



The Gospel of Luke Core Group Study

This is a 10-week study on the Gospel of Luke. Most likely written by the physician Luke (also the author of the book of Acts), the Gospel of Luke serves to give us a clearer glimpse of who Jesus actually was and the nature of God's work through Him to rescue humanity. Our goal for this study is to give you a starting point for bible studies centered on the Gospel of Luke.

The following studies are not all-encompassing since Luke has 24 chapters, and this is only a 10-week study. We have chosen selected passages to study and apply. It is merely a jumping off point for you and your co-leader(s). We strongly encourage you to tailor this for your specific core group.

The Gospel of Luke will challenge you to see Jesus in ways you've never seen Him, and will hopefully change you and your core group's lives forever.

Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, and that looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. Through Luke's description of Christ, we are able to see who Jesus was and is, and how we are to follow Him. This study will be broken down into three parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Contents

Birth and Preparation of Jesus:

Week One: Luke Intro, 2:1-20

Week Two: Luke 3:21-4:15

Jesus' Message and Ministry:

Week Three: Luke 4:16-30

Week Four: Luke 5:1-11

Week Five: Luke 8:1-15

Week Six: Luke 9:18-27

Week Seven: Luke 22:1-38

Jesus' Death and Resurrection:

Week Eight: Luke 22:39-53

Week Nine: Luke 22:66-23:49

Week Ten: Luke 24:1-12, 36-49





Week One: Introduction & Luke 2:1-20

Opening Question

What comes to mind when you think of the Christmas Story, i.e. the birth of Christ?

Body of the Study

(A general overview of Luke will need to be given during this week. We have provided you with the basic historical context (below), but additional information can be found using a good study bible or bible dictionary/encyclopedia)

Historical Context of Luke:

- Neither the Gospel of Luke nor the Book of Acts give the name of its author, but tradition and many Church Fathers attribute authorship to Luke, the physician.
- The main reason the author is writing is because the message of Jesus had spread to places beyond where Jesus had actually visited. While the spreading of the message was good, there was also a strong chance that the message could become muddled and confused. The author intends to set the original record straight.
- The author (to whom we will refer to as Luke) is writing to Theophilus, who may have been an official or a socially prominent figure. Another interpretation is that Theophilus is a literary device, since the name means “lover of God” in Greek.
- This Gospel was probably written around 60 A.D.

Your Explanation:

The Gospel of Luke is Luke’s attempt to set the record straight on the happenings surrounding Jesus. According to Chapter 1:1-4, Luke’s goal was to write an “orderly account” of what had taken place, so that no one would be led astray. Apparently, Luke felt the message was so vital that it must be protected and written down.

As we read on in Chapter 2, take time to think about the birth of Jesus. Even though many of us have heard it many times, it is essential that we understand that the birth of Christ was an event that all history had been leading to. All of the Old Testament points to a time when a King will be born and He will be righteous and have salvation (Zech 9:9-10). Christ’s birth is the beginning of a new era.

Text Questions

Please add or alter any text questions to fit the needs of your group.

1. What are some of the first things you notice in the passages we’ve just read?



2. Mary comes from poor agrarian roots. Galilee was not a respectable region. Yet, God chose for Jesus to come from these backgrounds. Why would God choose Mary and this setting to be Jesus' beginning?
3. Of all the places that angels could have visited, why do you think God sent them to the shepherds?

Application Questions

1. What kind of lessons can we gain from this passage?
2. Mary demonstrated an immense amount of faith and obedience. What can you learn from her?
3. The selection of Mary and the birth of Jesus illustrates that God often has big plans for the "least likely". Is this surprising to you? What does this tell you about the character of God?

Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise

The birth of Jesus changed all of our lives forever. What if God had not sent His Son to be born as a human? Take a few moments to silently meditate on this passage, and then write/pray a prayer of response to this unbelievable gift.

Memory Verses

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he Christ the Lord.'"

Luke 2:10-11





Week Two: Luke 3:21-4:15

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, and that looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. Through Luke's description of Christ, we are able to see who Jesus was and is, and how we are to follow Him. This study will be broken down into three parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

Last week we discussed the birth of Jesus. This week we're going to fast forward a few years to the baptism of Jesus. While we didn't read the beginning of Chapter 3 about John the Baptist, you should know that John has been preparing the way for Jesus for some time. John preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (3:3). He also declared that one would come who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire (3:16). Jesus would be that person.

As we read about Jesus' baptism, we see the relationship between Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. The Father's approval of Jesus demonstrated Jesus' authenticity and authority. The descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove is a kind of anointing in this situation. In other texts (Gen 1:2, 8:8-12), the dove has been associated with the presence and grace of God.

After Jesus' baptism, he is led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted. This will lead to the beginning of his public ministry.

