



LUKE

THE GOSPEL FOR BUSINESS

Study Guide

YOUNG BUSINESS LEADERS

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You may contact Young Business Leaders
at the following locations:

BIRMINGHAM OFFICE

Phone: (205) 776-5450

Email: rsvp@ybl.org

Address: 2310 Briarwood Trace, Birmingham, AL 35243

HUNTSVILLE OFFICE

Phone: (256) 882-6003

Email: bob@yblhsv.org

Address: 1111 Gleneagles Drive, Suite D, Huntsville, AL 35801

JACKSON OFFICE

Phone: (601) 957-6860

Email: jay@ybljackson.org

Address: Highland Village 4500, I-55 North Suite 232, Jackson, MS 39211

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LUKE – THE GOSPEL FOR BUSINESS

How to use this book: The goal of this workbook is to help you have greater success in your personal study and application of the Bible. During the week, you should read through the lesson questions, and then read the text and attempt to answer the questions in preparation for your small group. The lined pages on the right hand side are given to provide room for your answers.

In the actual group you may choose to cover all the questions of the study (which may result in the group taking longer than thirteen weeks) or the group leader may select 2–4 specific questions that they believe will be most profitable for discussion. Please use the method which is most fruitful for your group!

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LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

Why Luke is the Gospel For Business

It probably seems strange to so designate a book as 'For Businessmen' that was so clearly written for everyone. After all, Paul said to Timothy, 'All scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching, reproof, correcting and training in righteousness.' (2 Tim 3:16) However, every scripture that was written had a specific time and place, and a specific audience. There were reasons in the author's mind (even as those reasons were guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit-2 Peter 1:20-21) as to why he was writing to his audience. The author of the gospel of Luke is, by evidence and church tradition, Luke the Doctor. He is the author of Luke and Acts, and ministry companion with Paul the Apostle. His experiences and the situations of His time and the needs of his audience (Theophilus--Luke 1:3) shaped the message. It just so happens that the needs of that day and of his audience coincide well with the problems and experiences of many who work in the business realm. We will examine some of those here in the introduction in order to prepare you for the journey through this amazing book.

DISTINCTIVES IN LUKE

An Orderly Account: Luke was not an eyewitness of the resurrection. However, as he indicates in 1:1-4, his account was carefully researched and documented by eyewitness accounts. Perhaps it was his medical training, but whatever the reason, Luke exhibits a meticulous care for dates, times and details which sets him apart from other gospel writers (Luke 1:5, 2:1-2, 3:1-2) . This has to do with priorities, and Luke may go into greater detail because he was not an eyewitness. He sought to establish the truthfulness of these events beyond question or doubt.

Luke traveled with Paul extensively throughout the Roman world. As such, Luke carries a remarkable understanding, both from spending years traveling with a Jewish rabbi (Paul) and from encountering all manner of pagan cultures and their associated false religious distortions. His gospel, therefore, exhibits a keen understanding of both the Jewish and Roman worlds.

In a fast paced and high pressure world, businessmen are accustomed to reasoning and decisions substantiated by evidence. As such, the logical and footnoted style of Luke helps to speak clearly to an environment that requires such information for decisions.

The Responsibilities and Nature of Wealth: Luke's audience, Theophilus, may have been a specific person, or a generic title. The name, after all, means 'friend of God.' Whichever it was, both in style and content, the audience was from the middle or upper class of society. More than any other gospel, there are unique parables and emphases which call to attention the role and importance of using wealth well (Luke 16:1-14/19-31, 19:1-27, 21:1-4), and avoiding the ensnaring nature of money and greed (Luke 12:19-31, 18:18-30).

A Thorough Defense of The Value of Humility: The Greek and Roman Cultures of the first century did not value humility. There was a society in which demonstrating the wealth and power you had was an ordinary and praiseworthy thing. If you had wealth and power, there was nothing wrong with letting everyone know it—hosting grand celebrations in your own honor, and the like. In such an environment, Jesus' life and work utterly refuted the cultural norm of the grand and powerful benefactor (see Luke 14:1-14, especially 12-14).

The same challenges existed within the Jewish Culture. It was a common prayer of the Jewish man of that day to pray, 'God I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.' Into that world, we find Jesus pouring out blessing to Gentiles, the poor and crippled, and women (Luke 5:12-32, 7:1-10 & 11-17, 10:25-37, 13:10-17, 18:1-10, 21:1-4). Women, whose word would not even be accepted in a Jewish Court of Law, were the first eyewitnesses of the resurrection (Luke 24:1-2). Truly God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and the weak things of this world to shame the strong. (1 Corinthians 1:28-30)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1.** In what ways does Luke's professional background impact the way he wrote his gospel?
- 2.** Why would a book written to upper class people (as the initial audience) have such an emphasis on the poor?
- 3.** As discussed, humility was not a virtue in Jesus' time. What Christian virtues are not seen as praiseworthy today?
- 4.** Which of the mentioned distinctives of Luke's gospel is most intriguing to you? Why?

