

## Meditation Schedule for the Gospel of Luke

Luke 1:1-4

What kind of other accounts do you think existed when Luke began to write this gospel? (vs. 1)

Was Luke an eyewitness?

Who is this gospel written to? (vs. 3)

What did Luke do before writing this gospel? (vs. 3)

Why did Luke want to write this gospel? (vs. 4)

Things to remember in prayer: Thank God for the men and women who have striven to preserve the word of God over the years.

Practical Application: This gospel is written to Theophilus. No one knows who this individual was, but it is likely he was a man who lived in the 1st century. The name Theophilus means a lover of God or a friend of God. Not only does his name mean “lover of God,” but he also wanted to know more about Jesus. Even though Theophilus was probably an actual individual, Theophilus is also all of us. We are studying the gospel of Luke because we love God and we want to know more about Jesus.

Record your own reflections on Luke 1:1-4

Luke 1:5-25

What kind of people were Zechariah and Elizabeth? (vs. 6)

What other couples in the Bible were barren and faced this same situation? (vs. 7)

Why do you think Zechariah was frightened when he saw the angel? (vs. 12)

Do you think Zechariah expected to find God or one of his messengers in the temple?

Who is John supposed to resemble? (vs. 17)

How does Elizabeth feel about these events taking place in her life?

Things to remember in prayer: Too often we view the blessing of children as a natural occurring phenomenon. Thank God for the children in your life (sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc.)

Practical Application: Verse 12 is interesting. Zechariah receives the privilege of entering the sanctuary and offering incense. Zechariah gets to go into the place where God lives. This has to be very exciting for a priest. He may have waited his entire time as a priest for this moment, but in verse 12 we learn that he becomes frightened when an angel shows up. Now to be fair this is how most people act in the Bible when an angel appears, but there seems to be something else going on here. It is as if Zachariah did not expect to find God in the sanctuary of the temple. Today God lives in the church. He lives amongst His people. We should never be surprised when He shows up in our lives or the lives of others.

Record your own reflections on Luke 1:5-25

## Luke 1:26-38

What similarities are there between this story and the one before it (Luke 1:5-25)?

What kind of person was Mary? (vs. 30)

What is the difference between the reply of Mary (vs. 34) and the reply of Zechariah (vs. 18)?

What was Mary's reply to this news? (vs. 38)

Things to remember in prayer: Mary did not understand how everything was going to be carried out, but she trusted in God. Pray that God's will be done and not your own.

Practical Application: At first it may seem like the replies of Mary (vs. 34) and Zechariah (vs. 18) are similar, but a closer look will reveal they are not.

Zechariah questioned the angel because he did not believe what he heard, but Mary sought an explanation for what she knew to be impossible. In verse 37 the angel says to her, "For nothing will be impossible with God." Mary believes this and she trusts in God, but she doesn't know how everything will play out. Her response is, "May it be with me according to your word" (vs. 38). Even though we do not know what lies ahead our response should be the same. May it be with me according to your word!

Record your own reflections on Luke 1:26-38

Luke 1:39-45

Why do you think Mary wanted to spend time with Elizabeth?

What was Elizabeth and her baby's reaction to seeing Mary? (vs. 41-43)

Who does Elizabeth confess the baby of Mary to be? (vs. 43)

What does Elizabeth's baby leaping inside of her have to do with the story of Jesus? (vs. 44)

What does Elizabeth's blessing in verse 45 tell us about Mary?

Things to remember in prayer: Mary and Elizabeth came together to comfort and help one another in a difficult time. Thank God for the friends and relatives in your life that you depend on in times of need.

Practical Application: Having a child is an exciting time, but it can also be stressful. I remember when my wife became pregnant. We both read everything we could on the subject to make sure she was eating right and we were doing the best thing for the child. Now imagine those normal concerns heightened. Elizabeth is older than most pregnant women, and her desire has always been to have a healthy baby. Mary is an unwed pregnant woman in a world where that is unacceptable. These two women come together to comfort and console one another in this time of need. We need good Christian friends that we can depend on when we face difficult and stressful times.

