

Bible Study Guide: Running Home – Experiencing the Father’s Love

 Source Transcript:

Big Idea

God is a loving Father who runs toward us with compassion, forgiveness, and grace when we turn back to Him.

Theme

Lent is a journey of returning to God—leaving behind distance and shame to embrace the open arms of a Father who desires restoration, not punishment.

Core Scripture

Luke 15:20

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

Introduction: The Heart of the Father

The story of the Prodigal Son reveals:

- The depth of God's love
- The power of repentance
- The beauty of restoration

Key Insight:

“God is not waiting to punish you—He is waiting to embrace you.”

The Turning Point

The son:

- Comes to his senses
- Decides to return

The father:

- Runs to meet him
- Responds with love

Main Point 1: We All Drift Away from God

Explanation

Like the prodigal son:

- We wander

- We seek independence
- We chase the world

“We often run away from God.”

Spiritual Truth

Sin leads to:

- Distance
- Emptiness
- Brokenness

Application

- Where have I drifted from God?
- What am I chasing instead of Him?

Sticky Quote:

“Distance from God always leads to emptiness.”

Main Point 2: The Turning Point Begins with Realization

Explanation

The son realizes:

- His condition
- His need

Spiritual Truth

Transformation begins when:

- We acknowledge our need

“At some point, we have to wake up.”

Application

- What truth do I need to face?
- Where do I need to wake up spiritually?

Sticky Quote:

“Change begins when you see clearly.”

Main Point 3: Repentance Means Turning Around

Explanation

The son:

- Gets up
- Returns home

Spiritual Truth

Repentance is:

- Action
- Movement

- Direction change

“It’s time to turn around.”

Application

- What direction am I going?
- What step can I take toward God?

Sticky Quote:

“Repentance is a step toward home.”

Main Point 4: God Sees You Before You Arrive

Explanation

The father:

- Sees the son from far away

Spiritual Truth

God:

- Is watching
- Is waiting
- Is ready

“God sees you even from a distance.”

Application

- Do I believe God is watching for me?
- How does that change my return?

Sticky Quote:

“You are never out of God’s sight.”

Main Point 5: God Runs Toward You

Explanation

The father:

- Does not wait
- Runs to his son

Spiritual Truth

God:

- Moves toward us
- Pursues us

“God meets you halfway.”

Application

- Do I see God as distant or pursuing?
- Am I willing to meet Him?

Sticky Quote:

“God is not distant—He is pursuing.”

Main Point 6: God's Response Is Compassion

Explanation

The father:

- Feels compassion
- Shows love

Spiritual Truth

God's heart is:

- Loving
- Merciful
- Compassionate

“His response is always love.”

Application

- Do I believe God is compassionate toward me?
- What fear do I need to release?

Sticky Quote:

“God responds with love—not rejection.”

Main Point 7: Forgiveness Is Immediate

Explanation

The father:

- Embraces before the apology is finished

Spiritual Truth

God:

- Forgives quickly
- Restores fully

“Forgiveness is already waiting.”

Application

- Am I holding onto guilt?
- Do I accept God’s forgiveness?

Sticky Quote:

“God forgives faster than you expect.”

Main Point 8: We Often Run Away Instead of Toward God

Explanation

We run:

- Out of fear

- Out of shame
- Out of guilt

“Why are we running away from love?”

Spiritual Truth

Fear distorts:

- Our view of God

Application

- Why do I avoid God?
- What am I afraid of?

Sticky Quote:

“Don’t run from the One who loves you.”

Main Point 9: God Offers What the World Cannot

Explanation

The world offers:

- Temporary pleasure

God offers:

- Lasting love
- True belonging

“God offers what the world cannot.”

Application

- What am I looking for in the world?
- How does God fulfill that?

Sticky Quote:

“Only God satisfies the heart.”

Main Point 10: Every Day Is an Invitation to Return

Explanation

Returning to God:

- Is not one moment
- Is a daily choice

“Run into His arms every day.”

Spiritual Truth

God’s invitation:

- Is constant
- Never withdrawn

Application

- What would daily return look like?

- How can I stay close to God?

Sticky Quote:

“Every day is a chance to come home.”

Discussion Questions

1. Where have you been running from God?
 2. What is holding you back from returning?
 3. How do you view God’s response to your failures?
 4. What fears do you need to release?
 5. How can you “run toward God” daily?
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Practical Application Steps

1. Acknowledge Where You Are

- Be honest about your distance

2. Take a Step Back to God

- Pray and turn toward Him

3. Release Fear and Shame

- Accept His love and forgiveness

4. Embrace God’s Grace

- Receive His compassion

5. Stay Close Daily

- Build a habit of returning
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Closing Prayer

Father,
Thank You for loving us
with open arms.

Help us to stop running away
and start running toward You.

Remove our fear,
heal our shame,
and draw us back into Your presence.

Teach us to live daily
in Your love and grace.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Takeaway

No matter how far you've gone, God is already running toward you—ready to embrace you with love, forgiveness, and a new beginning.