FOR FURTHER READING

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds in Early Christianity*. Eerdmans Press, Grand Rapids, 2003. • Dickson, John. *Humilitas*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2011.

LESSON 2: ORIGINS

Luke 1-2

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 1 & 2

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 1 & 2:

Luke's introduction (1:1-4)

John the Baptist's Birth Foretold (1:5-25)

Jesus' Birth Foretold (1:26-38)

Mary/Elizabeth & Jesus/John Meet (1:39-45)

The Song of Mary (1:46-56)

The Birth of John (1:57-66)

The Song of Zechariah (1:67-80)

The Birth of Jesus (2:1-21)

The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple – Testimony of Simeon and Anna (2:22-40)

The Young Jesus at the Temple (2:41-52)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1.** Notice the parallels Luke creates with the birth of John and Jesus. (Angelic Announcement & Naming / Birth Narrative / Song of Celebration) Why do you think Luke chooses to create this parallel format? Amidst the similar format, what are the differences that are revealed about the two children?
- 2.** Mary responds to the announcement from the angel Gabriel with humility and acceptance. It can make us miss how most would perceive her situation. What would the average person assume about Mary, and how would she be treated? How does that frame your understanding of her visit to Elizabeth (1:39-56), and how do you think Elizabeth's words in v.45 impacted her?
- 3.** Mary patterned her song after the song of another biblical saint, Hannah. (Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10) What are the themes which both songs emphasize? How do these women view the birth of their children having meaning for the larger community?
- 4.** The birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1-21 is a famous passage, recited regularly by many at Christmas. In keeping with our distinctive themes discussed in lesson 1, what are some of the noteworthy details in this birth account?
- 5.** What does the account of Jesus as a boy in 2:41-52 teach us? Consider v.52. How do you process Jesus, the divine son of God as growing in stature with God and man?
- 6.** What is the purpose of this account of John and Jesus' birth, in terms of Luke's overall narrative? Consider, for example, the testimonies of Simeon and Anna in 2:22-40. How do these two chapters inform our understanding of who Jesus is?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider Mary's damaged social status, and the honor accorded to the shepherds as witnesses of Jesus' birth. Everything is not always as we think it is. How can this affect our decisions in the marketplace, for example, in regards to hiring and business relationships?

LESSON 3: QUALIFICATIONS

Luke 3-4

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 3:1-4:13

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 3-4:

Ministry of John the Baptist (3:1-20)

The Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22)

The Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-3:38)

The Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. In chapter 3, Luke moves to describing another place and time—fast forwarding almost thirty years. What do you notice about verses 1-2?
2. Verse 3 explains John's activities –what did he do? How does Luke interpret those activities in verses 4-6?
3. In verses 7-14, people ask John specific questions as they are coming to Him to be baptized. What questions do they ask?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider Mary's damaged social status, and the honor accorded to the shepherds as witnesses of Jesus' birth. Everything is not always as we think it is. How can this affect our decisions in the marketplace, for example, in regards to hiring and business relationships?

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4. What were the people wondering about John? How does he answer them? (15-17)
 5. How did it cost John to tell the truth? What might it cost you? (18-20)

Looking at Jesus – 3 Key Evidences of His Qualification to be the Messiah

6. Luke begins to give evidences of Jesus' qualifications for his unique ministry. What evidence is given in verses 21-22?
7. For what reason do you think Luke includes this genealogy at this point in his gospel? (23-37)

Read the section on the temptation of Jesus in 4:1-13.

8. How is Jesus described in verse 1? How does that relate to his baptism in 3:21-22?

9. Why do you think 40 days? What is significant about 40 in the bible? (2)

10. Verse 2 mentions that after 40 days, Jesus was hungry. As God and man, we often downplay how difficult these trials were for Jesus. What do you think about that? How does Jesus' humanity help you understand Him?

11. Consider each of the three temptations of Jesus. Interestingly, they parallel the temptations of the Israelites in the wilderness--to grumble for bread (Exodus 16:2), to worship false gods (Exodus 32:4) and to put God to the test (Exodus 17:7). Why do you think Luke shows that parallel? What is this section saying about Jesus?

12. What is instructive about the way Jesus resisted temptation? What is needed in order for us to respond in the same way?