Record your own reflections on Luke 1:39-45

Luke 1:46-56

Have you ever been so overwhelmed by something that you stopped and praised God in song or prayer the way Mary does here?

Where does Mary's praise come from? (vs. 46-47)

Who does God show mercy towards? (vs. 50)

According to vs. 51-53 who will God help and who will He punish?

Why is God going to do this? (vs. 55)

Things to remember in prayer: Praise God for the wonderful promises He has made. Praise Him because He, unlike many humans, keeps His promises.

Practical Application: It is easy to get caught up in the things of this world. Some people are mesmerized by wealth and power, and so they seek this above everything else. Some people see that poor people often suffer and are exploited by people with power and wealth. Individuals who recognize this may devote all their time and effort to politics until they are caught up in some of the same exploitations they started out fighting against. God also recognizes that things are not right. For now He has commissioned the church to be his hands and feet on this earth, but eventually Jesus will return and all things will be made right. If we are not careful we can easily find ourselves on the wrong side when God shows up. On that day the roles will be reversed just as He reversed the roles for Mary. The lowly servant girl was lifted up and she will forever be called blessed.

Record your own reflections on Luke 1:46-56

Luke 1:57-66

What did Elizabeth's relatives and neighbors think about the birth? (vs. 58)

How would you feel if your neighbors were the ones who chose the name for your child?

Are family and cultural customs important to you?

Why do Elizabeth and Zechariah reject the name chosen by their neighbors?

How did the neighbors view the miraculous event that gave Zechariah the ability to speak again? (vs. 65)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the ability to stand for what is right even when the culture pressures you to do otherwise.

Practical Application: We learn from Ruth 4:17 that the naming of a child by the neighbors was a custom in biblical times. Elizabeth and Zechariah were more than happy to go along with this custom. The neighbors did right by the couple by choosing a family name, but Zechariah and Elizabeth refuse to use this name. Why? It is because Zechariah and Elizabeth were following God. We find ourselves in similar circumstances quite often. We are asked by co-workers, friends, classmates, family members, etc. to do something which is culturally acceptable, but violates the laws of God. When this happens it is helpful to remember this story and the godly example of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

Record your own reflections on Luke 1:57-66

Luke 1:67-80

Why are these words from Zechariah significant? (vs. 64,67)

Who is the “mighty savior” in vs. 69?

Who does Zechariah hope to be saved from? (vs. 71,73)

What kind of persons or things are you looking for salvation from?

Why is Zechariah’s child special? (vs. 76-77)

Things to remember in prayer: Thank God for faithful people like Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John who were righteous, blameless, and followed God even when it was not popular.

Practical Application: The last two verses of this prophecy are beautiful.

Zechariah says, “By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Read those words several times.

Meditate upon them. Let them soak in. This is what hope is all about. Jesus came to bring light to a dark world and He will return again one day. As the church carries on the work of Jesus the dawn continues to break.

Record your own reflections on Luke 1:67-80

Luke 2:1-20

Why does Luke mention Augustus, the Roman emperor? (vs. 1)

Why did Mary and Joseph have to go to Bethlehem?

What was significant about Bethlehem? (vs. 4)

What signs were the shepherds supposed to look for? (vs. 12)

What was Mary's response to the shepherd's story? (vs. 19)

Things to remember in prayer: Thank God for coming to this world and living among us.

Practical Application: If we believed in a god that was far away and distant we might be able to get away with complaining that he does not care, but this is not the case. We serve a God who is not far away, but very near. God comes to this earth. He spends his first night in a feeding trough (manger). His birth is humble and lowly, just as His life will be. God came to this earth because He cares. He wants to be close to us. He loves us so much that He left heaven to come to earth.

Record your own reflections on Luke 2:1-20

## Luke 2:21-40

What is the theme of this section? (vs. 39)

What does the offering in verse 24 tell us about Joseph and Mary? (Lev. 12:8)

What had Simeon been waiting for his entire life? (vs. 26)

What did Anna do every day? (vs. 37)

Have you ever waited your entire life for one thing?

