Comfort, loneliness, or unresolved wounds.)
- **I am carrying something I have never confessed.**
(Shame or guilt that has slowly isolated me over time.)

IF I FIND MYSELF:

2. FAR FROM GOD BECAUSE OF REBELLION, HE WELCOMES ME WHEN I REPENT

¹¹ And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to[a] one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his servants,[c] ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

LUKE 15:11-24

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE DRIFTED AWAY THROUGH REBELLION?

- **I persist in something I know displeases God.**
(A sinful habit, an immoral relationship, a dishonest business practice.)
- **I use what God has given me for my own pleasure rather than for His glory.**
(Influence, status, money, abilities, or opportunities.)
- **I know God’s Word, yet I choose to reject it.**
(“Bless those who curse you,” yet I continue to insult others.)

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

PROVERBS 28:13 ESV

IF I FIND MYSELF:

3. BLINDED BY PRIDE, HE CONFRONTS ME WITH GRACE

²⁵ “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

LUKE 15:25-32 ESV

The younger son was going to return as a hired servant, but the father restored him as a son.

The older son was a son, but he had the mindset of a hired servant. Both were lost.

The sin that distances us from God is not always visible rebellion; sometimes it is pride disguised as service.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM A PROUD BLIND MAN?

- **I criticize the faults of others while ignoring my own.**
(Others are sinners, but somehow I think I am above reproach.)
- **I prioritize public ministry over my personal relationship with God.**
(As long as I am serving in church, I convince myself I do not need to change.)
- **I justify my sin because I am “in the house”.**
(Because I serve so much, I give myself certain allowances and excuses.)

How long have you been hiding in the church, believing that you are close to God, while your daily life does not reflect it?

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

HEBREWS 12:1-2 ESV

“God’s ultimate end in all things is His own glory: that He may be known, admired, and worshiped. This statement is true, but it is incomplete. It must be balanced by the recognition that God saves not only for His glory, but also because doing so brings Him gladness.”

— J. I. PACKER

IF I AM:



Lost through neglect

He pursues me in love.



Far from God because of rebellion

He welcomes me when I repent.

Blinded by pride

He confronts me with grace.