13. Which temptation of Jesus do you particularly identify with?

LESSON 4: FIRST MINISTRY

Luke 4:14-6:49

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 4:14-6:49

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 4-6:

Jesus First Ministry in Galilee (Nazareth & Capernaum) (4:14-43)

The Calling of Peter, James & John (5:1-11)

Miraculous Healings of the leper and paralytic (5:12-26)

The Calling of Levi (5:27-32)

Questions on Fasting and the Sabbath (5:33-6:11)

The Calling of the Twelve Disciples (6:12-16)

The Sermon on the Plain (6:17-49)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. After learning all of Jesus' qualifications, and Luke's note that He was working in the power of the Holy Spirit (14), how would you expect his ministry to be received by His hometown?(16-30)
2. How was He received? Why? (4:22, 28-29)
3. How can familiarity with Jesus cause us to miss truly knowing Jesus?
4. What was astonishing to the people about the teaching of Jesus? How was it different from what they were used to? (4:32)
5. What do the demons in both 4:33-34 & 4:41 have in common? Why do you think Jesus did not want them to speak?
6. Notice the alternation between preaching (4:16:22, 31-32, 43-44) and miraculous works (4:33-36, 38-41, 6:17-19, 20-49) that mark Jesus' ministry. How do the miracles connect with the preaching and teaching?

In chapter 5:1-11, Jesus calls the first three disciples, Peter, James and John.

7. How does Jesus get their attention? Who would reasonably be expected to know more about fishing – the carpenter or the professional fishermen? How does Peter interpret this enormous catch of fish?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Are you tempted to think that Jesus does not know how to help you in your vocation? Do you ever ask Him?

8. As with the demons, so Jesus tells the leper to keep the news of his healing quiet. Why would Jesus want to keep this news secret? (12-15)

Jesus heals the paralytic (17-26)

9. Jesus asks the people whether it is easier to say 'your sins are forgiven' or 'rise take up your mat and walk'? Which is easier? Why?

10. Jesus calls Levi (also know as Matthew, the tax collector and writer of the first gospel). Jesus does not get good press for eating with these people. Why does Jesus say that he eats with them? Do you think that he means that the Pharisees and religious people are 'well'? (30-32)

11. Notice that the questions on fasting and the Sabbath relate to how the ministry of Jesus changes things. The question: Is it wisdom to apply the same answer to different situations, or wisdom to know that the answers may be different if the situation is different? (5:33-6:11) How does the idea of Jesus' teaching with authority become evident in these interactions?

12. Notice that Jesus withdraws to desolate places three times in these chapters (4:42, 5:16 & 6:12). What was He doing there? How does this example instruct our own practice?

13. Why did Jesus appoint twelve disciples? What is the significance of twelve?

Similar in content to Matthew 5-7, Luke 6:17-49 is called the 'Sermon on the Plain' (17).

14. Again we see miracles (17-19) that precede teaching (20-49). Considering that pattern, what do you think are the purpose(s) of these miracles?

15. Notice the contrast between verses 20-23 and 24-26. What is Jesus telling these people to expect if they follow Him?

16. Verses 27-36 have some of the most astounding words ever uttered about forgiveness. We are to forgive our enemies and those who oppose us. These are people who have nothing to offer and would not give it if they could. Look at verses 35-36. On what basis does Jesus command this remarkable forgiveness of others?

17. There is an important tension between verses 37-42 and 43-45. How do you keep the two in balance?

18. Keeping in mind the previous sections of Jesus' teaching, why do you think he concludes with 46-48 concerning the parable about the houses on the rock and sand. What is Jesus saying about all that He just taught?

LESSON 5: THE ONE WHO WAS TO COME

Luke 7-9:50

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 7-9:50

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 7-9:50:

Healing of the Centurion's Servant and the Widow's Son (7:1-17)

Jesus and John the Baptist (7:18-35)

Jesus Forgives a Sinful Woman (7:36-8:3)

Parables: The Sower & The Lamp (8:4-21)

Jesus' Authority – Over Storm, Demons, Death (8:22-56)

Jesus Sends out The Twelve (9:1-9)

Feeding of 5,000 (9:10-17)

Jesus' Identity and Mission (9:18-50)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Healing of the Centurion's Servant and the Widow's Son (7:1-17)

1. Consider Luke 7:1-17. There are two separate instances here of people receiving help from Jesus. Who are they? What makes them noteworthy, in terms of the people and priorities of that day and time? Why do you think Luke includes their stories in His gospel?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Jesus had compassion on a woman who was destitute. She could offer Him nothing. Are there any similar situations or people groups that your business interacts with? How can Jesus' compassion inform your dealings with these people or groups?

John the Baptist (7:18-35)

2. Previously, John the Baptist clearly declared that Jesus was the Messiah, the King that the people of Israel had been waiting for. (3:15-17) If that is so, what situation prompted John to ask his question in verse 19? How does Jesus answer him?

3. Though Jesus has a gentle rebuke personally for John, how does He speak of John in public (26,28)? How might that instruct us to speak of others?

A Pharisee and A Sinful Woman (7:36-8:3)

4. Jesus interacts with two people of very different social standings, Simon the Pharisee (40) and a sinful woman. Who had a better reputation? Yet according to Jesus, who was better off spiritually? Why?

