

Influence Ministries

30-DAY CHURCH CHALLENGE

LESSON 4

TITLE: REACHING OUT TO YOUR RELATIONAL WORLD.

Welcome to the 30-Day Church Challenge!

Turn to the person next to you and say, "I'm glad you're here."

And say, "What we're going to experience together will change your life - if you let it."

Acts 2:42-47 -NIV

42 The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed.

43 Everyone felt that God was near. The apostles did many wonders and miraculous signs.

44 All the believers were together. They shared everything they had.

45 They sold what they owned. They gave each other everything they needed.

46 Every day they met together in the temple courtyard. In their homes they broke bread and ate together. Their hearts were glad and honest and true.

47 They praised God. They were respected by all the people. Every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

Welcome to the final week of the 30-Day Church Challenge!

For the past three weeks we've been taking challenges that are changing us and changing our church.

When we started our 30-Day Church Challenge we committed to doing it together.

Every week I've encouraged you to embrace these challenges so that you can experience the love, joy, peace, and fulfillment that comes from doing God's will for your life.

I'm going to finish this series strong!

Today we'll learn what our final challenge is by looking at the fourth purpose of the church—outreach.

Certainly, there was a magnetism to the church because of their devotion, unity, and generosity. But no one would know about those things unless the member of the church was talking about them with their friends outside the church.

Luke 15 contains three parables by Jesus: the stories of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Wayward Son.

The first story is about a shepherd who loves his sheep.

"A sheep might wander off, but we would never be so careless as to lose one."

When he finds the sheep, he puts it on his shoulders, brings it home, and throws a party.

"Rejoice with me," he says to his friends. "I found what I lost."

The second story starts with the same hypothetical, "Suppose one of you ...?"

The literal translation would be "What woman among you, having ten coins and loses one of them?"

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The lost coin is so precious that she scours the house until she finds it. When she does find it, she calls her friends to party. “Rejoice with me,” she says. “I found what I lost.”

Jesus then tells his third story. This is the story of “The Prodigal Son.”

As the story progresses, you’ll see that it’s really the story of a father.

The prodigal son asks his father to divide the inheritance. The son takes his share of the estate and moves to a foreign country where he squanders his wealth in wild living.

As soon as all the transactions were completed, the son heads for a far-away country. It’s in the far-away country, that this wayward son gradually descends into his own personal hell.

The text says, “He squandered his wealth in wild living” (Luke 15:13).

He devises a plan: “I’ll go home, admit I was a fool, and instead of asking to be reinstated as a son, I’ll ask to be hired as a servant!”

This is a story that no one could have anticipated.

When the son is found, the father throws the mother-of-all-parties to celebrate his return. Why? Because he’s happy.

Those are Jesus’ three stories. In every one of them, something goes missing. And ...

Everything that’s missing matters.

The sheep matters to the shepherd.

The coin matters to the woman.

The son matters so much to the father.

In each case, what’s missing matters so much it warrants an intentional search.

In each case, what was lost is searched for, found, and reclaimed.

Reclamation brings rejoicing.

Do you see what the Lord is saying?

He’s saying, “Missing things matter enough to warrant an intentional search.

Find everyone who’s missing and bring them to me.”

That’s why, five weeks ago we launched “Back to Church Sunday”.

Bring back to God, people that have lost their way.

Our final challenge for this series is to care about what Jesus cares about and do something shepherd-like, or woman-like, or father-like to find the missing and invite them home.

I want to suggest your final week’s challenge.

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Pray an eight-word prayer for the next eight days.

The prayer goes like this:

“God, give me your heart for the lost.”

Eight words that will take you eight seconds.

Start praying it today and pray it every day through next Sunday and that'll be eight days.

The prayer is powerful. It might change your life.