



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Lookin' for a Leader Series, Lesson 4

Lesson Title: Father's Day: God Is a Faithful Father

Take Home Point: Our Heavenly Father is faithful.

Warm-Up:

The story goes that several years ago, a teenage girl got fed up with what she considered her parents' overbearing strictness. So one day she took all the money she could find in the house and ran away, hitching a ride to a nearby city. Her money quickly ran out and she ended up on the streets, hungry and tired, with no place to go and no one who cared. Finally, not knowing what response she would get, she called home and asked if she could return. Her father agreed to pay her bus fare, and when she arrived at the bus station in her hometown, there were dozens of people – family and friends – waiting to welcome her. At the very front of the crowd was her father, who wrapped her in his arms and said, "Let's go home."

Read: Luke 15:11-32

Observation (What happened?):

How did the father show his love and faithfulness to his younger son?

What was the son's attitude when he returned to his father?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

How is God like the father in the Bible account?

Do you think the older brother was justified in his anger? Why or why not?

Insight:

Occasionally a significant point in a Bible event is missed because we read it from the perspective of Western culture. For example, a missionary friend once told me of his experience with a Middle Eastern man who had just read this story. "What do you find most interesting in this story?" my friend asked. The man replied, "The father running to meet his son! That is not done in our culture. For a father to run like that is to humiliate himself in front of family and friends. He must have loved his son very much!" How like God this is! The Bible tells us in Philippians 2:6-8 that Jesus humbled himself to become a man. Consider how humiliating it was for him to be tried and executed as a criminal, to be mocked and scorned on the cross, for his resurrection to be doubted by his own disciples. But that is how much he loves us. He gladly took on the cross, even "ignored the disgrace it brought on him" (Hebrews 12:2) to bring us back to our faithful Heavenly Father who runs to us today when we turn to him.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you show God that you trust him as your faithful father?

Pray for each child in your small group to have a father (or father figure) in their life that helps them have a positive understanding of God as their true Heavenly Father.