

## Who's Best

**Ice-Breaker:** *(Group Leader - Have everyone in your group answer this question. Start with one person and then proceed around the group in a circle until the last person has answered. Be specific with who you would like to start with.)*

- Describe a time you tossed up a flair prayer to God?
- Do you believe that talking to God, even wishing that God would do something is prayer?
- Do you believe that these prayers are recognition that there may be something better than our current position?

## Who's Best? My best or God's best

**Tough Questions to Consider:** *(Group Leader - Ask 3 or 4 specific people to answer these questions.)*

1. Do your prayers have a tendency to have a predetermined answer that you want?
2. What happens when God doesn't come through in line with your desire answer?
3. Have you ever got something that you wanted but later regretted getting that thing? (ie - house, car, job or person.)

## **Exercise: IS MY BEST GOD'S BEST OR IS GOD'S BEST MY BEST**

- **Have you ever been frustrated with God for not getting what you thought was best?**
  - Often our desires are based around a better position or another possession.
  - What if God's best has nothing to do with our positions or possessions but everything to do with our posture?

**TEXT Luke 15:11-32** Jesus tells a story. Read this story and consider the posture of the two sons. *(Group Leader - Ask someone to read the text out loud.)*

## **The Story of the Lost Son**

*11-12 Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'*

*12-16 "So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.*

*17-20 "That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' He got right up and went home to his father.*

*20-21 "When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.'*

*22-24 "But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time.*

*25-27 "All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.'*

*28-30 "The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!'*

*31-32 "His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!'"*

**Group Question:** *(Group Leader - Ask 2 or 3 specific people to answer these questions.)*

- What posture does the younger son come back to the Father with?
- What posture does the older son respond to Father with?

***These postures are laced with I owe you and you owe me. Both are based in pride. The fact is we owe a debt we cannot pay and our desire to slave our way up the ladder is a proud position before God. The other way we come to God is to say to explain all that we have done for him and he owes us which is a insane estimation of oneself.***

**TEXT Ephesians 2:1-10** Paul writes to a church in Ephesus. *(Group Leader - Ask someone to read the text out loud.)*

## **Ephesians 2:1-10**

*1-6 It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live.*

*You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us.*

*Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ.*

*He did all this on his own, with **no help from us!** Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah.*

*7-10 **[Now] God has us [where] [he] wants us,** with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. **Saving** is all his idea, and all his work. **All we do is trust him enough to let him do it.** It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing!*

*No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving.*

*He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.*

**Group Question:** *(Group Leader - Ask 2 or 3 specific people to answer these questions.)*

- What posture does God want us to be in?

**Closing Challenge:** *(Group Leader - Ask everyone to answer the challenge.)*

- This week spend some time focusing on this thought: "Just come home!" Home in relationship with God is exactly where he wants us. This posture places us in the position to receive God's Best.
- A great practice is to close your eyes and say silently and out loud: "Just come home."
  - Find God's best there.

**Closing Prayer:** *(Group Leader - Ask someone to pray for the group out loud or have everyone in the group pray.)*

- Holy Spirit, help us to continually just come home.

**Thanks:** Thanks to everyone for coming to group.