

## “Sibling Rivalry”

### *A Personal or Small Group Experience*

Discuss your household growing up. How were you raised compared to your siblings? (If you were an only child, compare your parents to your close friends---curfews, privileges, discipline, etc.)

In my family, I have an older brother and a younger sister. At holidays and other gatherings, we typically begin telling stories of our childhood---like the one when my brother made me drink hot sauce or when I ruined my sister’s slumber party. After that, it does not take long for the comparisons to begin on how we were parented. I have noticed that 99.3% (estimate) of older siblings feel like they were unjustly parented through earlier curfews, harsher punishments, and less overall freedom compared to their younger siblings.

This extends into daily living and we have to prove how we are always the victim. We seek ‘justice’ and try to make sure that everyone knows how much harder life was for me than others. Seeking this ‘justice’ can be a dangerous place to be and our motives must be challenged. ‘Justice’ becomes a cloak for pervasive self-centeredness. We want this ‘justice’ as long as it’s in our favor, but fail to apply it equally to ourselves when adding God into the equation. The parable of the prodigal son demonstrates this sibling rivalry and feeling of injustice.

Read through Luke 15:1-3.

Jesus addresses a specific audience through the subsequent three parables. Who were these two groups? Who are the ‘sinners’ of our generation?

The ensuing parable of the prodigal son addresses both of these groups. The tax collectors were Jewish people that worked with the Roman government to tax the Jewish people. They were much less popular than our modern day IRS employee! The ‘sinners’ represent various people the religious elite deemed as ‘sinful’ and the majority of society saw them in this light as well. The Pharisees were a Theo-political power party within the Jewish people. Read and discuss Luke 15:11-32, looking for these groups.

Which character in the story do you relate to the most now and why? In the past? What surprises you about the Father’s behavior? How would you have reacted?

In what ways have you been like the self-righteous older brother?

Too often, we focus on the younger brother and neglect to observe the older brother in this story. The older brother represents the self-righteous, religious elite and the younger brother represents the ‘sinners’ that in the group Jesus was addressing. Whether we are the older brother, the younger brother or somewhere in between, we are all desperately in need of the grace of God. The Father in the story demonstrates God’s compassion and desire for relationship with humanity. We must humbly confess our brokenness (through blatant sin or smug self-righteousness) and come running back to Him.

Read through 1 John 1:8-2:2 and discuss this passage. Close in prayer, receiving God’s grace and forgiveness, regardless of your past. Ask to live in God’s grace on a daily basis and to receive a spirit of humility towards those around you, remembering the debt God has forgiven you.



**Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.**

Isaiah 60:1

### “Connecting With God” Weekly Guide

This booklet is a resource to help you “Connect with God” this week. He deeply desires ongoing personal connection with you. You are that important to Him.

**This Page** has some scripture verses for you to meditate on each day this week. Notice the helpful hints section – these are great things to consider when personally engaging with God through His Word.

**The Center Pages contain** the notes and outline for the message given on Sunday. The message is also available as an audio download from [www.pointofgracechurch.org](http://www.pointofgracechurch.org)

**The Back Page** has a study written specifically for a small group of people (or an individual) to drill down deeper into a particular aspect of the week’s theme. Small groups can review memorable points of the week’s message and then work through the study concluding with a time of prayer.

### *Scripture & Meditation Guide - February 7 – February 12*

#### Helpful Hints:

- 1) Find a quiet place along with 15-20 minutes!
- 2) Focus on God for a few moments asking His Spirit to speak to your heart!
- 3) Listen to Him by reading a section of scripture then rereading it several times, dwelling on “words and phrases” which grab your heart’s attention. Ask God, “What do You want me to hear?” “Why this word at this time?” “How are You inviting me to respond?”
- 4) Pray everything that is on your heart and mind as you are ready!

*Worship Him, Bless Him, Thank Him, Ask Him, Trust Him*

**Monday:** Luke 15: 1-32

**Tuesday:** 1 Corinthians 13: 1-8

**Wednesday:** Luke 7: 36-50

**Thursday:** John 8: 1-11

**Friday:** 1 John 1: 5—2: 2

**Saturday:** Luke 15: 1-32