Found only in the gospel according to Luke, Jesus tells a story of a woman who has lost a valuable coin. Without even waiting for daylight, she lights her lamp and begins sweeping the floor of the house for her lost possession. Finally, she finds it and invites all her friends and neighbors to come rejoice with her that she has found what was lost.

**Setting:**

This story is told between two other parables. The first is the *Parable of the Lost Sheep*, in which one sheep within 100 goes missing. The shepherd then leaves all ninety-nine of the sheep to go looking for the one. The second story is the *Parable of the Lost Son*. In this, one son leaves his father and squanders all of his father’s money, while the other son stays at home and does the work expected of him. The first son returns home expecting to be rejected, but is warmly accepted back by his father, while the son at home is furious that he has not been recognized for his work. And in between both of these, a small story is squeezed in about a woman and her lost coin. Each of the stories tells about something that is lost and when it is found, there is a great celebration.

Jesus tells these three parables in response to a statement of the Pharisees exclaiming, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them” (Holy Bible, Luke 15:7-10). Their statement was directed at the fact that a man who is supposedly holy and divine was associating himself with sinners. Because the Pharisees could not understand why he would willingly do such a thing, Christ tells these three parables to show the value of a sinner being saved.
Exegetical Analysis:

What does the coin represent? The woman’s search for her lost coin is the equivalent of God’s search for his lost children, or sinners. Another way to understand more about the lost is to see that what is lost is really just out of place. It is natural that “Sheep belong with the flock, coins belong on the chain, and lost sinners belong in fellowship with God” (Wiersbe). To be lost is to be where one does not belong. Humans are designed to be in a relationship with God and so those who are not are the lost.

In modern times, the value of a coin is so little. Nearly everyday, a penny can be found on the pavement and no one will even both to pick it up. It’s hardly worth the effort. But, during the times of this story, the value of such a coin was very great. The woman has lost a drachma, which is equal to a day’s wage (Parable of the Lost Coin, 195). Not only was this coin worth a fair amount of money, it is also considered to be a part of her dowry consisting of 10 silver coins, which is worn as a headband or necklace (Wiersbe). Losing a piece of this would be the equivalent of losing a wedding ring in today’s culture. It should be noted that this coin is so valuable that she doesn’t waste a moment looking for it. She uses up the expensive oils for her lamp in order to begin the search immediately. Those listening to Jesus at the time would have understood these examples of value, thus it would have been clear to them that “the sinners with whom He was associating were extremely valuable to God” (Walvoord).

Message:

What is interesting about this story, unlike its two surrounding stories, is that the coin was lost because of someone else’s carelessness. Perhaps Christ is trying to show the
Pharisees that they are not doing an adequate job of helping others come to know God. Perhaps they are even hindering them. This passage not only demonstrates God’s search for the lost, but equally demonstrates a Christian’s responsibility to the lost. It should be a Christian’s goal to spend time with sinners and to bring them into a relationship with the Lord. And when a sinner enters that relationship, it should be the greatest celebration of all. When the woman found her lost coin, she invited all her friends and family to come and celebrate with her. She does not simply let out a sigh of relief, she throws a party.

It is written, “In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents” (Holy Bible, Luke 15: 10). Each human is equally valuable to God, whether it is the believer who does everything asked, or the sinner who has not yet been found.

**Application:**

Often times, Christians are the ones who turn others away from Christianity. By acting hypocritical, uncaring, unloving, or even simply ignorant, Christians can easily set a bad example for non-believers. Even today it is a Christian’s responsibility to seek repentance for sinners. It is so easy for Christian students to leave their faith at home when they go to school each morning. When they are at school they view themselves simply as students. At school is often the greatest opportunity for a person to share their faith with others. It is when one is most often surrounded by sinners. Why not use opportunities like these to bring someone into a relationship with God? By words, faith, and even actions, Christians have the ability to bring others towards or away from God.
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Form

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Grade: A—