



## Theme: The Gospel on Broadway “Lion King– You’re Not Too Far”

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### Weekly Memory Verse:

***20 “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still along way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.” – Luke 15***

### Monday, May 11 – Read 2 Timothy 1:3-7

At a key point in *The Lion King*, Simba’s watery reflection becomes the image of his father. Rafiki says, “You see? He lives in you.” That’s a very Biblical idea. The apostle Paul traced his faith to his ancestors (verse 3). Here he called his friend Timothy to live out his own legacy of faith from his mother and grandmother, and from Paul, his spiritual “father.”

- Your family may or may not have been Christians, but the church family’s roots go back nearly 2,000 years (with Hebrew roots even older). How does that history guide and shape you as a Christ follower? What positive things have you learned from mentors in the faith? How has even the brokenness in your mentors’ lives helped you see more fully the human condition and the need we all have for God’s grace?
- Throughout 2 Timothy, Paul taught Timothy about leading others. We’re called not only to take in the faith of our ancestors and mentors, but to be “spiritual ancestors” to others. In whose life (family, friends, work associates) can you invest by nurturing their faith?

**Prayer:** Dear heavenly Father, thank you for reminding us that we reflect you. May we remember this week to let who we represent the person you have created us to be. Amen.

## **Tuesday, May 12– Read Deuteronomy 6:4-12, 20-25**

When we are young, we often resist listening to and learning from parents or other “aged” guardians. But one of God’s central charges to Israelite parents (and to parents ever since), was “teach your children.” Faithful fathers and mothers patiently guide their children, just as Mufasa patiently (and, it sometimes seemed, pointlessly!) taught Simba in *The Lion King*.

- Verses 8-9 (“Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses”) are the basis for rituals Orthodox Jews follow to this day. What habits have you built that help you always keep God’s principles for life in focus? What is one spiritual practice you’ve wanted to try, but haven’t?
- Verses 10-12 warned Israel that they’d be tempted to forget about God when they were affluent and all was going well. Does this tend to be true for you, too? In a culture obsessed with “the economy,” how do you keep God central in your life?

**Prayer:** Father, we pray today that we are reminded that we are all called to be “teachers” in some way, to our peers, kids, students, friends and the people we encounter daily. Allow us to be patient in learning and teaching. May what we say and do help others learn about you. Amen.

## **Wednesday, May 13 – Read John 15:11-32**

Simba has left the pride and in the desert found new friends. He does his best to make the most of it but eventually Nala comes and reminds him who he is and what he has left behind. He knows that returning to the pride will be hard but he HAS to do it. There are always moments in our lives where we run from our past to be called into a new future. When we read this story of the son returning home we all have someone in the story we relate to.

- Who do you relate to? The son returning home? What are you coming home from? What are you looking ahead to?
- Do you relate to the father the most? In verse 32 he says, “we had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!” He knows that he son left with his money and went off on his own but the joy of seeing his son return home reminds us all that we should greet those lost with open arms.
- What about the brother who did not leave? He feels anger. Is there anger you are holding on to that you need to release and look around at all the joys you have? What are the joys you feel today?

**Prayer:** Father, we come to you as we are. We know that you accept us and want to pick us up when we are feeling like were at the bottom. If we are holding anger, we will give that to you today. We know that as our father, you will share in the burden of

our anger and hurt. You choose to celebrate the day we come home. Thank you for welcoming us home always. Amen.

#### **Thursday, May 14 – Read Luke 15:11-24**

Jesus told this story to “tax collectors and sinners,” people who had given up on God. They thought God had given up on them, and the “church people” they knew criticized Jesus for even talking to them (see Luke 15:1-2). But Jesus drew a picture of an eternal Father who is always waiting to joyously welcome home any wandering child.

- The phrase “burning your bridges behind you” came from generals who wanted their soldiers to see no chance of retreat if they lost a battle. Now it often stands for ruined relationships. Are you nearing God or far away? If far, what's blocking you from “going home”? Considering Jesus' story, can you picture God waiting with open arms for you?
- *The Lion King* includes amusing scenes in which Simba, in exile, learns to eat (but never quite enjoy) grubs with his new friends. In Jesus' story, the son ended up wishing for some of the hogs' food. When you're close to hitting bottom, inwardly hungry, how can God's gentle call on your life offer you fresh hope, new purpose and deep peace?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thank you for joyously welcoming us no matter our faults. This is love and grace we will never fully understand. May we take that love and mercy and remember to look ahead to you and the path you have laid before us. Amen.

#### **Friday, May 15– Read Matthew 7:7-12, Luke 11:9-13**

In *The Lion King*, Mufasa promised his son Simba that he would always be there. But he could not (at least in a physical, earthly sense) keep that pledge. Jesus taught that we can only fully learn the ultimate meaning of “father” from God. God's fatherly love, Jesus said, runs farther and deeper than the love of even the best human fathers can—and it WILL always be there.

- As we ponder Jesus' words, they trigger an awareness that we often define “good” differently than God does. Have you ever seen a child who strongly wants something (e.g. a fourth ice cream cone) that the child's father knows would not be good for the child? How does this shape your understanding of what Jesus promised us?
- Psalm 68:5 called God a “father to the fatherless,” and added that “God sets the lonely in families.” Was your human father a warm, close person for you, or a more distant, or even hurtful, figure? In what ways does Jesus' image of God as an ever-present, fully reliable father speak to your heart? How have you experienced God's fatherly love?

**Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, we come to you today and remember that you are the only one who is with us always. Bring us closer to you and remind us that we always have a father in heaven. No matter how alone we feel, there may be a reminder of your presence in our lives. Amen.

**Saturday, May 16 – Read John 14:1-3, Revelation 21:1-5**

*The Lion King* offers us a vivid parable of our tired, sin-sick earth. Under Scar's selfish, evil rule, hope seems nearly gone—the herds have moved on, the rains won't come, and the land languishes, dry and ever more lifeless. But hope is not gone, because the true king returns! Hope was what Jesus held out to his disciples the night before he went to the cross. He is the hope whose light has marked the way for Christians through the centuries. Natural disaster, illness, human evil—none of these can extinguish our hope. The King will return!

- Every day, people face illnesses and injuries that seem designed to extinguish hope. Do you have hope? In whom do you place your confidence—when natural disasters and illness strike, when the economy goes south or when the world scene is chaotic? Do you have confidence that Jesus meant it when he promised to prepare a place for us, and to come again to get us so that we can be with him throughout eternity? Do you have hope?

**Prayer:** Lord, today we want to hold on to the hope and promise of you. You are the hope that our foundations must be built on. Allow us to be closer to that hope of eternal life with you every day. You have made us to love us and we love you! Amen.