



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 3: Worthy?

Suggested Week of Use: March 21, 2021

Core Passage: Luke 18:9-17

News Story Summary

Larry Epps grew up with an angry alcoholic father. Larry became involved in drugs, alcohol, etc. but because of an accident and a coworker who tirelessly shared Jesus with him, Larry accepted Christ. He served in the National Guard as a nurse which led him to get training to become a chaplain. As the door to being a military chaplain closed, another door opened. Today he serves as chaplain at the Perry Correctional Institution in Pelzer, SC which houses some of the states' most notorious inmates. What separates him is his ability to love the unlovable. When he is approached with hate, he gives back love, mercy, and grace. Many inmates have accepted Christ because of his actions. Chaplain Epps believes this work was what he was destined to do.

For more about this story, search “Larry Epps destined to prison ministry”.

Focus Attention

To replace the Begin idea under Focus Attention, share the story of Larry Epps returning hate for love and the impact it is having on inmates deemed unlovable. Emphasize the words love, mercy, and grace when sharing the story. Call for the group to suggest how Chaplain Epps's life story helps him demonstrate love, mercy, and grace to the inmates. Ask: *How does us recognizing our need for forgiveness help us understand other people's need for that same forgiveness?* Explain that in today's study, we will examine a parable about two men praying and how their perceived need for forgiveness impacted how they approached God. Complete the step using the Transition idea.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Pray idea under Summarize and Challenge, revisit the story of Larry Epps. Lead the group to discuss how Epps actions of love, mercy, and grace can be implemented in your community. Guide the group to identify specific ways the group can show worth to people considered unworthy by others. Lead the group to determine to show at least one person, considered unlovable, an unconditional display of love, mercy, and grace this week. Conclude in prayer.