Parables (8:4-21)

- 5.** Jesus tells two parables—the parable of the sower (8:4-8) and the parable of the lamp (8:16-18). Why, according to verse 10, does Jesus tell parables?
- 6.** What is the point of the parable of the sower?
- 7.** What is the point of the parable of the lamp? How does that tie in to the section with Jesus' mother and brothers (8:19-21)?

Miracles (8:22-56)

- 8.** Luke records three remarkable miracles in 8:22-56. What things do each of the miracles demonstrate Jesus' authority over? This has the effect of a mounting argument. What is the conclusion you think Luke would like his readers to come to concerning the person of Jesus?

Disciples on Mission (9:1-9)

- 9.** Jesus' authority was established in the previous section. How does that tie into His commissioning of the disciples?
- 10.** Based on what the text says, why do you think Herod might have wanted to see Jesus?
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BUSINESS BLOCK

Have you ever said or heard someone say they would believe if they saw a miracle? Does this section on Herod suggest that people can exhibit religious curiosity that is not a real spiritual interest?

Feeding the 5,000 (9:10-17)

- 10.** What does Jesus ask the disciples to do, and how do they respond? Why do you think Jesus asks them? How does the feeding of the 5,000 tie into the mission of the disciples?

Jesus' Identity and Mission (9:18-50)

- 11.** Jesus asks the disciples two questions. What are they? How do they answer? How are the answers different?
- 12.** In light of Jesus' identity, what is shocking about the next section (21-27)?
- 13.** In light of this shocking revelation, what does the section on Jesus' transfiguration (28-36) serve to do?
- 14.** The disciples are thoroughly confused at this new revelation. In what ways are their limitations and misunderstandings highlighted in verses 37-50?

LESSON 6: TOWARD JERUSALEM

Luke 9:51-10:42

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 9:51-10:42

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 9:51-10:42:

Clarifying the Mission (9:51-62)

A Micro-mission and Jesus' Assessment (10:1-24)

The Priority and Scope of Love (10:25-42)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Earlier in chapter 9, Jesus made clear both His identity and His mission (9:18-22). What indications in 9:51-62 seem to indicate that His disciples and others have not understood what He has told them?

A Micro-mission and Jesus' Assessment (10:1-24)

2. Jesus said to His disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (10:2) Do you still believe that is true today? Are you praying God will send workers to the harvest? How does Jesus equate His messengers with Himself? (10:16)

3. What is Jesus' assessment of the three cities where He did many of His miracles? Why? (13-15)

4. Jesus cautions the disciples after their jubilant return (17-20). What temptation is He protecting them from? How does Jesus' prayer in verses 21-24 form a positive application of His own caution?

The Greatest Commandment (Luke 10:25-42)

5. What is the point of the parable of the Good Samaritan? How does it answer the question of the lawyer?

6. How does the story of Mary and Martha connect with the Mission of Jesus?

LESSON 7: PRIORITIES

Luke 11-12

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 11-12

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 11-12:

Priority: Pray Persistently (11:1-13)

Priority: Recognize the Kingdom of God (11:14-36)

Priority: Flee Hypocrisy (11:37-12:3)

Priority: Value the Kingdom above all Else (12:4-34)

Priority: Be Ready! (12:35-59)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. At the end of the previous lesson, Jesus was teaching Mary and Martha that a relationship with himself was of higher priority than the dishes and housekeeping. How does that theme continue in 11:1-13? What is the priority and focus of these verses?
2. What prompted the disciples to ask Jesus about prayer? (11:1) How is that instructive?
3. What is the logic with which Jesus assures us it is a worthwhile practice to ask God in prayer?

APPLICATION

What do you think of the access to God that Jesus is teaching here? Do you feel that you can approach God as your Father and be welcomed? What helps or hinders you in thinking this way? Discuss.

4. In 11:14-23, Jesus makes the point that you cannot take the goods of a strong man until you overpower him. How does this relate to the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan? What is Jesus saying His miracles are demonstrating?
5. In relation to this idea of two conflicting Kingdoms, what is the point of verses 24-26?
6. What does Jesus mean by the sign of Jonah (11:29)? Why is it a wicked generation that seeks signs?
7. Why do you think the Pharisees and Religious Leaders receive such harsh words from Jesus? (11:37-12:3)
8. As opposition to His teaching begins to mount (11:53-54), Jesus teaches even more clearly that to follow Him involves making a choice. How do 12:6-7 and 12:11-12 help us to be confident even in serious danger?
9. How does this parable warn the businessman in regards to His activities?

10. Having just warned us of the danger of being wholly consumed with earthly priorities (12:13-21), how does 12:22-34 help us resist the temptation to be the fool in the parable? List at least three ways.

