

SRMBC SEPTEMBER 2018 BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE

Lesson Title	Date	Scripture/Movie
Week 1 – Imagine a Loving Father	9/5/2018	Matthew 3
Week 2 – Imagine Forgiveness	9/12/2018	Luke 15
Week 3 – Imagine Redemption	9/19/2018	Luke 4
Week 4 – Imagine Going Home	9/26/2018	John 14
SRMBC Family Movie Night?	9/28/2108	"I Can Only Imagine"

ABOUT MERCY ME



MercyMe is an inspirational Christian band with a rich musical repertoire. They're the lighter side of Christian music—contemporary Christian music that is designed to be a praise and worship experience.

Among their best hits:

- **"I Can Only Imagine"** is a glorious view of what Heaven will look like when we finally get to see Jesus face-to-face.
- **"Bring the Rain"** speaks passionately about learning to stand with Jesus in spite of circumstance—of getting through the hard times by leaning on God.
- **"Word of God Speak"** calls to God to speak down his message to the world—this song won a number of awards, even being named Christian Song of the Decade by Billboard magazine in 2009.
- **"Greater"** shouts out that it doesn't matter what all the voices of the world tell you as long as you know who you are in Christ and what He says about you—because He is greater than all the powers of the world.

ABOUT BART M. MILLARD OF MERCY ME



- Bart Marshall Millard (born December 1, 1972) is an American singer and songwriter who is best known as the leader of the band MercyMe. Bart wrote the lyrics of "I Can Only Imagine" in just ten minutes.
- The song was inspired by the loss of his father, who was abusive before being diagnosed with cancer and transformed by faith in Jesus Christ.
- Millard is from Greenville, Texas. He and his wife Shannon have five children: Sam, Gracie, Charlie, Sophie and Miles.

ABOUT "I CAN ONLY IMAGINE" - THE MOVIE



In the film, I Can Only Imagine, the life story of MercyMe lead singer Bart Millard is told for the first time.

Bart grew up with an abusive father and a distant mother, and in early adulthood, came face to face with his own deep need for acceptance.

His lack of love from his earthly father challenged his faith and hope in his heavenly Father.



SRMBC FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

I Can Only Imagine:
Week 2: Imagine Forgiveness
Luke 15

Group Discussion

Would you describe yourself as an imaginative person? What role does imagination play in your life?

Imagination in My Life	
At My Job	In Ministry
Being Able to See Solutions to Technical Problems Quickly	In Preaching/Teaching 300+ Sermons Bible Studies
Able to Think Outside the Box	To Use Various Sources for Illustrations And Concepts
To Visualize A Project's Completion Before It Starts	Quick Thinking – Innovation for Solving Problems (Parking Announcement at SRMBC Play)



What is a Parable?

par • a • ble(s)
 an earthly story
 with a spiritual truth

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON OVERVIEW

THE PRODIGAL SON



Luke 15:1-32

The Parable of the **Prodigal Son**, follows the parables of the **Lost Sheep** and the **Lost Coin**. These parables demonstrate what it means to be lost, how heaven celebrates with joy when the lost are found, and how God loves and longs to save people.

The story of the Prodigal Son begins with a man who has two sons. The younger son asks his father for his portion of the family estate as an early inheritance and the son promptly sets off to a distant land and when the money runs out, the son finds himself in dire circumstances.

The young man finally comes to his senses, remembering his father and decides to return to his father and ask for forgiveness and mercy. The father receives his son back with compassion and is overjoyed at his son's return.

Meanwhile, the older son boils is angry when he and discover a party celebrate his younger brother's return. The father tries to dissuade the older brother from his jealous rage explaining, "You are always with me, and everything I have is yours."

LUKE 15:11-15 (NKJV)

The Parable of the Lost Son

11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons.

12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

LUKE 15:16-20 (NKJV)

16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

17 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’

20 “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

1. Why do you think Bart’s full sense of imagination – including Art and music – helped Him endure a painful childhood?

- It helped him to find a “place” where he could escape from the pain of his dad’s treatment.
- It helped him imagine having the ability to overcome adversity and take risks in his life.
- It helped to imagine a better “Father” - a better father – son relationship.

Bart’s father held a negative view of ambitious dreams and imagination, even in children. Bart says” he was definitely bitter toward anything that seemed unrealistic. And to him everything was unrealistic.



2. Have you experienced bitterness from your parents, teachers or others? How has that bitterness affect you growing up how does it affect you today?

- **In My Childhood** - I was bullied and made fun of – because I wasn't one of the "cool" kids (smart, wore thick glasses, dorky, etc.)
- **In the Army** - I was ridiculed and berated by Drill Instructors and supervisors.
- **At Work** – I had a boss and a co-worker that were ruff!

