

## Leaders' Guide, BS 2: A Perfect Love

**Goal:** That the student would understand that God loves them and desires to be in a REAL relationship with them.  
**Scripture:** Luke 15:11-32

### Getting to Know You (20 minutes)

- Bring a bag of random items from your room. Dump the items in the middle and have each person choose an item. They will use the item to describe something about themselves.

### Vision (2 minutes)

Our desire is that we all would know Jesus Christ more. We don't just want to know more about Him, but we want to really know Him. God designed us to seek Him together in community. No matter where you are in your faith, you are an important part of this group as we seek Christ together. We want this to be a safe place where we can be honest with each other as we seek to know Jesus better. **Pass around info sheet again. Pray.**

### Hook:

When God looks at you what do you imagine he is thinking/feeling?

*Possible follow-up question: Why is he feeling/thinking that?*

Have you ever disappointed someone?

*Have a couple students share a story*

*Possible follow-up question: How did that affect the relationship you had with that person?*

### Book:

Jesus often told stories or parables to make points and to teach his followers. The following is a story he told as recorded in Luke 15 verses 11-32. His audience included two groups of people according to the first two verses of the chapter:

- ☐ "Tax collectors and sinners" -People who were considered to be far from God
- ☐ Religious teachers called Pharisees and Scribes who were highly concerned with following all the right rules in order to be self-righteous and look good to others.

### Look:

**Let's look more in depth at the three characters in this story**

The first is the younger son who left home (often called the prodigal son)

*Have someone recap what he did in the story.*

- ☐ Why do you think he left?

*Several possible answers would include: he is selfish, wants to be out from under his father's authority...*

- ☐ How would you describe him as a son?  
*Pretty rotten; demands inheritance, wastes it all in "wild living"*
- ☐ Why does the text say he returned home?  
*He "Came to his senses" and realized that he would have it better as one of his fathers servants.*
- ☐ Based upon his behavior what type of reception do you think he deserved when he returned home?  
*He expected no more than to be hired as a worker but he didn't even deserve that – he was counting on his father's love and mercy.*

*Additional leaders note: Jews were prohibited from eating pork – it was an unclean animal; so having anything to do with pigs would have been detestable for a Jew – He could have sunk no lower!*

**The second is the older son who stayed home**

*Have someone recap what he did in the story.*

- ☐ What is his reaction to the return of his brother and the reception his father gives him?  
*He is angry, bitter and refuses to join the party.*
- ☐ How well does he appear to know the heart of his father?  
*Apparently not very well- He should have been rejoicing with him*
- ☐ When his father comes out to plead with him to join the party what is his reaction?  
*'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'*
- ☐ What does this reaction tell you about his motivations for staying with his father?  
*He thought he had a privileged position because of his work. He served his father not out of love but out of a desire for a reward. He saw himself as being in bondage to his father.*

**The Father**

*Have someone recap what he did in the story.*

- ☐ How would you describe him as a father?  
*Loving, caring, patient, merciful, kind...*
- ☐ Why did he receive back his son?  
*Clearly not because he deserved it but because he loved his son and wanted to have an intimate, restored relationship with him – Mercy*
- ☐ Is his father's reception of him based upon the son's "confession?" Why or why not?  
*No he felt compassion, ran to him, hugged him and kissed him before he even gave the little speech he had rehearsed.*

God longs to be in a real relationship with you, not because of who you are or what you have done but because of who he is—He is your loving heavenly father.

Close in prayer.

## Announcements (5 minutes)

Real Life, any other hang out times...

Took:

**Of all the people in the audience, who would identify with the prodigal son? *Sinners* Why?**

**Who would identify with the older son? *Pharisees***

**What was the point that Jesus was trying to make to his audience?**

*God is longing for there to be a real relationship between himself and those who are clearly "far from him" as well as those who appear close but aren't. He desires this relationship because of His love for us. The father loved His younger son no less because of his mistakes and he loved his older son no more for his service. He unconditionally loved them. God, as our perfect heavenly father, loves us no less when we make mistakes. And we cannot make him love us more through our service—He loves us perfectly.*

**Which son do you most identify with? Why?**

- ☐ Based on the scripture we have just looked at, how will God respond to you if you come to Him?  
*God loves you. He will accept you and "throw a party" to celebrate your coming to Him.*

- ☐ What makes this hard to believe?
- ☐ What does it look like to come to Him?  
*Make sure someone explains receiving Christ at this point.*

*If you think it would be helpful for your group, explain that the disobedient Christian may need to "come back" to God but that this is different than coming to him the first time to receive Christ.*