Luke 15:4-7 (NKJV)

4 If you had one hundred sheep, and one of them strayed away and was lost in the wilderness, wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine others to go and search for the lost one until you found it? 5 And then you would joyfully carry it home on your shoulders. 6 When you arrived, you would call together your friends and neighbors to rejoice with you because your lost sheep was found. 7 In the same way, heaven will be happier over one lost sinner who returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

a: Verse 4: The Shepherd seeks His sheep.

1. A compassionate search
   Just one sheep was missing, yet the Shepherd still went.

2. A costly search
   For the Shepherd, the search was dangerous and death was a possibility.

3. A consistent search
   The shepherd did not stop until his mission had been completed and the sheep had been found.

b: Verse 5: The Shepherd secures His Sheep.

1. He secures them by His strength
   The sheep is not responsible for getting itself home. After it is saved, it finds itself resting upon the strong shoulders of the shepherd!

2. He secures them by His stamina
   He had sufficient stamina to finish what he had started. His strength never wavers! Our arrival in Heaven does not depend upon you and me, but upon Him.

c: Verse 6-7: The reason for rejoicing.

Sheep are saved from:

1. Disuse – as long as it was lost, it was of no benefit to the shepherd.

2. Danger – it could never have defended itself or rescued itself.

3. Death – if the shepherd had not come looking for the sheep, it would have most certainly died out there in the wilderness.

d: Why would a sheep say no to being rescued?

- He liked running around outside the sheep flock. But night is coming and he won't like it anymore when a wolf finds him.

- He thinks he can find his own way back. That sheep can’t find the flock, or else he wouldn’t have been lost in the first place.
• He thinks he’s been a bad sheep for wandering off and doesn’t deserve to go back. *If the shepherd thought he was too bad to take back, why would he have gone out after him? He wants the sheep back, because he still loves him.*

• He’s not sure what to expect when he’s back with the other sheep. *He has nothing to be afraid of. The other sheep will be glad to see him, and he’ll be a lot better off than he is now.*