

WEEK 1: "THE STORY OF YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE"

"THE FURTHER AWAY YOU GET FROM GOD, THE MORE YOUR LIFE IS TROUBLED. THE CLOSER YOU GET TO GOD, THE MORE YOUR LIFE IS TRANSFORMED."

Jesus told them this story: A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.'

So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

~ Luke 15:11-24 (NLT)

1. I MUST _____

...he began to starve...he became so hungry...he finally came to his senses... ~ Luke 15:14-16, 17

GOD: You'll find me when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else. ~ Jeremiah 29:13 (Message Paraphrase)

2. I MUST _____

When he finally came to his senses, he said, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you.' ~ Luke 15:17-18

Your sins have separated you from your God, and have hidden His face from you... ~ Isaiah 59:2

Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love. Because of your great mercy wipe away my sins! Wash away all my evil and make me clean! I recognize my faults and I am conscious that I've sinned against you. ~ Psalm 51:1-4 (TEV)

The Lord says, 'No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow.' ~ Isaiah 1:18 (NLT)

3. I MUST _____

When the son left he said: 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' ~ Luke 15:12

When the son returned he said: "Please take me on as a hired servant."
~ Luke 15:19

Because God is merciful to you, *OFFER YOURSELVES* as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. And do not conform to the pattern of this world, but *BE TRANSFORMED* by the renewing of your mind. ~ Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

THE FATHER'S RESPONSE!

Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him... his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest...'
~ Luke 15:20, 22

4. I MUST _____

'We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began. ~ Luke 15:23-24

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; *LIFT UP A SONG* to him...His name is the Lord! ~ Psalm 68:4 (ESV)

I will sing to the Lord because he has been so good to me!
~ Psalm 13:6 (NLT)

this week's memory verse:

"Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone. A new life has begun." ~ 2 Corinthians 5:17