



Small Group Guide Week 2 INTRO: Whether it's an impressive job, a social group, or a belief system, castles are everywhere. They may provide security, but they also keep other people out, including their vulnerabilities and needs, many of which aren't of their own choosing. The thing is, Jesus never calls you to build a castle for yourself. He calls you to build a kingdom for others. Castles are built with moats and judgment to keep people out, but God's Kingdom is built on grace through Jesus Christ.

1. How are we a castle building society? How do we decide who's in and who's out?

READ Luke 15:11–32:

1. The younger son has nothing and no one helps (verse 16). How does this lack of help contribute to the younger son's destitution?
2. Why does the father embrace his son before the son apologizes?
3. What does it mean to be "dead" and "alive" again? (verse 24)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the younger son. Is he someone you would want to invite into your inner circle?
2. Are you quicker to judge the younger son, empathize with him, or pity him? Why?
3. What aspects of your life are like a castle? Who sits outside the moat?
4. What would it look like to extend your community to those who are often on the outside?

OUTRO: In an individualistic society, our successes and failures are our own. We see the younger brother as a screw up who was offered grace, but often ignore the context of his situation. Other factors, like famine and a lack of community, played a part in his story. The father skips telling off his son and goes straight to a mighty embrace. Struggling people don't need judgment, they need a life-saving alternative. They need love. Choose the alternative. Open up your life to needy people—you're one of them!

PRAY TOGETHER: *Pray Psalm 8 and consider how God's mindfulness of you leads you to be mindful of others.*