

# Think Like A Shepherd

## WARM-UP:

1. Have you ever played Hide & Seek growing up? Tell us about the most memorable one you had.
2. Share something that you recently realized missing. Was it worth looking for?
3. Aside from food, shelter, clothing, and internet connection, what is one thing that you can't live without? Why do you think so?

## WORD:

*1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners [including non-observant Jews] were coming near Jesus to listen to Him. 2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes began muttering and complaining, saying, "This man **accepts and welcomes** sinners and eats with them." 3 So He told them this parable: 4 "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and **go after** the one which is lost, **[searching]** until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he **lays it on his shoulders**, rejoicing. 6 And when he gets home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!' 7 I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance. - **Luke 15:1-7 (Amplified Bible)***

As people who now follow Jesus, we get to enjoy the fellowship of newfound friends and extended families in the church community. The acceptance, belongingness, and friendship of like-hearted believers are truly God-given blessings.

In this text, Jesus shares a parable about a faithful shepherd who left the ninety-nine for one lost sheep. This tells us about the great joy God and all of heaven has whenever one soul repents and comes back to God. This encourages us to not just be content in fellowshiping with other believers, but to also be shepherd-minded like Jesus. This also reminds us that our gathering has a higher purpose than just for our own benefits. We do fellowship to be built up and be sent out for the lost. Here are three realities that will inspire us to think and act like faithful shepherds:

## 1. Shepherds know the value of a lost sheep.

*1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners [including non-observant Jews] were coming near Jesus to listen to Him. 2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes began muttering and complaining, saying, "This man **accepts and welcomes** sinners and eats with them." - **Luke 15:1,2 (Amplified Bible)***

Lost people are valuable to God. Luke 15 is a series of parables about the lost being sought, found, and celebrated. Jesus was showing us how God's heart goes out for all the lost people and desires for them to be found. (Read 1 Timothy 2:3-6.) It was expected of shepherds in their culture to never lose any valuable sheep. Should anyone be lost, shepherds are required to look for it whether alive, injured, or dead, to the extent of bringing any part of it from the predator's mouth. God's heart beats for the lost. He wants us to be in touch with His heart, to be accepting and welcoming of sinners, and to oppose indifference.

*(For the leader: Share about how God is changing your heart when it comes to seeing lost people who are far away from God.)*

## 2. Shepherds seek and find no matter what.

*4 "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and **go after** the one which is lost, **[searching]** until he finds it? - **Luke 15:5 (Amplified Bible)***

Shepherds in those days were most likely owners or the owner's relatives of the sheep. True shepherds will do whatever it takes to seek and save the lost ones. The same narrative applies for the Parables of the Lost Coin and The Lost Son. Love was the motivation for the woman who lost a coin and overturned everything at home just to find what went missing. Love was the driving force of that father who chose to be patient and waited daily at the horizon for his wayward son's return. God is an eager Savior who pursues sinners until they come to their senses.

*(For the leader: What has been your compelling reason to still reach out to people and make disciples no matter how challenging it is?)*

### 3. Shepherds carry the sheep home and celebrate its return.

*5 And when he has found it, he **lays it on his shoulders**, rejoicing. 6 And when he gets home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!' 7 I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.- **Luke 15:5-7 (Amplified Bible)***

History tells us that the early church's symbol for Christianity was neither a cross nor a fish, but a shepherd carrying an oversized sheep on his shoulders. The reason behind the intentionality of the artists who created this was to illustrate the cost our Great Shepherd took upon Himself just to carry home the lost sheep that was found.

No family or person would own 100 sheep, but it would be possible that several families could own a number like this. So, finding that one sheep indeed calls for a community celebration led by the shepherd himself. Anyone who does not rejoice over a lost sinner being found and brought to the LORD is out of touch with God's very heart. This was the point of the Parables in Luke 15 – heaven's joy recovering the lost. May we always find ourselves rejoicing over the lost being found!

*(For the leader: How do you usually celebrate people who have decided to follow Jesus because of the gospel?)*

## **APPLICATION:**

- Which of these three shepherd mindsets would you like to improve or grow in?
- Name a person or two whom you would like to be saved and discipled in the gospel of Christ Jesus like you.
- How can you better celebrate with those who are coming to Jesus and giving their lives to follow Him?

## **PRAYER:**

- Thank God, our Great Shepherd, who has sought and found us and brought us from darkness into His light.
- Ask God to create in you the desire to be a faithful shepherd of His sheep—seeking the lost, carrying them home, and celebrating their return.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the confidence and boldness to share the gospel to those He is leading you to and to walk with them in this journey of faith in Jesus.