

## **“A New Identity”**

### *Black Sheep week #3*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

There will always be voices competing to tell us who we are. Some will have a greater impact than others and ultimately the trajectory of our lives will depend on the voice we respond to. The prodigal son also had voices telling him who he was. Even after coming to his senses, he wasn't hearing the truth about himself. In this our final study in the Black Sheep sermon series, we will try to hear what the Father's voice is saying about us.

#### **Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

Do you find it difficult to carry on a conversation in a crowded restaurant?

#### **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

##### **What I see ...What God sees**

**Q1. Read Luke 15:19,24; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Genesis 1:27; 1 Corinthians 15:57**

Many times, the most critical voice we will ever deal with is our own. The enemy of your soul not only uses the voices of others to tell you lies, he takes advantage of your own guilt and shame to reinforce a negative view that you might have of yourself. When the Prodigal son was at his lowest, how did he view himself? (Luke 15:19) But how did the father view him? (Luke 15:24)

It can be hard for us to see beyond our own guilt, shame or failures, but God has a different perspective. One way to gauge something's value is by what price it will bring. We might see ourselves as worthless, but what price was paid for you? (1 Peter 1:18-19) If you look in the mirror what image do you see looking back at you? Whose image is it that each one of us bears according to God? (Genesis 1:27) Even when we feel we are losing our daily battles, what is the truth according to 1 Corinthians 15:57? Is there something negative that you think about yourself that is holding you back from seeing yourself as God sees you?

##### **Restoration**

**Q2. Read Luke 15:22-24; Genesis 3:21; 1 Peter 5:10; Romans 8:38-39**

Even though the son asked to be treated as a servant, the Father had a different plan. The first thing he called for was the finest robe, the kind worn by kings, priests and people of high position. When did God first provide a robe to a son who needed to be restored? (Genesis 3:21) The next thing the father gave the prodigal was a ring, which would have signified the family he

belonged to, and then shoes because slaves went barefoot, not sons. It gave the father great joy to restore his son. How do we know God is willing to restore us when we fall? (1 Peter 5:10) The father's love for the prodigal would not be deterred. What are the things that you have found tend to keep you distant from God? Is there anything that we might do that would separate us from God's love? (Romans 8:38-39) The truth is, we have a gracious, forgiving, loving Heavenly Father who longs to restore us to our rightful place as His children. If there is anything hindering you, take time right now to come to your Father and receive His forgiveness and love.

#### **Celebration**

**Q3. Read Luke 15:28-30, 32**

The father was eager to celebrate the return of the prodigal, even if the older son wasn't. What was the reason he refused to go the party? Not only did he fail to see his brother through the father's eye, upon what was he basing his own worthiness? What lies has the older son been allowing to influence him? What did the father view as cause for celebration? Over the weekend we were able to celebrate as members of the New Life Family were baptized declaring that they were dead to sin and alive in Jesus. Share with your group your personal baptism experience and celebrate it once again.

#### **WRAP-UP**

We can choose to listen to a number of different voices in our lives, but not all of them tell us the truth. God's truth about us is found in His Word. It tells us that we are His children, made in His image, loved, forgiven and victorious in Christ. If you are listening to other voices that tell you anything different, you are being lied to. God longs to restore us and celebrate that we are His children! Don't let anything keep you from drawing close to the Father's love.

#### **Memory Verse**

*It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."*  
*Luke 15:32 ESV*

#### **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Challenge- Take time this week to write down the ways how you think your Heavenly Father sees you (holy, a child of God, forgiven...). See if you can find scriptures to confirm each statement. Then read aloud the truth of who you are in God's eyes.*

