



Special Reprint

Puppies, Kittens, and Babies

Everyone loves puppies, kittens, and babies. But they grow into dogs, cats, and adults. And often as such they are hard to love. This time of year the events surrounding the baby Jesus is on the minds of many. But the baby Jesus grew up a long time ago.

Jesus the Man

He came to His own people and they rejected Him. In His home town they sought to throw him over a cliff. Religious leaders sought to trap Him in His words; failing that they sought to kill Him. His teachings were considered hard, and many followers left.

Some of His teachings that were considered hard are: You will die in sins unless you believe I AM. • If you reject the Son, you'll be rejected by the Father • One must come to the Father through Him. • To be His disciple, one must take up his cross and follow Him. • Disciples must love Him more than family. • To love Him is to keep His commandments. • One must believe and be baptized to be saved.

Jesus Adored and Ignored

Some relish the fact that He came—
but ignore the reason He came.

Some adore the baby Jesus (Christ-child)—
but not the man (Christ-lord).

Some enjoy visions of baby in manger—
but not a king in heaven.

Some participate in the activities of Christmas—
but not the actions of a Christian.

Some clamor for the spirit of Christmas—
but not the spirit of Christ.

Some pay lip service to Him—
but reject His commandments, His Way.

LUKE 15

To appreciate the full impact of the three parables in Luke chapter 15, one needs to understand the setting as found in the first two verses. It is in this setting that Jesus spoke these three parables. Each parable contains a lesson, but combined, there is a much greater lesson.

(1) Tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him [Jesus].

(2) The Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” (The Pharisees and scribes trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed [all] others with contempt. (Cf. Luke 18:9-12)

FIRST PARABLE: ONE LOST SHEEP FOUND

The man rejoiced with friends and neighbors.

The Pharisees and scribes could relate to the rejoicing.

The spiritual parallel: *“That in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”*

SECOND PARABLE: ONE LOST COIN FOUND

The woman rejoiced with her friends and neighbors.

The Pharisees and scribes could relate to the rejoicing.

The spiritual parallel: *“In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

THIRD PARABLE: ONE LOST SON FOUND

The father rejoiced and planned a family feast. The older brother objected.

The Pharisees and scribes could not relate to the rejoicing. Such rejoicing was inconsistent with their view of sinners. They were acting like the older brother.

The spiritual parallel: *There is rejoicing in heaven when tax collectors and the sinners come to Jesus.*

THE LESSON

Self-righteousness causes one to be proud. To trust in oneself. To view others with contempt. To appear outwardly religious. To strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. To be strict in little things. And neglect justice, mercy, and faithfulness. (Echos of Matthew 23).

WORTH NOTING

The body of Christ is composed of people from all walks of life. The Apostle Paul considered himself “chief of sinners.” Among those who became Christians on the day of Pentecost were individuals who had cried out, “Crucify him.”

It is said of the Christians at Ephesus: *“... Among them **we too all formerly lived** in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”* Ephesians 2:1-3

It is said of the Christians at Corinth: *“... Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **Such were some of you** ...”* 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

REJOICE!

Rejoice with the one who was dead in sin and has begun to live; was lost and has been found. Do not focus on the person’s former life. It’s the new life that matters.

Priceless Gifts for All Seasons

(WHAT TO GIVE AS A GIFT, NOT ONLY AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR, BUT ALL YEAR LONG.)

GIFTS FOR OTHERS

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Romans 12:18

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word ... "you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:14

*"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

Matthew 5:16

In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified ...

Titus 2:7



GIFTS FOR BRETHREN

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves
is born of God and knows God.*

1 John 4:7

*That there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have
the same care for one another.*

1 Corinthians 12:25

*... be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift,
employ it in serving one another...*

1 Peter 4:8-10

*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ ... standing firm in one spirit,
with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

Philippians 1:27

*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard
one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own
personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Philippians 2:3-4

*... walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and
gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love ...*

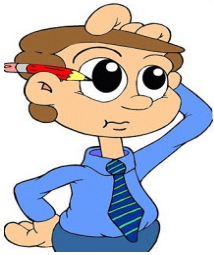
Ephesians 4:1-3

*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification
according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

Ephesians 4:29

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Acts 10:35



Ponder This

Calculations

Sometimes we are so busy adding up our troubles we forget to count our blessings.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Ephesians 1:3
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**A grief shared is only half a grief,  
a joy shared is double joy.**

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

Romans 12:15  
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**Counting some things as loss
in order to gain.**

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Philippians 3:7
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**One addition must not be made.**

*Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.*

Proverbs 30:5-6  
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'Added to you'

"For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you."

Luke 12:30-31
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**A Comforting Thought**

*When my anxious thoughts multiply within me,  
Your consolations delight my soul.*

Psalms 94:19

## TRUE WISDOM

My son, if you will **receive my words**  
And **treasure my commandments**  
within you,

Make your **ear attentive to wisdom**,  
Incline your **heart to understanding**;

For if you **cry for discernment**,

Lift your **voice for understanding**;

*If you seek her as silver and **search for her as for hidden treasures**;*

*Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God.*

Proverbs 2:1-5

## LESSON FOR US: "IF/THEN"

IF YOU WILL

Absorb what has been heard.  
Hold dear His commandments.  
Listen to learn.  
Take it to heart.  
Strive to understand.  
Diligently seek.

THEN YOU WILL

Revere God and have knowledge of Him.  
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TRUE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

*The conclusion, when all has been heard, is:
fear God and keep His commandments,
because this applies to every person.*

Ecclesiastes 12:13

*The wise of heart will **receive commands**,
but a babbling fool will be ruined.*

Proverbs 10:8

*Through insolence comes nothing but strife, but wisdom is with those who **receive counsel**.*

Proverbs 13:10

F.Y.C. is a monthly publication by Ron Adams.

Articles written by others are duly noted.

Bible references are from the NASB except where another translation is referenced.

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