I have learned to enjoy who I am and to be prepared and do my very best at everything. Sometimes I do find it hard to trust and get close to people.

3. How do you relate to Luke 15: 11 – 20? Have you ever had a period of life where you ran away from God? What happened next in your life?

Yes – there was a time when I far away from God – trying to live my old life while still belonging to Christ.

I started to experience a lot troubles:

- **Lack of closeness to God/Worship** (Isa. 59:2)
- **Heaviness of Spirit/Conviction** (Psalm 32:3 – 4)
- **Extreme Hardships/Consequences** (Gal. 6:6 – 7)

When I came to myself:

- **Confession** – I admitted I was wrong and that God is right (I John 1:9)
- **Restoration** – God restored me and my joy (Psalm 40:1 – 3)

LUKE 15:20 – 24 (NKJV)

20 “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

4. Jesus' parables show us the heart of God. He is a kind, forgiving Father. How does this challenge or encourage your view of God? Does the Father in this parable come to mind?

Challenges

- When the hardships in life come my way.
- When my prayers either are not answered or take longer than I want
- When I have blown it big – time and think that I could/should never be forgiven.
- The evil and trouble in this world – and how everyone is affected.

Encouragements

- No matter what happens – good or bad my Father will take care of me
- My Father knows and wants the best for me.
- My Father is always there to forgive – even when I fail. He always will love me.
- My Father has everything under control.

5. Some people hold a view of God as stern, demanding or distant. Why do you think that is? Have ever viewed God this way?

- The relationship with our own fathers. Some of us have grown up with overbearing and demanding dads and that clouds our vision of the Lord.
- Sometimes it may be the way God was presented to us at church (fire and brimstone).
- Looking at the problems and difficulties we deal with and face in this world.

While we need to understand that God is Holy and Righteous – we also need to understand that He is a loving, kind and gracious Father – demonstrating that love through Jesus Christ.

6. In the video, Bart responds to his Dad, "God can forgive you, I can't" What do you think that response? Have you ever held that response toward someone who hurt you?

- While this is not the Christian/Biblical response, I can understand the feeling – especially when the hurt is real and deep.
- The truth is that forgiving as we are commanded is difficult (even impossible) but it can only be done through the grace of God (Matt. 6:9 – 15).
- One thing that can help us to forgive others is remember how much God has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).



LUKE 15:25 – 29 (NKJV)

25 “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

29 So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.

LUKE 15:30 – 32 (NKJV)

30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’

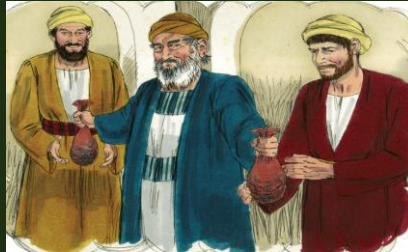
31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.

32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”

7. How Are Two Brothers Different? How Are They The Same? How Does The Father Show His Love And Acceptance To Both?

The Elder Son:

- Religious/pious – loyal to his father
- Unrepentant
- Working for his father is important
- Lost – Selfish
- No real, true love for his father



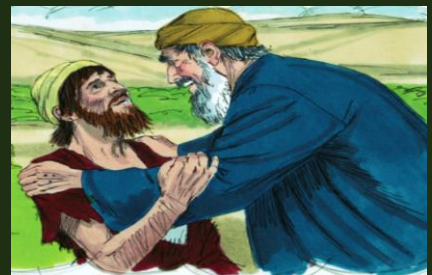
The Younger Son:

- Non-Religious disloyal to his father
- Working for his father was not important
- Lost – Selfish
- No real, true love for his father
- Repentant



The Father's Love & Acceptance:

- He gives both son's inheritance
- He sought both "lost" sons
- He sees both sons as family
- He loves and seeks the best for both
- He desires the sons to be brothers



8. Do You Identify More With The Younger Brother Or The Older Brother?

- I can definitely identify with making my own decisions and making a serious mess.
- Especially now – when seeking to serve and minister to this church – I am desperate to know Him.
- As I reflect on how the God the Father forgave me and gave me another chance.



- There have been times in my life when I have just like a Pharisee overly critical and judgmental.
- I too had a season where I was "angry" with God when things in life didn't go my way.
- When I first heard this parable, I sided with the elder brother – but I discovered he was just as lost as the younger brother.


9. What Does It Mean To You That God Celebrates When We Return To Him?

- It is so much better not to leave His side. Obedience not only brings blessings – but avoids unnecessary hardships.
- It is so great to know that forgiveness is always available when I willing to repent and return it will be to His open arms.
- As I reflect on the Love of God through Jesus and His Sacrifice for me - I want to know Him – Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God.



QUESTIONS

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*Father, thank you for this
message of God's forgiveness.
Let us truly believe and feel your
forgiving presence this week.
We love you and trust you.
Amen.*