11. 12:35-40 and 12:41-48 are two parables about being ready to meet Jesus and give an account. Peter asks who the parable is for in 12:41. Jesus answer is in 12:42-43. Who is the parable for?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Jesus drives home the priority of readiness by explaining the intensity of the conflict (49-53), the immanence of it (54-56) and the importance of it (57-59). How prepared are you to give an account to Jesus? If you are not, what needs to change?

LESSON 8: THE GOSPEL FOR ALL

Luke 13-15

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 13-15

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 13-15:

All Must Repent and Bear Fruit! (13:1-9)

The Kingdom of God and Its Recipients are Surprising (13:10-14:6)

The Kingdom of God Inverts Worldly Wisdom (14:7-35)

Rejoice In the Recovery of the Lost—Lost Sheep, Coin, Son (15:1-32)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Gospel is Open to ALL (Luke 13:1-14:6)

1. Look at 13:1-5. What is the background of the people whom Pilate (The Roman Governor) killed? Based on Jesus' response, what does it appear that these people are assuming about people who suffer? What does Jesus say should be our perspective on suffering and judgment?
2. Look at Luke 13:6-9. Then skim over Isaiah 5. Is this parable really about fig trees and gardening? What is it about?
3. Who is healed in 13:10-17? What are some of the perceived obstacles of this healing in the minds of the religious leaders? Look at 14:1-6. How is this passage similar?
4. Jesus explains that the kingdom of God will begin almost unnoticeably, and then it will expand to fill the earth. (13:18-21) What is unexpected (at least to the Jewish Leaders) about the way this Kingdom will be filled? (13:22-30) How does Jesus feel about this reality? (13:34)

BUSINESS BLOCK

The culture of Jesus' day—both Jewish and Greco-Roman—felt that if you were important, it was appropriate to let everyone know it. What does Luke 14:7-11 say about that mindset? What is the advantage of purposely choosing the lowest place?

How does this concept relate to business? How do you advertise your qualifications, your company and services without this kind of inappropriate self-honoring? How might this relate to sales and the way you speak about your competitors?

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5. Who do we typically invite to dinner? Who does Jesus say we should invite over? Why? (14:12-14)

- 6.** What is peculiar about the guests and their excuses in Jesus' story in 14:15-24?
- 7.** Everyone ought to want to come to a banquet—how does 14:25-33 help explain why not everyone is entering the Kingdom of God?
- 8.** What are the three parables Jesus tells in chapter 15?
- 9.** What was the issue that prompts Jesus to tell these stories (15:1-2)?
- 10.** Even though there are three parables, there is only one main point to them all. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach through them?

LESSON 9: THE PATH OF THE KINGDOM

Luke 16-19:27

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 16-19:27

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 16-19:27:

Stewardship: Be Faithful with Money & Marriage (16:1-31)

Forgiveness: You Must Forgive! (17:1-10)

Thankfulness: Express Your Thankfulness to God (17:11-19)

Preparation: The Kingdom Comes Unexpectedly (17:20-37)

How to Come to God: Persistently, Humbly & Without Reservation (18:1-30)

Who can Come to God: Anyone! Beggar & Zaccheus the Tax Collector (18:31-19:10)

Faithfulness: Parable of the Ten Minas (19:11-27)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Stewardship (Read Luke 16:1-31 & Luke 19:11-27 together)

- 1.** What makes stewardship different from ownership? In what ways are they the same?
- 2.** How does our perspective of seeing ourselves as stewards of God's resources change the way we think about them?
- 3.** Consider how the steward in the parable (16:1-13) used his last days of authority to win favor with others. Was that wise of Him? Why do you think Jesus says that worldly people are more shrewd in their dealings than 'the sons of light?'
- 4.** Consider the rebuke to the Pharisees in 16:14-15. How does the story about the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) serve as a warning to them?
- 5.** According to 16:30-31, if someone does not believe the Bible, will they believe if they see miracles?

Forgiveness & Thankfulness (17:1-19)

- 6.** Consider the section in 17:1-10. Jesus commands them to forgive—as many times as a person repents, without limit (3-4). The disciples say, 'increase our faith!' (5) Jesus' answer is basically that even a tiny faith is enough (6). What then does Jesus say is the issue for the disciples?
- 7.** Jesus heals ten lepers. What is noteworthy about the healing, in terms of the details in the story?
- 8.** Are there people today that you think it would be unlikely or hard for God's grace to reach?

Preparation (17:20-37)

9. The Pharisees ask about the Kingdom of God and its coming (20). How does Jesus describe its coming?

How to Come—and Who is Accepted By God (18:1-19:10)

10. Look at the parable Jesus tells in 18:1-8. There is logic operating here. What is the logic in the parallel between the story of the unjust judge and God?

11. Concerning the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14), which one of these men would be socially acceptable? Which one is socially unacceptable? So then what makes the conclusion of Jesus surprising in this story?

12. Look at 18:15-17. What are the qualities of children that make them socially unacceptable, and yet welcome to Jesus? What does that say about our mindset in seeking Jesus?