Things to remember in prayer: Thank God for the avenue of prayer. Anna prayed every day as she patiently waited for the Messiah.

Practical Application: In this section Luke begins a theme he will continue throughout the rest of the gospel. He wants us to know that Jesus was obedient to the law in every way. Even as a baby when He had no control over the things being done, his family faithfully kept the law. This section begins with the circumcision of Jesus, a law unique to the Jewish people. The circumcision was performed on the eighth day as God had commanded. In vs. 22 Luke specifically mentions the law of Moses, and at the end of this section he reminds us again that “they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord.” The law was a blessing to the people of God, but by the time Jesus was born many had distorted and corrupted its teachings. Jesus follows the law perfectly and reminds us of its original intentions.

Record your own reflections on Luke 2:21-40

## Luke 2:41-52

What does it say about the times in which Mary and Joseph lived that they could go a day before missing their son? (vs. 44)

How would you feel if someone dear to you went missing for three days?

What types of feelings does Mary experience? (vs. 48)

Why does the Son of God submit to His earthly parents? (vs. 51)

Things to remember in prayer: Being a parent is difficult even if your son is perfect. Pray for parents you know and the ones you don't.

Practical Application: It is interesting that this is the only story we have from Jesus' adolescent years. There is a reason this story was preserved and others weren't. One of the lessons we learn here is about submission. In verse 51 Luke tells us that the Son of God was submissive to His earthly parents. God was submissive to humans? How can this be? This destroys one of the great myths about submission, that the one submitting is somehow less important than the one they are submitting to. Submission has nothing to do with greater and lesser. It is a lifestyle. Sometimes we have to submit to people or governments that we don't agree with, but this is what God has commanded. Submission does not mean that we have to change our views or opinions about certain things, but it is necessary for the world to operate. Imagine a world where no one submitted. Jesus is the ultimate example of submission. As a boy the Son of God submitted to His earthly parents, and as a man He submitted to the point of death.

Record your own reflections on Luke 2:41-52

## Luke 3:1-9

Why does Luke give us the name of all the leaders and the year in which they reigned? (vs. 1)

What was the purpose of John's preaching? (vs. 3)

What is a necessary result of repentance? (vs. 8)

How would you react if you were given a message to repent?

Things to remember in prayer: Repentance does not always have to be public. If there is something in your life you need to repent of, then ask God for forgiveness.

Practical Application: Israel is being oppressed by a foreign government and their own leaders, as well as many of the priests are corrupt. They were hoping prophecy which had ceased several hundred years ago would begin again. They were looking for renewal. John the baptist is a prophet who tells the people what they need to do. He does not point the finger at their corrupt government, but instead says renewal begins with each individual. It is easy to talk about the sins of others, but we have a harder time facing up to our own sins. We must always look inward, before we look outward. If things aren't going well in our lives, families, church, etc. we need to look at ourselves first.

Record your own reflections on Luke 3:1-9

Luke 3:10-20

What is the difference between needs and wants? (vs. 11)

Is it hard for you to part with your stuff? (vs. 11)

Is greed acceptable if everyone else is doing it? (vs. 12-14)

Who did people think John was? (vs. 15)

Why was John put in prison? (vs. 19-20)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for people in poverty and for people who are exploited and oppressed by others.

Practical Application: How much is enough? John tells the people that if they have two tunics (a set of clothes) and there is someone without any, then they have too much. We live in a very materialistic society. We determine a person's value by what they own. Many people like to collect, hoard, stockpile, etc., but they find it hard to let go. If we are going to be true followers of God, then we must get used to letting go of our things. We should not allow our things to stand in the way of our relationship with God. We should not place more value on our things, than we do the lives of other human beings. Every person is created in the image of God and they are more important than any car, boat, or tunic we may own.

Record your own reflections on Luke 3:10-20

## Luke 3:21-38

Why do you think Luke placed the story of the baptism of Jesus next to this genealogy?

