

## Lost and Found

### Look

I may have a phobia about losing things--I often have dreams about losing something (like a jacket) then searching for it. In my dreams this is always disruptive—I have to leave what I was doing and return to hunt for the missing thing. Sometimes in my dream I find the missing item and continue on. But just losing something creates tension, conflict, and delay in my dream. It's especially stressful when the item I lost isn't mine.

In the real world I lose things too—usually not permanently. When I returned home from Vermont last fall I had lost my key ring--house key, car keys, and church keys. But they are probably back in my dresser drawer in Vermont. When Gloria and I lose track of something we have a running gag: “It's not lost, it's in the house”. And we often blamed the cat. But if it's important we usually find the missing item.

1. Have you ever lost something important? How did you find it?
2. Have you ever helped a friend find something?
3. We also talk about losing something that isn't an object--losing a friend, losing our way, losing our sanity, losing our faith. Have you ever lost something like this?
4. Have you ever been lost then found?

### Book/Took

Luke 15:3-7 (New International Version)

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Luke 15:8-10 (New International Version):

8 “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

1. Jesus' parables of redemption are quite black-and-white—something is lost and then found. Can we be partially lost? Found?
2. John Newton wrote the hymn Amazing Grace. In his early life he had a pattern of coming close to death, examining his relationship with God, then relapsing into bad behavior. When he wrote “I once was lost but now am found.”, what did he mean by “found”?
3. Do we go through cycles of lostness and foundness too?