Text Question:

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group).

1. Why is Jesus being baptized at the same time as all of the other people?
2. Why does Luke include a genealogy in the text?
3. Summarize Jesus' temptations. How can His temptation be described? Why does Satan tempt Jesus in these specific ways?
4. What does Jesus' responses to Satan's temptations reveal about Him?

Application Questions

1. Are there any specific temptations you're being faced with now?
2. How are we to respond to temptations?
3. Has God ever provided for you in the midst of temptation? How?
4. In light of this passage, how then are we to live our daily lives?



Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise

How we react when faced with temptation can say a lot about us. If you are a Christian, you too can face temptation the way Jesus did. Read Colossians 3:5-10 out loud, and write down the things that you want Christ to put to death. Then pray for those things with a friend in the group.

Memory Verses

"When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'"
Luke 3:21-22





Week Three: Luke 4:16-30

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

Last week we read about Jesus' baptism and temptations in the desert. At the end of the passages, we see Jesus emerge with the full authority and approval of God the Father, as well as the power of the Holy Spirit. After such spectacular events, people have begun to ask, "Who is this Jesus?" Jesus begins to answer that in our passage today.

Jesus openly quotes Isaiah 61:1, 2 and declares that he is the person the text refers to. All are amazed until he begins comparing their world to the period of Elijah and Elisha. So why do they get so mad? Well, according to theologian, NT Wright:

"By way of defense and explanation for the line he had been taking, Jesus points out what happened in the days of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha, and in doing so identifies himself with the prophets. Elijah was sent to help a widow - but not a Jewish one. Elisha healed one solitary leper - and the leper was commander of the enemy army. That's what did it. That's what drove them to fury. Israel's God was rescuing the wrong people... His hearers were, after all, waiting for God to liberate Israel from pagan enemies... Instead, Jesus is pointing out that when the great prophets were active, it wasn't Israel who benefited, but only the pagans."

- NT Wright, *Luke for Everyone*

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group).

1. Who is Jesus claiming to be?
2. What will the Messiah (Jesus) bring to the world? How?
3. Jesus deliberately reminded the audience of Israel's past. What did He want them and us to understand about God and His Kingdom?
4. Why do you think the audience was amazed and then angered?

Application Questions

1. What does Jesus' proclamation of His mission mean for you?



2. Sometimes God desires things that seem to be contrary to our expectations (as He did with the Nazarenes here). Has God put anything on your heart that has been surprising to you?
3. How do you respond when God or His Word challenge your own plans for your life? For how you think the world should work?

Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise:

How can you partner with Jesus to carry on His mission? Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,"(4:18-19).

- Who are the poor around you?
- How can you proclaim freedom?
- How can you pray for others around you?

Think about these questions in Core Group and discuss.

Memory Verse:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Jesus speaking)
Luke 4:18-19





Week Four: Luke 5:1-11

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

Last week we learned about Jesus reading a section of Isaiah in his local synagogue with the goal of announcing that the Lord's salvation and favor was fulfilled in him. Then, perhaps even more incredible than this (to his Jewish hearers), he tells them that, just as God ministered to the unexpected in the past, he would again be reaching out to those beyond Israel - namely, Gentiles. This infuriated his hearers, and he left his hometown to begin his ministry.

In this passage, Jesus issues His first call to his soon-to-be disciples. The crowds are pressing in around Jesus because of his growing fame, and goes out into a boat. There He performs a great miracle and illustrates even greater spiritual truths to those around Him. Again, He sets Himself apart from the traditional expectations of what a Messiah should be.

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group)!

1. Under what circumstances does Jesus first meet His disciples (Simon, James, and John)?
2. How did Peter respond? Why did he respond that way?
3. What do you think was Jesus' intention or motive behind the miraculous catch?
4. What was Jesus' response to them?
5. What made these three fishermen follow Jesus?
6. Why do you think Jesus chose them?

Application Questions

1. What would have been your response to this situation (specifically for Jesus getting on your boat, the catch, etc.)?
2. What could this look like today?
3. How are we to be "fishers of people"? Or are we?
4. How did Jesus call you?

Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise



It's important to be reminded of how/when God first called you when we are thinking about sharing our hope with others. Take a few minutes to remember how He first called you to Himself. Everyday this week, take a moment to reflect on that, and then take 10 minutes to pray that God would make you a fisher of people. Pray to be used to introduce Christ to people all around you.

Memory Verse:

"For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be fishing for people.'"

Luke 5:9-10





Week Five: Luke 8:1-15

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

Jesus is now traveling with His 12 disciples, in addition to other followers (females included!). Naturally, Jesus continues to draw a crowd with His miracles and Good News.