What do these two accounts tell us about the identity of Jesus?

Why is the baptism of Jesus significant to our understanding of the trinity?

Why does Luke provide a genealogy of Joseph?

Who are some of the significant individuals in this genealogy?

Things to remember in prayer: Be thankful for the life of Jesus and the example He left us to follow.

Practical Application: These two stories are about identity. The genealogy shows that Jesus, as the adopted son of Joseph, was a Jew. Not only was He a Jew, but He a Jew who could trace his lineage back to David. This genealogy goes beyond the Jewish roots of Jesus and goes all the way back to Adam, connecting Jesus with all humanity. Then there is the story of the baptism of Jesus where God declares that Jesus is His Son. Jesus is the Messiah the Jews were looking for, but He is also the Messiah for all peoples. Jesus is identified with David, Adam, and others, but ultimately He is the Son of God. We may be identified with our parents, children, siblings, etc., but ultimately our identity should be found in Christ.

Record your own reflections on Luke 3:21-38

Luke 4:1-13

What would it be like going 40 days without food?

What kind of temptation would it be to eat something after fasting for many days?

How does Jesus face the temptations of Satan?

What does this story teach us about the power of Scripture?

What can you do when Satan tempts you?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for help with any temptations you may be facing.

Practical Application: Satan (The Accuser) is doing what he does best in this story. He is always looking for fault or weakness, so he can strike. We must be careful and not think that Jesus overcame temptation because He is the Son of God. Jesus faced temptation just as we do. He went without food for 40 days, and then was tempted with food. He felt the urges, desires, and cravings just as we do, but He resisted. Jesus did not resist temptation in some miraculous way. He resisted temptation by quoting Scripture. When we are tempted we should be encouraged by this story. Temptation can only overcome us if we allow it. We can defeat temptation the same way Jesus did.

Record your own reflections on Luke 4:1-13

Luke 4:14-30

Why were synagogues helpful to the spread of Christianity in the 1st century?

What is the passage that Jesus read in the synagogue about? (vs. 18-19)

What was the peoples' response to his reading? (vs. 22)

Are there similarities between the people in this story and Satan in the temptation story? (vs. 23)

What does Jesus say that makes the people so angry? (vss. 25-28)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for outsiders.

Practical Application: When Jesus returns to his hometown (the place where he grew up), and reads Isaiah in the synagogue he is welcomed with open arms (vs. 22). Although the people outwardly welcome Him, Jesus knows their hearts (vs. 23). He reminds them about the great prophets who came before Him, who helped not Jews, but Gentiles. This enrages the people so much that they drive Jesus out of town and try to throw him off a hill. The Jewish people of Jesus' hometown were not ready to hear that the Messiah came to help outsiders. They believed that the Messiah would come and help the Jews and judge the other nations. They were not willing to accept that God came to save others also, and because of this they missed the One they were looking for.

Record your own reflections on Luke 4:14-30

## Luke 4:31-44

What kind of teacher was Jesus? (vs. 32)

Who do the demons believe Jesus to be? (vs. 34, 41)

What happened when Jesus began to heal people? (vs. 40)

Does Jesus heal everyone?

Why does Jesus go to be alone? (vs. 42)

Things to remember in prayer: Healing and caring for the sick was a major part of Jesus' ministry. Pray for those who are ill.

Practical Application: There are several things we should take from this passage. It is about the miracles that Jesus did. Jesus' ministry was equally about taking care of the needs of individuals and proclaiming the good news. The two went hand in hand. It is up to us to continue this ministry. Although we cannot perform miracles as Jesus did, we can help those who are in need. As we are doing this we must also share the good news with the people we meet. Jesus healed people all night long, but then He went to be by Himself. God rested on the seventh day and Jesus went to rest in this story. We need to be busy with the work God has given us, but we also need to set aside time to rest, pray, and meditate upon God's word.

