



NOW IS THE TIME: LUKE DISCUSSION GUIDE

To accompany *Now Is the Time: Luke*
25 day reading plan

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

About Luke

The book of Luke is the first of the writer's two-part volume, Luke-Acts, which was written to give a careful account of the events that happened during the life of Jesus. Luke uses the accounts of several eyewitnesses to introduce his readers to Jesus' life and ministry. Luke tells of Jesus' encounter with people who were very much like us as they struggled to determine what their purpose was. They were deeply concerned about their families, their communities, and their nation.

Jesus shows up and offers love and compassion to both Jew and Gentile, no matter what their social or economic status. Who was this remarkable rabbi who taught about God's kingdom and offered his audience salvation? Luke reveals how Jesus gave them a radical new gospel, taught them to love sacrificially, to forgive unconditionally, and to serve and worship God from a heart free of selfish motives.

Getting to the core

One of the central themes of Luke is the role of Jesus as Saviour to all humankind. Luke also reveals Jesus' great compassion for those who are downtrodden, disenfranchised, and poor. In his inaugural sermon, Jesus proclaims, among other things, that he is the one whom God has chosen "to tell the good news to the poor... to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers" (Luke 4:18). Each of us "suffers" in some form.

As you discuss various themes in the life and ministry of Jesus, study them with an introspective eye. Recognise that it is for you Jesus came, lived, and died. Recognise too, that Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and imminent return is about establishing a relationship with you and through you to others. How will you personally respond to Jesus' gift of salvation and then live out his example of compassion to the world around you?

Live it out!

The accounts in Luke will become alive in you when you are willing to live out this radical gospel in such a way that causes people to take notice. Each week, for a period of five weeks, discussion points, questions, and activities will challenge you to not only recall what you've read, but also to look beyond the text for opportunities to incorporate what you have learned in your day-to-day encounter with others. All Scripture texts are taken from the Contemporary English Version (CEV), an easy-to-understand translation that makes the Scripture come alive for all ages. A weekly affirmation called "Live It Out!" taken from Scripture, will encourage you to put learning into practice.

Memorise It!

Participants will also be introduced to weekly Memory Verses. These Memory Verses provide a point of reference to the text and allow the Word of God to be etched in your mind and heart for lifelong benefit.

This Discussion Guide is designed to enrich your journey through the book of Luke. We pray that God will transform your life and empower you to live out the radical gospel of Jesus everywhere, every day! Now is the time!

WEEK 1: LUKE CHAPTERS 1-5

Discussion

1. The angel Gabriel appeared to two very different people to announce the coming of two very special babies. What was the main difference in the ways Zechariah and Mary responded to the message they received? What was the result? (Luke 1:18-20, 1:34, 38) What is your response to “impossible” situations?
2. There are many who agree that the birth of Jesus was the most important event in history, even among those who don’t profess a personal relationship with him. Why?
3. How do you understand the words of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 as they relate to your own sense of mission? (Luke 4:18-19)
4. Why didn’t Jesus receive a hometown hero’s welcome in Nazareth, even to the point of his peers wanting to throw him off a cliff? Have you ever experienced ostracism among your friends and family because of your faith? (Luke 4:22-24, 28-30)
5. What did Jesus mean by saying, “No one pours new wine into old wineskins?” What part of the religious order of that day did Jesus’ actions challenge? (Luke 5:21-24, 30-32, 33-39)

LIVE IT OUT!

“If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn’t have any. If you have food, share it with someone else.” Luke 3:11

Prayerfully consider how you can help someone you know in need. Whether through helping to pay a bill, offering free babysitting, or taking them out to lunch – step out in faith and help someone from the abundance God has given you.

Memory verse

“The Lord’s Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind and to free everyone who suffers, and to say, ‘This is the year the Lord has chosen.’” Luke 4:18-19

WEEK 2: LUKE CHAPTERS 6-10

Discussion

1. Jesus’ teaching challenges the thinking of the “natural” person, that is, one who is living without the help of the Holy Spirit. Which of Jesus’ teachings in Chapter 6 is most difficult for you? (Luke 6:20-45)
2. Jesus taught that we should not only listen to his teachings but also obey them. Compare what Jesus says in Luke 6:46-49 to what his half brother James says in James 1:22-25.
3. Jesus tells the parable of the sower in Luke 8:4-8, and then interprets it in Luke 8:9-15. How are our hearts like those four different conditions Jesus describes in receiving the word of God? What condition do you most identify with?
4. What does Jesus mean by “take up your cross every day”? (Luke 9:23) Why did he use the metaphor of a cross? What is the most difficult cross you bear daily in order to follow Jesus?
5. How are the stories of Jesus calming a storm (Luke 8:22-25), performing healing miracles (Luke 7:2-10), and raising people from death (Luke 7:12-15) connected to the apostle Paul’s declaration in Colossians 1:16-17? How does that give you hope in today’s world?

LIVE IT OUT!