13. Consider the story of the rich ruler. Jesus asks him to give away all his possessions. Does Jesus ask everyone to give up their wealth to follow him? Why do you think he asks this man to do so, and what does that teach us?

14. How does the story of the rich ruler connect with verses 31-34?

15. What is the significance of the beggar calling Jesus ‘Son of David’?

16. Look at the story of Zaccheus in 19:1-10. Zaccheus was a tax collector—even a chief among tax collectors. Tax collectors of that day often made extra money by collecting more than the required amount—all with the threat of Roman force if you refused to pay. Such people were seen as the worst traitors in the Jewish Community—Jews who served the Romans to make money off their brothers. Knowing this was the typical mindset of tax collectors, what do you find surprising in this account?

LESSON 10: AUTHORITY

Luke 19:28 – 20:47

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 19:28-20:47

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 19:28-20:

Authority Asserted: Jesus' Royal Entrance into Jerusalem (19:28-44)
Jesus' Authority Demonstrated and Challenged (19:45-20:47)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Jesus' Authority Asserted (19:28-19:44)

- 1.** Look at 19:28-40. Compare also Zechariah 9:9. What is significant about Jesus riding on a colt, specifically one that no one has ever sat on?
- 2.** Look at 19:41-44. Jesus weeps over the city because he knows they will not receive Him. Even more He weeps because their rejection will lead to their eventual judgment and destruction by the Romans in 70 AD. Why would their failure to recognize Jesus' mission lead directly to their destruction?

Jesus' Authority: Demonstrated and Challenged (19:45-20:47)

- 3.** Jesus was upset by the moneychangers and salesmen in the temple. According to 19:46, what purpose does he say has been subverted by their commercial activity? Look at the parallel account in Mark 11:15-18. Consider verse 17. What word is added to Jesus' statement about prayer?

Jesus is angered by the moneychangers not because they are selling goods, which pilgrims from Jerusalem would legitimately need, rather than to carry their sacrifices from distant places. Rather, Jesus is angered because they were conducting their business in the area of the temple known as the court of the Gentiles, which is the only place that foreigners were permitted to go and pray. Jesus is upset because these salesmen did not care about Gentiles being able to pray and meet with God in the temple.

- 4.** Frustrated with Jesus thwarting their plans, the religious leaders ask Jesus a question (20:1-8). What is tricky about this question? How does Jesus answer?
- 5.** In the parable of the tenants (20:9-18), who do you think are the tenants, the servants and the son of the vineyard owner? What is Jesus telling the people with this parable?
- 6.** Look at 20:19-26. Consider the trap in the question about paying taxes. What happens if Jesus says it is right to pay taxes to Caesar? What if He says it is wrong? How does Jesus avoid the trap?
- 7.** The Sadducees were a wealthy and powerful group that controlled the Sanhedrin

