*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 5 - 10

“The Lost Coin”

**Monday, September 5 Luke 15:8-10**

*“Suppose a woman has 10 silver coins and looses one”*

 The image of the lost coin is similar to that of the lost sheep in the previous verses. This time a woman hunts for a lost coin. The coin in Jesus’ story is a *denarius* (also called a *drachma*) which was the equivalent of a day’s wage for an average worker. This is a meaningful but not extravagant sum of money, similar to the meaningful but not overwhelming value of a single sheep. Still, it is worth it to the woman (as it was to the shepherd) to seek that which is lost. The search for the coin takes time and effort. The woman lights a lamp, sweeps the room, and searches carefully until she finds the coin. When she does, she is as excited as the shepherd was.

 One may ask what caused the coin to be lost in the first place. While the sheep wandered off, in the unthinking manner of the species, the responsibility for the coin’s lostness must be, at least in part, placed on the woman. Could it be that one of the things Jesus wants us to think about in this parable is the importance of sharing Christ with those within our homes so that their potential for becoming spiritually lost is reduced?

*May we as your disciples, Lord, be willing to make the effort to seek the lost. Amen.*

**Tuesday, September 6 Ephesians 6:1-4**

*“Children, obey your parents . . . fathers, don’t make your children angry”*

 For Paul, obedience to parents is right from a Christian perspective. Paul is not speaking merely ethically, even if his conclusion might be the same as society’s. Instead, he argues from a Christian framework. That children should obey their parents was a given in his society, but for him it was right because of their relation to Christ. Similarly, speaking from a Christian point of view, he warns fathers against provoking their children to anger by the way they are treated.

 Being a parent is a hard job, but if God grants a person the privilege, nothing in life is more important. The practical consequences of Paul’s instruction to children and parents include: (1) creating a context of grace, love, support, respect and encouragement; (2) speaking the truth in love; (3) attending to the material and emotional needs of children; (4) teaching, enlightening, warning, holding accountable, and disciplining, all as part of life lived in Christ; (5) giving children a Christian foundation for their own future parenting; (6) refusing to put down, demean, or damage; (7) rejecting jealousy and contempt.

*We pray, Lord, that our homes will be graced by Christian love. Amen.*

**Wednesday, September 7 2 Timothy 1:3-7**

*“You have the faith of your mother and your grandmother”*

 Paul thanks God for the faith in Timothy, celebrating the fact that Timothy was a third generation Christian. Both his mother and grandmother had preceded him in the faith. While it’s great to celebrate Timothy’s faith as a source of joy because of the influence of Lois and Eunice, we must not forget the other side of the coin. There are many children who have been reared in wonderful Christian families who have rejected their parents’ faith and values. Thus, Christian parenting is not a guarantee of Christian children. Similarly, there are a large number of deeply committed Christians who were brought up in incredibly bad environments.

 All of this goes to show that one’s relationship with God is not dependent on one’s parents. That being said, Scripture is still clear about what God asks of parents: that they provide a Christian environment for their children in which they may hear and practice a Christian lifestyle so that they may, in their own way and in God’s time, receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and commit to living a life dedicated to becoming like him.

*We thank you, Lord, for Christian parents who share their faith with their children. Amen.*

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September 5 - 10

“The Lost Coin”

**Thursday, September 8 Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

*“Talk about these commandments with your children”*

 The “commands, laws, and regulations” of the Lord that Moses refers to in verse 1 is a summary of the Ten Commandments as related in the previous chapter. They are to be obeyed that all may go well for the people and their children. Then, in verse 5, Moses wraps up all these commands into the one great command: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.” This great command is the central feature of the entire biblical message, shaping both Jewish and Christian spiritual life.

 Given its central role in the spiritual life of the people of God, Moses emphasizes how important it is within the community to learn how to love God. Turning his thoughts to the next generation, he emphasizes the need not only to repeat the command so that by repetition it may become familiar to children, but parents are to talk about what it means to love God with their sons and daughters. This needs to be done as an ongoing aspect of parenting so that children will learn how to love God with their lives.

*Lord, help us to teach our children how to love you. Amen.*

**Friday, September 9 Luke 2:41-52**

*“And Jesus grew”*

 The annual trip to Jerusalem for the Passover was one of the highlights of the Jewish year. The trip from Jesus’ home in Nazareth to Jerusalem would normally take three days, and people traveled in caravans for protection and for the camaraderie of a shared adventure. On this particular occasion, Jesus remains behind in Jerusalem. By the time they realize he isn’t in their group and return to Jerusalem and find their son, he has been missing for three days. They find him among the teachers in the temple, listening to them, asking questions, and giving replies. Those listening to him are astonished at his understanding.

 While we know nothing about Jesus’ growing up years and his relationship with his parents except for this particular story, it seems clear that Jesus has been exposed by his parents to the teachings of Judaism. While his understanding about God, who he calls “Father,” is impacted by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we must also give credit to godly parents who sought to do their very best raising this child who was clearly blessed by God.

*Help our children to grow in you, Lord, and to know your love for them. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 10 Matthew 12:46-50**

*“Anyone who does the will of my Father is my [family]”*

 Spiritual relationships are the most high and most holy of life. When family ties have the spiritual dimension there is no richer fellowship. But when family ties do not have the spiritual dimension we find that the deeper meanings of fellowship are found beyond the family. Even in Jesus’ family, one of the things he had to face was that his own siblings had a problem believing in him (John 7:5) and some of his relatives and friends thought that he had gone mad (Mark 3:21).

 While Jesus emphasizes loyalty to God over loyalty to family, he has not come to abolish the family. Later he upholds the law that demands children honor their parents and rebukes those who develop traditions that allow children to disobey the law (Matthew 15:3-9). And we will see that after having taught the people in parables, Jesus does return to Nazareth, where his family is still living, to preach in the synagogue (Matthew 13:54-58). But Jesus is here demonstrating the preeminence of commitment to him and the kingdom of heaven, which places people in a new spiritual family.

*Lord, I pray that all in my biological family will also be in your family. Amen.*