

God’s Relentless Love Pursues the Lost and Hurting

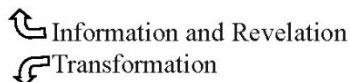
We are all wounded, and every wound represents the potential to hurt other people. We sometimes do crazy things to try to cope with our wounded hearts. When a person lashes out at you, God wants you to see that person through His eyes, and to realize there is a hurting heart buried in the rubble of pain. Only God can heal a broken heart, no matter the source of the offense, whether self-inflicted or brought about by another person. It does not matter your station in life, whether you are at the pinnacle or the bottom of the heap, God offers His relentless love to heal your aching and wounded heart.

The Aimless are Vulnerable—Jesus told three parables that describe God’s desire to pursue us with His relentless love. In the first parable, Jesus compares people to sheep. People, like sheep, are sometimes aimless and go astray, and therefore vulnerable. The Good Shepherd cares for His sheep and wholeheartedly goes after any sheep that strays. Luke 15:4-7 tells the story. *“If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven’t strayed away!” (NLT)*

The Lost Have Great Value—Jesus’ second parable, the story of the lost coin, seems to convey the same message. However, looking closely, we see the story emphasizes the intrinsic value of the lost person. Jesus wants us to see that every person has enormous value. This is because we are made in His image. Luke 15:8-10 shows us this truth, *“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.” (NLT)*

Every Rebel Needs Love—Jesus’ third parable revolves around a selfish and rebellious son. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus wants us to see yet another perspective of His relentless love. The prodigal son was not innocent or unknowing; his sinful intentions were calculated and uncaring. His actions betrayed his father, his family, and his culture. The story plainly infers that the rebellious son must have dreamed about and fantasized about the pleasures that awaited him. In this story, the prodigal’s father represents our Heavenly Father, who demonstrates a measure of unconditional love that goes far beyond any human reasoning.

The story of the prodigal son tells us that God is no respecter of persons. He loves each person, *no matter the condition of our heart*. This means that you cannot be too bad or too good for God to pursue you. Like the prodigal’s father, God’s arms are outstretched to receive *whosoever will* turn to Him and respond to His relentless love. —Ω



Heavenly Father, thank You for Your relentless love that pursues me in my woundedness. Help me see how my pain affects others; I ask You to heal my broken heart. I ask You to keep me when I’ve gone astray and when I lose sight of Your direction and guidance. Draw me back to You and show me the benefits of abiding under the shadow of Your wings. Help me see how valuable I am through Your eyes. Sometimes I fantasize about the pleasures of sin; when that happens, I ask You to overtake me with Your love, according to Your Word that says Your love covers my sin. LORD, I turn to You now and follow You as a sheep in Your pasture for Your name’s sake. I ask this in Jesus’ precious name. Amen.