



Bible Discussion Groups - Autumn 2021

Life Lessons from Luke

Session 5: Identity and worth

Quiz: all the famous people in the left-hand column have had their true identities concealed (by themselves or others) through a pseudonym or nickname. Can you match each alternative identity to their true identity?

Pseudonym / Nickname	True identity
Bob Dylan	Charles Lutwidge Dodgson
Currer Bell	Reginald Kenneth Dwight
Doris Day	Ramón Estévez
Elton John	Norma Jeane Mortenson
Freddie Mercury	Gordon Sumner
Lewis Carroll	Farrokh Bulsara
Marilyn Monroe	Edson Arantes do Nascimento
Martin Sheen	Doris Mary Ann Kappelhoff
Pelé	Charlotte Brontë
Sting	Robert Allen Zimmerman

Special services at St John's this Advent

Sunday 12th December 4pm Christingle
 Sunday 19th December 6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols
 Friday 24th December 4pm Carols around the Crib
 Friday 24th December 11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion

Visit www.saintjohnsbromley.com for full details

Passages for small group study

Luke 15:1-10 NIV

15 ¹ Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering round to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them.'

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ 'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.

⁸ 'Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin." ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

Luke 18:9-14 NIV

18 ⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get."

¹³ 'But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

¹⁴ 'I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

1. The first passage (Luke 15:1-10) contains two parallel stories, each of which deals with something which is lost and then found. The man and woman who search for the lost items clearly consider them to be of great value. How many details can you find in the two stories which show us this? (*Clue: think about how much effort they take and what they do when they find what they had lost.*)
2. Jesus links *the finding of the lost sheep / coin* to *the repentance of a sinner*. Is this a good analogy? And who is represented by the people in the two stories who search?
3. Religion has sometimes been called “a long search”, meaning that people of all cultures look for God in their own different ways. Why might this be an attractive view? Is that the kind of search described in these stories?
4. The story Jesus tells in Luke 18 warns us to think about our identity and worth in the right sort of way. How did the two men in the story end up? Why might Jesus’ original hearers have found this a surprising ending to a story about a Pharisee and a tax collector?
5. The destinies of the two men seem to be directly linked to what they think of themselves. What was the key thing which separated them?
6. Many people feel that Jesus’ commands in this passage are very challenging, but they are designed to apply to everyday situations. Choose one or two of these scenarios and try to work out how you would respond in line with either or both of the Bible passages we have been studying:
 - a. Mrs A’s home is near to a council estate, where recently there has been an upsurge in crime. She admits that the young people who commit the crimes are not really the ones to blame. She says their parents are the ones who should be punished because they brought them up badly.
 - b. Mr B comes to you in a very depressed state and says that his wife is planning to leave him, which he says is his fault. His behaviour has made her life very difficult and he feels that nobody could possibly love him, not even God.
 - c. Mr C is a Sunday School teacher and she is planning to teach the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector to her class next week. She has written a prayer which begins: Dear God, we thank you that we are not like the Pharisee in the story.
 - d. Miss D became a Christian a few months ago but is becoming discouraged. She says she is starting to realise that she is more selfish than she ever thought possible, and she is thinking about giving up.
7. How well do you think you can obey these commands of Jesus in your daily life? Pray for God’s help to follow Jesus in the week ahead.

Identity and worth – some quotations (not from the Bible!)

1. The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian independence leader
2. To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.
Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Irish poet and playwright
3. That is something that my mother instilled in me at a very young age - to know my self-worth. And I have had times again and again in the fashion industry where all of that was tested and I rose to the occasion because I was told that I am worthy.
Iman (born 1955), Somali-American fashion model, actress and entrepreneur
4. "We must fall in love with yourselves. I don't like myself. I'm crazy about myself."
Mae West (1893-1980), American actress, singer, comedian, and sex symbol
5. "You are not your job, you're not how much money you have in the bank. You are not the car you drive. You're not the contents of your wallet."
Chuck Palahniuk (born 1962)
American novelist and author of best-selling *Fight Club*
6. "Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice."
Steve Jobs (1955-2011)
American entrepreneur and co-founder of Apple Inc
7. Think about what people are doing on Facebook today. They're keeping up with their friends and family, but they're also building an image and identity for themselves, which in a sense is their brand.
Mark Zuckerberg (born 1984)
American co-founder and CEO of Facebook
8. I'm high maintenance, but I'm worth it.
Lara Logan (born 1971) South African war correspondent