Record your own reflections on Luke 4:31-44

Luke 5:1-11

What was the response of the people to the teaching of Jesus? (vs. 1)

What does Jesus do to avoid the crowds of people?

Why does Jesus perform this miracle?

What is Peter's response to the miracle? (vs. 8)

After they return to shore what do the fishermen do? (vs. 11)

What have you given up to follow Jesus?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for individuals you know, such as missionaries, who give up much to preach the gospel.

Practical Application: The first disciples give up everything to follow Jesus. They walk away from their families, friends, jobs, and more to learn from Jesus. As we continue to read Luke we will see that the disciples did not always have the right theology and they did not always grasp who Jesus was or what His mission was about, but they were serious about following Him. They allowed their actions to shape what they believe. Jesus says "follow" and that is what they do. We often take the opposite approach. We want to get all of our beliefs worked out before we act. Sometimes this hinders us from acting at all. Although beliefs are important, so are actions. We cannot trade one for another. It is just as important to act as it is to believe. Jesus calls His disciples to act first by asking them to follow Him, knowing that they will believe later.

Record your own reflections on Luke 5:1-11

## Luke 5:12-16

What kind of man do you think the leper was?

What characteristic best describes the actions of this man? (vs. 12)

Why does Jesus often tell people he heals not to tell anyone about it? (vs. 14)

Why do you think the word spreads even more? (vs. 15)

Why does Luke give us the information found in verse 16?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for a humble spirit.

Practical Application: “Not my will be done, but Yours.” You sometimes hear that in prayers, but I wonder if we really mean it. That is a hard thing to pray. It is especially hard if you are dealing with something such as leprosy, cancer, or the recent Texas wildfires. If we are truthful with ourselves, then we will admit that we want more than anything to be spared. We want the cancer or leprosy to go away. We want our home and possessions spared, so it is hard to sincerely pray, “Not my will be done, but Yours.” The leper in this story says to Jesus, “Lord if you choose, you can make me clean.” The leper knew Jesus could do it, but He allowed Jesus to choose His fate. That takes great faith and Jesus could see this. He says to the leper, “I do choose. Be made clean.” The next time you face a great struggle pray that His will be done and not yours.

Record your own reflections on Luke 5:12-16

Luke 5:17-26

What was the character of this man's friends?

What ailment was this man seeking healing for?

Why do you think Jesus forgave this man's sins first?

How do the scribes and Pharisees react to Jesus forgiving sins? (vs. 21)

What have you done to bring someone to Jesus?

Things to remember in prayer: Please pray for the faithful men and women who do whatever they can to bring someone to Jesus.

Practical Application: This story has many interesting facets. The part of the story that impresses me the most is the faith of the man's friends. They will not let anything stand between them and getting their friend to Jesus. This is how we should be. We should not let anything stand in our way from getting a friend, relative, coworker, etc. to see Jesus. If we would merely adapt the mentality of these men the church would grow by leaps and bounds. The day the paralytic man met Jesus changed his life forever, and it will do the same for the people around us.

Record your own reflections on Luke 5:17-26

Luke 5:27-39

What is Jesus' first command to Levi? (vs. 27)

What is the Pharisees and scribes reaction to Jesus communing with sinners?

Do we ever cut ourselves off from those who need us the most?

Why do Jesus' disciples not fast? (vs. 34-35)

Is there a need for fasting today?

What point is Jesus trying to get across with the parables in vs. 36-39?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the people who take the gospel to sinners and outsiders.

Practical Application: The universality of the kingdom of God is a theme that runs throughout the gospel of Luke. The gospel is for saints and sinners, men and women, poor and rich, outsiders and insiders, etc. In this section Jesus communes with tax collectors and sinners. The religious people are angered by the actions of Jesus. Every passage of the gospel has application to us. If we were going to identify ourselves as either religious people or sinners I would venture to say that we are closer to the religious people. We identify ourselves as people of God. We strive to follow the law of God to the best of our ability. We attend worship every week. We have a lot in common with the religious people of Jesus' day, but these were the individuals who cut themselves off from everyone else. They saw no need in reaching out to the people who needed them the most. Although we have lots in common with the religious people of Jesus' day we should learn from their mistakes and seek to be like Jesus.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 5:27-39

Luke 6:1-11

Why does Luke place these two stories together (6:1-5, 6-11)?