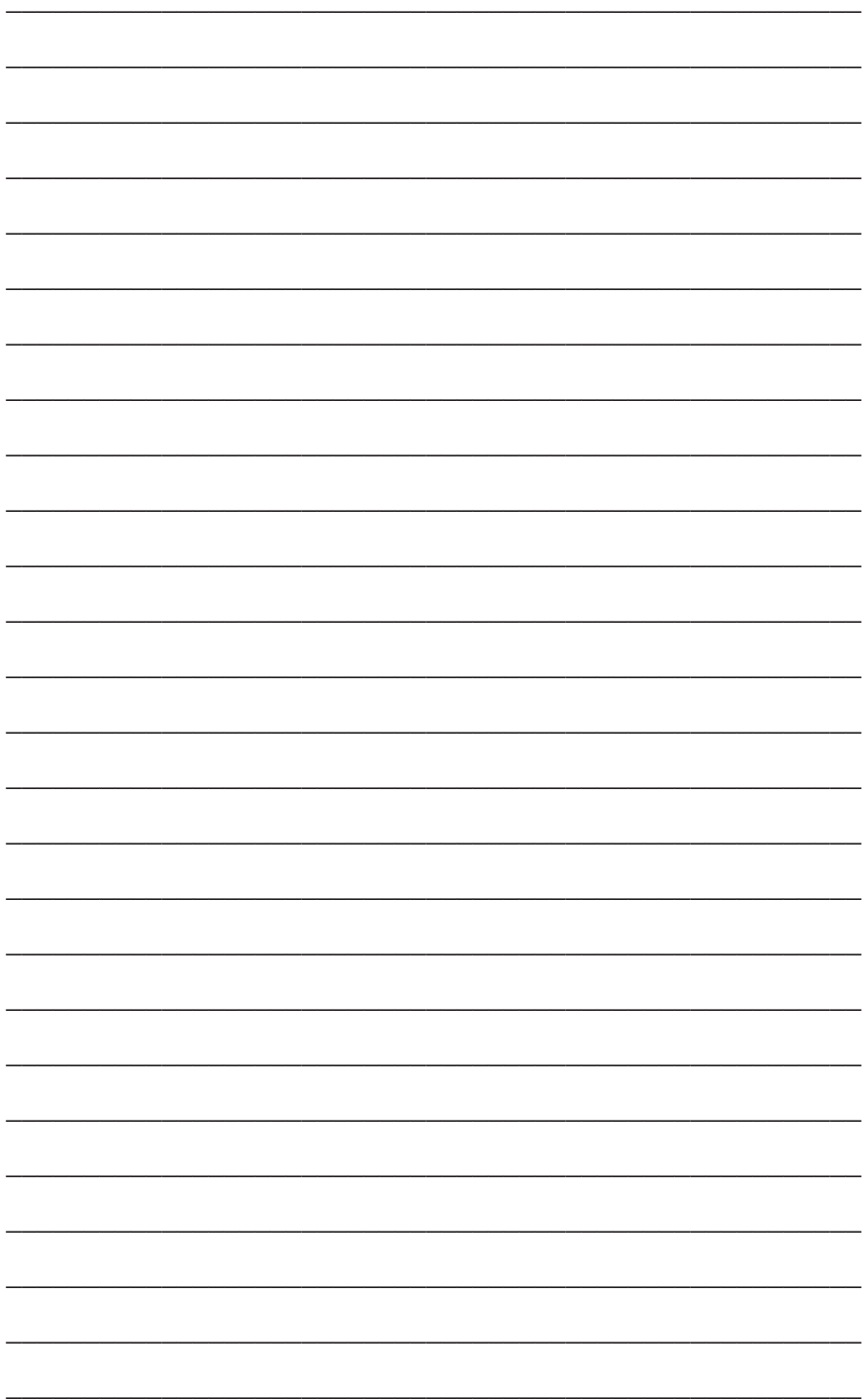
(Jewish Supreme Court). They did not believe in a resurrection from the dead, and they only accepted the first five books of Moses as authoritative. Knowing these things, what is so wise about Jesus' answer to their question about the resurrection?

8. Jesus asks the leaders a question (20:41-44). This quotation is from Psalm 110. What does this question demonstrate, which the religious leaders were not willing to accept?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Jesus handled many difficult questions in this section, demonstrating His authority with divine wisdom. Are there current questions being asked of Christians in general, or you in particular, which seem like loaded or trap questions?

How does Jesus' way of answering help to instruct our approach in responding to hostile questions?



LESSON 11: PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT FUTURE

Luke 21

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapter 21

CONTENT IN CHAPTER 21:

The Widow's Offering (21:1-4)

Judgment and Difficulties are Coming (21:5-28)

Be Ready (21:29-39)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Widow's Offering (21:1-4)

1. Consider the widow's offering in verses 1-4. If she truly gave more than all the others in the temple treasury with her two copper coins, what principle is Jesus teaching about our giving?

Judgment and Difficulties are Coming (21:5-28)

2. Look at Jesus' words in 21:5-28. To people in Israel, their temple was an enormous source of pride, and they were very confident that their nation could never be destroyed. Knowing that, what does Jesus foretell and how would it be shocking to his audience?

3. In the middle of this section, look at 13-19. What can Jesus' disciples expect to happen to them amidst all this upheaval? What are they—and we—called to do?

4. How does Jesus encourage His disciples as they might anxiously imagine being put on trial for their faith before a hostile audience (14-15)? How does that encourage you for those times when you have to bear witness?

5. What do you think it means that verse 16 says some Christians will be killed—but then in verse 18 Jesus promises 'not a hair of your head will perish'? How does this encourage us?

6. In what way does Jesus explaining about the timing of His return help strengthen the disciples?

Be Ready (21:29-39)

7. In verses 29-36, Jesus urges them to put to use all that He has told them. What is the application?

LESSON 12: WHEN DARKNESS REIGNS

Luke 22-23

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 22-23

Content in chapters 22-23:

The Plot to Kill Jesus (22:1-6)

The Passover with the Disciples (22:7-38)

In the Garden (22:39-46)

The Arrest and Trials of Jesus (22:47-23:25)

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (23:26-49)

The Burial of Jesus (23:50-56)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Plot to Kill Jesus (22:1-6)

1. What made it difficult for the chief priests to arrest Jesus publicly? Why was Judas' help valuable to them in this regard?

The Passover with the Disciples (22:7-38)

2. Luke 22:7-20 explains Jesus celebrating the Passover with His disciples. The Passover was the Jewish celebration of their deliverance from Egypt. In Exodus 12, God commanded them to sacrifice a lamb and spread its blood over their doorposts. When God judged the people of Egypt by the death of every firstborn son, he would 'see' the blood of this lamb and 'pass over' the houses protected by the blood. How does this significant event connect with Jesus' mission?