“If you give to others, you will be given a full amount in return. It will be packed down, shaken together, and spilling over into your lap. The way you treat others is the way you will be treated.” Luke 6:38

If you do not do so already, consider volunteering and giving of your time. Research an organisation that fits your skill set and inquire about getting involved.

Memory verse

“If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross every day and follow me.” Luke 9:23

WEEK 3: LUKE CHAPTERS 11-15

Discussion

1. What does Jesus teach us about prayer in Luke 11:5-13? Even though God knows our hearts and our needs, why is it still important that we ask, search and knock?
2. Jesus' remedy for worry and anxiety seems uncomplicated. Simple, but not easy. Why is it so difficult for us? What assurance do you find in Luke 12:32? (Luke 12:22-32)
3. Jesus is called the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), and yet in Luke 12:51 he says he came to cause division. What do you think he means by that? Read John 14:27 and John 16:33. How do you understand Jesus' words in both books?
4. Jesus uses examples of a mustard seed and some bread yeast to describe something about the kingdom of God. What is he teaching? What impact does this have on your role in God's kingdom? (Luke 13:18-21)
5. What can you learn about God in the story of the Prodigal Son? The word "prodigal" means "one who wastes." How does that describe each of us with regard to our spiritual inheritance? (Luke 15:11-32)

LIVE IT OUT!

"But put God's work first, and these things will be yours as well." Luke 12:31

Encourage a friend to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus in a trying time.

Memory verse

"Ask and you will receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks." Luke 11:9-10

WEEK 4: LUKE CHAPTERS 16-20

Discussion

1. Jesus has some strong things to say in chapter 16 about faithfulness, honesty and the love of money, and draws a distinction between "wicked wealth" and "true wealth." How can you apply these concepts to your life in the kingdom of God? (Luke 16:10-13)
2. What is the significance of Jesus instructing ten lepers to go to the priests to show that they had been healed when the actual healing didn't occur until they were on their way? What does this tell you about faith? (Luke 17:11-14)
3. What is Jesus saying about prayer in the parable of the persistent widow in chapter 18? Why is it so easy to give up when we don't see an answer to prayer right away? What does our giving up quickly have to do with our current culture? (Luke 18:1-8)
4. Jesus foretells his death to his disciples multiple times before he makes his final journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:22, 9:44, and 18:31-33). He even told a parable to the crowd in Luke 20:9-16 that indicated his coming death. Why do you think it was so difficult for the disciples and others to understand what was going to happen?
5. The tension between the religious authorities and Jesus is building in these chapters. Why did they use a question about paying taxes to build their case against him? What does Jesus' answer to them teach us about our civic responsibility?

LIVE IT OUT!

"If you had faith no bigger than a tiny mustard seed, you could tell this mulberry tree to pull itself up, roots and all, and to plant itself in the ocean. And it would!" Luke 17:6

Find a trusted friend and pray together to have the Lord reveal places in your lives where you may be lacking faith. Pray about those situations with each other.

Memory verse

"You are always making yourselves look good, but God sees what is in your heart. The things that most people think are important are worthless as far as God is concerned." Luke 16:15

WEEK 5: LUKE CHAPTERS 21-24

Discussion

1. When Jesus commented on the widow's offering, he was referring to intentions of the heart rather than financial abundance and poverty. How might his comment in Luke 21:4 be applied to other aspects of life (personality, talent, hospitality, etc.) and our contribution to the kingdom of God?
2. As Jesus was eating the Passover meal with his disciples, he makes some theological statements (Luke 22:19-20) that have become the basis for what Christians today refer to as the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, or the Sacrament of the Mass. Why, then, did the conversation move so quickly to a dispute about who among them was the greatest? What did Jesus teach about servant leadership?
3. Why do you think the women who encountered the angels at the tomb remembered the words of Jesus in foretelling his death and resurrection, but the apostles they told still didn't believe or understand their words? (Luke 24:1-11)
4. The scene of Jesus appearing suddenly among his disciples, inviting them to touch his body and look at his hands and feet to assure them of his identity, and then asking for something to eat is one of the most stunning in all of Scripture. How would you have responded to this event? What part of it would be the most startling? How quickly would you be able to move from shock to joy? (Luke 24:36-43)
5. How is Jesus' reference to "the one my Father has promised" connected to his words about the disciples receiving "power from heaven?" (Luke 24:49) How did they spend their time while they waited for God's promise? (See Luke 24:53) Why do they need this power to fulfil the responsibility he gave them to tell the good news to all nations? What can we learn from this?

LIVE IT OUT!

"They also say that all people of every nation must be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven. So beginning in Jerusalem, you must tell everything that has happened." Luke 24:47-48

Pray that the Lord would give you opportunities to share what he has done or is doing in your life.

Memory verse

"[Jesus] told them, 'The Scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer, then three days later he will rise from death. They also say that all people of every nation must be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven.'" Luke 24:46-47

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