In this passage, Jesus tells a parable to the crowds and His disciples. As Jesus travels more and more, people's receptions fall into different categories. He addresses this in the "Parable of the Sower". According to the passage, His message of reconciliation falls on different "soils" (i.e. hearts). Depending on the condition of the person's heart, the message either grows or dies. The same is true with us. The condition of our hearts determines whether we will hear God's voice and grow closer to Him, or not. His audience at this time would have perfectly understood His agricultural illustrations. It will be important to relay the same intended message to your core group.

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group)!

1. What are the four types of soil?
2. What is this parable about?
3. Why would Jesus relay this message in the form of a parable?
4. What does verse 15 mean?

Application Questions

1. What's your first response to this passage?
2. Which of these soils do you most see in yourself? Why?
3. What kind of crop are you producing?
4. How can you be more fruitful?
5. What can we do to sow the Word more successfully in others' lives?

Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise



Have core group members pray for each other in reference to Application Questions 3, 4, and 5. If time, have the group pair off (or gather in 2s and 3s) to brainstorm ideas for more fruitfulness in our lives and then pray.

Memory Verse

“As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.”

Luke 8:15





Week Six: Luke 9:18-27

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

Last week we talked about the importance of the condition of our hearts. If our hearts are not open, seeking, and submitted, we may miss out on the ways that God is moving.

This week we see a major turning point in Jesus' ministry and the disciples' lives. Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, finally understands, and confesses Jesus as the Messiah that they've been waiting for. He sees Jesus as the Promised One, but Jesus is quick to point out that His reign will look much different than they expect. He predicts that He will suffer, be rejected, killed, and resurrected. You can imagine Peter's reaction!

Despite Peter's lack of full understanding, his confession is monumental. He recognizes Jesus' messiahship, and it is on this confession and declaration that Jesus says that he "will build [His] church"(Matthew 16:18).

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group)!

1. Why does Jesus ask Peter the question in verse 18 and then in verse 20?
2. What does Peter's reply mean in verse 20?
3. Why would Jesus warn them not to tell anyone?
4. Why would He respond like He does in vs. 22?
5. What does Jesus' mission mean for His disciples? (vs. 23-27)

Application Questions

1. What is one of the toughest things about being a Christian to you? (adapt if members are not Christian).
2. What does it look like for you to deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Jesus?
3. Name one way that you might be tempted to "forfeit" yourself or be "ashamed of Him".
4. How can we encourage and spur one another on?



Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise

We all hear about “taking up our crosses”, but we often overlook the implications and difficulties of doing so. Take a few minutes to talk as a Core Group of what that might specifically look like on campus. Are there ways that you all can help each other?

After this exercise, take some time to pray and worship! Thank God for each other and the fact that He never leaves us in tough situations. He always gives us the strength to follow Him.

Memory Verses

“Then he said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.’”

Luke 9:23-24





Week Seven: Luke 22:7-38

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

A lot has happened since we last picked up in Chapter 9. Because this is only a 10-week study, we've had to choose our passages carefully. Encourage your core group members to take the time to continue Luke and read through Chapters 9-22.

In the passage we see that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is here. This was a time when Jews would remember the Passover to commemorate the Exodus period in which the Jews were delivered from Egypt. At Passover, the Jews would celebrate together with an extended and elaborate meal. That is where we find Jesus and His disciples in 22:7. There, Jesus makes a prophetic proclamation that He will suffer, but in His suffering there will be a new covenant. He then goes on to have some very personal conversations with His disciples. These moments with them demonstrate His love and care for them.

This passage is one of the most important passages in Luke's gospel. It is where we get our instructions for Communion, a glimpse of Jesus' heart for us, and a whole new set of rules. The new rules for the Kingdom of God would shake things up. It would place the servant over the served, bring a whole new expectation for what the Messiah would do, and much more.

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group)!

1. What is the New Covenant Jesus is talking about?
2. Why would Jesus use food to symbolize His body and blood?
3. Can you think of other areas of the Bible where food has been symbolic? (ex. manna from heaven, "man shall not live on bread alone" (Matthew 4:4), living water, etc.)
4. What does God's Kingdom look like?
5. What does Jesus predict about Peter (34, 32)? Why do you think He told Peter?

Application Questions

1. How would you have reacted if you were sitting at the table listening to Jesus?
2. Jesus prayed and interceded for Peter. Do you think Jesus would do that for us? (See Hebrews 7:23-25)



Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise

Often it's difficult to see the humanity AND deity of Christ. But we must understand that He was 100% human and 100% God. The Last Supper shows both of His natures. Take a few moments to name ways that this passage describes both natures of Christ. Reflect on why it was essential that Christ be both fully human and fully God. Then finish your core group by thanking Him for those attributes.