3. What is shocking about the disciples' transition in conversation from 22:21-23 to 22:24?

They are worried and wondering who might betray Jesus, and in the next moment, asking which one of them is the greatest. So much like us, they swing from fear to self-confidence.

4. Jesus asks a question in 22:27: "Who is greater? The one who reclines at the table or the one who serves?" Answer his question.

5. Jesus then says that He is among them as the one who serves. What does that mean for the disciples and for their argument about who is the greatest?

6. Look at 22:31-38. Jesus warns Peter that he will deny Him, and he warns the disciples that in the future they will be without Him. Do they believe or understand Him?

7. Jesus wrestles in prayer in the Garden. (22:39-46) We have seen a pattern of Jesus' prayerfulness throughout this book. Do you find this hard to grasp—either that Jesus needed to pray, or that He could be so conflicted in His prayer to the Father? How can this encourage us?

8. Luke 22:47-53. Luke records the arrest of Jesus. Peter tries to kill a guard and cuts off his ear. Jesus rebukes Peter and heals the guard. In your opinion, who is in control of this situation?

9. Look at the beginning of Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court). In 22:67, they ask Him to tell them if He is the Christ. How does Jesus' answer (67-68) expose their dishonesty? What can this also say about the receptiveness of our own hearts and the hearts of others?

10. Pilate was the Roman Governor. He had final authority, as the Jewish Court (The Sanhedrin) and Herod (Jewish King) ruled under Roman permission. Pilate first determines that Jesus is not guilty (4). The chief priests were persistent in lobbying Pilate. With the idea of getting a clearer grasp of the charges, Pilate sends Him to Herod. Herod mocks Jesus, but likewise does not condemn Him (11-12). Pilate attempts to release Jesus under the Roman custom of releasing one prisoner to the Jews during the Passover as a sign of goodwill (16-18). Pilate tries one more time to release Jesus by appealing to the crowd (22). Finally, Pilate gives in to the crowd and hands Jesus over to be crucified (24-25).

Does the evidence indicate that Jesus was guilty, according to this account? Why was Jesus handed over to be executed? Matthew 27:24 adds the detail that Pilate publicly washed his hands before the people concerning this decision. Do you think Pilate is innocent or guilty in this matter?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider Pilate in relation to your own experience. Are there times when you have 'passed the buck' in your workplace or family? Discuss.

11. People are weeping for Jesus as he is being led out to be executed (27-31). What does he tell them they ought to weep for?

12. We have talked a lot in this book about God's grace coming to places and people that are unexpected. How does that continue in Luke 23:32-43? What works was this man able to do to make himself more acceptable to God? How does this affirm the way we are saved from our sins?

13. Who witnessed Jesus' death, and what was his assessment of it? What makes his testimony insightful?

14. In 23:50-56, Jesus is buried. Why is the person who buries Jesus significant? Why is it significant that no one else had ever been laid in this tomb? And why is it significant that the women followed and saw the tomb and where the body was laid?

LESSON 13: ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN

Luke 24

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapter 24

CONTENT IN CHAPTER 24:

The Resurrection (24:1-12)

The Road to Emmaus (24:13-35)

Appearance to the Disciples (24:36-49)

The Ascension of Jesus (24:50-53)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Resurrection (24:1-12)

- 1.** The women going to pay honor to Jesus find the tomb empty (1-8). Is it possible these women were just ignorant and went to the wrong tomb? What evidence is here and in the end of the previous chapter that makes the suggestion seem foolish?
- 2.** A common modern criticism of the Bible is that people from years ago were superstitious and would believe anything. Does that appear to be the mindset of the disciples (10-12)?
- 3.** Women were not considered reliable witnesses in Jesus' day. How does this account honor women?

The Road To Emmaus (24:13-35)

- 4.** Consider the account of the road to Emmaus (13-35). Were Cleopas or his fellow disciple convinced of the resurrection yet (13-24)?
- 5.** How does Jesus (whom they do not recognize) chide them? What evidence were they not paying attention to in considering the resurrection?
- 6.** Jesus explains the prophecies about Himself in the Old Testament. Where does He begin? What does this confirm about the Old Testament?
- 7.** Consider what this means for our reading of the Old Testament. How should we read it?
- 8.** Jesus appears to all the disciples (36-43). In spite of seeing Jesus in His resurrected body, they still do not believe He is actually there. What evidence does Jesus give to confirm that He is really alive?
- 9.** Jesus is not just content to prove He was raised. Once that matter is resolved, He gives the disciples their mission. They are to be Jesus' witnesses. Summarize what they are supposed to testify about Jesus.

10. There is one thing before beginning this mission (48-49). What are the disciples told to wait for?

11. What is the final proof the disciples have finally believed the resurrection and understood the scriptures(52-53)? How does that impact the way we think about the evidence of our own faith?

