OCTOBER 28, 2026 STUDY NOTES

What's Running You

Session 4: Misguided Goodness

KEY SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Luke 15:25–32

CENTRAL QUESTION

Am I doing what I do from love, or am I trying to secure an outcome that I believe my goodness should guarantee?

CENTRAL INSIGHT

Sometimes what is running my good behavior is an insecurity I have learned to make productive.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

You can do the right thing for reasons you have never examined.

- Sometimes we don't discover what has been driving our goodness until our goodness fails to get us what we expected.

1. Your resentment may reveal an agreement nobody knew you had made

- Sometimes we are angry with people for breaking a contract they never knew they signed.

Cognitive behavioral therapy examines the underlying rules and assumptions that shape our responses. These often take an "If I do this, then that should happen" form. Such rules become painful when we treat them as guarantees.

When approval becomes the goal, giving can become an attempt to secure the relationship.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- What have I been doing faithfully that I secretly believe should have guaranteed me a particular result?
- What am I afraid would happen if I stopped doing more than I honestly have the capacity to do?

2. Being overlooked can hurt without making somebody else's celebration wrong

An unmet need can become an unfair accusation when we refuse to name it honestly.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

You don't have to prosecute somebody else's worth to explain your own hurt.

3. Don't be crippled by comparison or need comparison to cancel someone else's worth compared to yours

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Who am I still describing by a version of them that gives me a reason to feel superior?
- What role am I afraid to release because I do not yet know who I am without it?

4. Understand the meaning of belonging over performing

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Belonging gives you permission to receive what performance keeps trying to deserve.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Am I responding to what this relationship requires, or am I still trying to correct what happened in the last one?

You cannot repair a past failure by placing your present self on permanent probation.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- "What happened in my past that left me believing I must always do more to keep my place?"
- "What responsibility genuinely belongs to me, or what loss am I still trying to prevent through overperformance?"

Closing Prayer

Lord, examine the part of me that everybody applauds. Show me where love has become bargaining, where service has become scorekeeping, and where responsibility has become my attempt to earn belonging. Teach me to ask honestly, serve freely, receive grace, and rejoice when grace reaches somebody else.

In Jesus' Name.
Amen.