



DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

19 & 20 FEBRUARY 2022

“DISCIPLESHIP AND DEVOTION”

LUKE 7.36-50

The main study guide material for this sermon series is to be purchased at <https://spckpublishing.co.uk/for-everyone-bible-study-guide-215>.

It is recommended that the e-book be purchased. Nevertheless, individuals or Connect Groups that wish to purchase hardcopies may do so from physical Christian bookstores, or online stores (Amazon, Bookdepository, Blackwells, etc)

The material in this document is intentionally brief. It is intended as a supplement only.

- **Begin by reading the Scripture passage together.**
- **Review the video of the sermon if needed (see <http://www.brmc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).**
- **Refer to the [main study guide](#) Chapter 8 as well as this supplementary material.**
- **Feel free to discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.**
- **Remember to allocate some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another, before ending your group session.**

Info Sidebox

We are disciples who participate in God's Upside-Down Kingdom

One of the main themes in the Gospel of Luke is the "upside-down kingdom": an overturning of the political, social and cultural expectations in the world, inaugurated by the coming of Christ.

In Luke 7:36-50, two figures are presented in contrast to each other; Simon the Pharisee and the unnamed sinful woman. They appear as diametric opposites both in terms of their social standing, as well as their response to Jesus. Simon, a religious leader, fails to show Jesus the basic courtesy of hospitality (v44-46), let alone honouring him as the incarnate God. On the other hand, the woman, apparently notorious for her sinful past, is moved to tears and affection for Jesus.

Jesus overturns his listeners' expectations with the parable (v41-42), treating both debtors as equal before the moneylender. The focus is not on how much they owed, but how much they loved as a result of their debts being forgiven. In other words, the Kingdom of God subverts worldly expectations and accords new status to the rejected and lowly.

This theme is a particular focus of the Gospel of Luke, from Jesus' birth in a manger, to his rejection in his own "hometown" (Luke 4:16-30), the Blessings and the Woes during the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-26), his ministry welcoming the "poor", "prisoners", "blind" and "oppressed" (Luke 4:18-19), and his death on the cross, culminating in his final ascension to heaven. As we continue our journey through the Gospel of Luke, continue to look out for ways in which Jesus calls us, his disciples, to participate in this "upside-down kingdom".

Response, Application, Prayer

1. In contrast to Simon's apathetic treatment of Jesus, the sinful woman was filled with affection and reverence to Jesus, lowering herself to washing his feet with her tears and hair. Do we love Jesus this much? What might still be lacking in our affection for him? What are some things we are still holding back from God?

2. In the Kingdom of God, all believers, regardless of their past, are forgiven because of the work of Jesus Christ — “the ground is level at the foot of the cross”.

- a. Have we intentionally or unintentionally placed any obstacles on this level ground, making it harder for non-Christians to enter the faith?
- b. Repentance is a prerequisite to forgiveness. What does true repentance look like? Is it something that has to be done on our own, or in community?
- c. Be assured that, if we repent, no sin is too great that God cannot forgive (1John 1.9).¹ What about for us, are there any sins someone has committed against you that you are unwilling to forgive them for?

3. Consider the parable in verses 41-42. Although Jesus rebukes Simon for his smugness against the sinful woman and his irreverence toward Jesus, be careful not to use this parable to justify our own smugness against the Simons in our lives. Like with the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14), Jesus’ point here is not to encourage complacency against a negative example, but to call our own hearts into question.

- a. Have we really been moved by the Spirit? Do our affection and humility match the sinful woman’s, let alone Simon’s?
- b. How much “money” do you think you owe God? Has he forgiven you “more” or “less”? Do you love him “more” or “less”? Would you pray for the Holy Spirit to convict you more of your sins, that your love for him might grow in turn?

¹ The unpardonable sin has to do with persistently rejecting God’s forgiveness and remaining unrepentant. For more details, see <https://www.gotquestions.org/unpardonable-sin.html> or <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-sin-not-leading-to-death-in-1-john-5>.