Memory Verses

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'"

Luke 22:19-20





Week Eight: Luke 22:39-53

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

This passage further details Jesus' journey to the cross. However, this passage shows us how difficult the journey would be. Jesus turns His attention away from His disciples to His Father on the Mount of Olives in verse 39.

He draws away from the crowds to have a personal moment with the Father. His humanity can be seen as He pleads for His Father to take the cup if He will. In His prayer, we see His dedication to His mission and love for the Father and us. Christ's pain was so great that His sweat was like blood.

We also see that the disciples are very similar to us. Jesus urged them to pray but they fell asleep instead. Sometimes God can be so close to us, but we fail to obey.

Thankfully, Jesus was committed to the Father's will, and nothing could deter Him.

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group)!

1. Why does Jesus tell the disciples to pray, even though He knows they are exhausted?
2. Why does Jesus take the time to pray?
3. What does Jesus pray?
4. What was Jesus experiencing during this time?
5. How does God strengthen Him?
6. Why do you think this passage is included in Scripture?
7. What do you think is meant by the words "this cup" in Jesus' prayer?

Application Questions

1. Do you see any similarities between yourself and the disciples?
2. What does this teach you about prayer in relation to temptation?
3. What does this teach you about Jesus?



Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise

This week, encourage the group to spend some time alone with God. Commit to a certain time every day, and see what God does. Keep each other accountable.

Memory Verses

“He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’”

Luke 22:42





Week Nine: Luke 22:66-23:49

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

This passage is one of the most heart-breaking yet powerful passages in Scripture. Jesus has finally reached the pinnacle of His journey, the Cross. He has known all along what He was destined to do, and must face death and agony for the sake of love.

Beginning in Chapter 22 and going through Chapter 23, Jesus faces His harshest critics, the ones for which He is willing to die for. Yet instead of fighting back, He prays "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," (23:34).

An old song called the "The Wonderful Cross" sums up the beauty and sorrow of Jesus dying on the Cross. It says,

*"See from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown*

*Oh the wonderful cross
Bids me come and die and find
that I may truly live"*

While those of us who have a relationship with Jesus cannot hardly bear or understand the power of the Cross or why Christ died for us, it was vital for Him to do so to save us. Praise God for His generosity and love!

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group)!

1. Why do you think Jesus answered Pilate's questions as He did? Why would He not answer Herod's questions?
2. Why did Pilate send Him to Herod?
3. How did Jesus respond as He was being crucified?
4. Why did Jesus tell the one criminal that He'd see him in Paradise?



5. What were Jesus' last words before He died? Why do you think that is?

Application Questions

1. What is your first response to this passage?
2. How do you think you would have responded during the crucifixion?
3. How do you think the disciples felt? How would you have felt as one of His disciples?

Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise

The most appropriate response to this week's reading is praise! Take time to worship and praise God for His awesome gift to us. Spend time in worship- whether that be with song (singing or listening), prayer, whatever! Just praise Jesus!

Memory Verses:

"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"
Luke 23:34

"Then Jesus, calling out in a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this he breathed his last."
Luke 23:46





Week Ten: Luke 24:1-12, 36-49

Reminder of the Objective

The Gospel of Luke is intended to give its readers a thorough look at what it was that Jesus came to accomplish. He came to accomplish God's plan for the world, which looked very different from what His disciples and followers thought. This study will be broken down into 3 parts: the birth and preparation of Jesus, his message and ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Body of this Week's Study

This is the final week of our study. While there are many other valuable scriptures in Luke, we've chosen to look only at the last 10 weeks' worth. This week's passage is vital to the Gospel, however. Had Jesus not risen from the dead, He would never have had victory over death, shown Himself as God, and freed us.

We skipped reading the account of Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus for time's sake. But if you have time, read it. It is His first encounter with the disciples after his death.

The way that Luke closes the Gospel hints at another "promise of the Father" that will come to them soon. We find out who that is at the beginning of Acts. All in all, Jesus stayed with them for some 40 days before ascending to the Father. Right before He parted with them, He blessed them. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit came to counsel and comfort us soon after.

Text Questions

Please write your own text questions (in order to shape them according to the needs of your specific group)!

1. Who first went to the tomb?
2. What did they find?
3. Why did the disciples not believe the women's accounts?
4. Why did Jesus want the disciples to see His hands and His feet?
5. What was the "promise of my Father upon you" that Jesus said He'd send? (vs. 24:49)

Application Questions

1. How would you have reacted? Would you have needed "proof" of Jesus' resurrection, or would you have believed the verbal accounts?
2. What does His resurrection mean for us?
3. What do we have to look forward to in light of Jesus' resurrection?

Creative Implementation for the Week/Spiritual Exercise



What ways have you changed after completing this 10-week study? Discuss as a group or in pairs.

Memory Verses

“Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.’”

Luke 24:44-47