How did the Pharisees and scribes misunderstand the purpose of the Sabbath?

How does the story of David and his men (1 Sam. 21:1-6) relate to what Jesus' disciples did (6:1)?

What was the reaction of the Pharisees and the scribes to Jesus' teaching on the Sabbath? (vs. 11)

What is the purpose behind the laws of God?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for a soft heart and an open mind that is always ready and willing to accept the will of God.

Practical Application: It would be wrong to accuse the Pharisees of not loving the word of God. They loved it, but they misunderstood it. They were so afraid of breaking the law of God that they created laws to protect the law, but what they ended up doing was binding the law from its intended purpose. In trying to keep people from breaking the law of God they made it void. The purpose of the law of God was and is for the benefit of people. God has a specific purpose for every law He creates. We may not always be able to see the purpose behind every law, but we can rest assured there is one. When a society ignores the laws of God it will not be long before they collapse. If an individual ignores the laws of God they will not enjoy an abundant life. The Pharisees respected the law, but not in the way God intended them to. When Jesus corrects their abuses they are filled with anger, instead of admitting their own mistakes.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 6:1-11

Luke 6:12-26

What does Jesus do before He chooses the apostles? (vs. 12)

What is the difference between a disciple and an apostle? (vs. 13)

Why did the people come to Jesus? (vs. 18)

How would you explain the differences between this sermon and the sermon on the mount in Matthew?

What kind of people receive blessings and what kind of people receive woes?

Is your life more like those who receive blessings or those who receive woes?

Things to remember in prayer: Be thankful for the marvelous teaching of Jesus.

Practical Application: Some skeptics might compare the sermon on the plain found here in Luke and the sermon on the mount in Matthew and say the Bible writers got it wrong because they do not match up. A person who has come to this conclusion has failed to critically consider all the options. Luke and Matthew are not giving us a detailed account of the same sermon. One sermon took place on a mountain while the other took place on a plain. They are similar because they are delivered by the same man, but they are not the same because they are not the same sermon. When I was a campus minister I used to go to all the supporting congregations informing them about the work I was doing. My message to those congregations was similar, but not the same. There are many things that happened in the life of Jesus that were not recorded. What we have recorded for us in the four gospels is exactly what God intended us to have.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 6:12-26

## Luke 6:27-38

How are Christians supposed to be different from the world?

How is our definition of love different from the biblical definition of love?

What is the rationale behind these commands? (vss. 35-36)

What must we do to receive forgiveness? (vs. 37)

Are these commands you strive to live by everyday?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for your enemies.

Practical Application: Christians are supposed to be a little weird, crazy, and different. We are to be all these things in a godly way. Nearly every biblical character does something we would describe as not normal. John the Baptist wears burlap and eats locusts and honey. Hosea marries a prostitute. Jeremiah sets up camp in front of the temple of God and acts much like a modern day street preacher. These are things we find weird, but according to this text in Luke Jesus doesn't want us to be normal. He wants us to be a little bit different. Are you striving to fit in with the crowd? Are you laboring to keep up with the Joneses? This is not what Jesus has called us to do. He has called us to be like Him, and that means we might be called weird every now and then.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 6:27-38

## Luke 6:39-49

How do we interpret 6:41-42 in light of Gal. 6:1? What do you think Jesus is trying to teach His followers?

What is the origin of the good fruit we may or may not produce? (vs. 45)

Does building a strong foundation take work? (vs. 48)

What will happen if we build on the wrong foundation? (vs. 49)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the humility to recognize your own faults and correct them, before helping a brother or sister in need.

Practical Application: Matthew presents a parallel account of Luke 6:46-49 in Matt. 7:21-27, but they are slightly different. Matthew presents a vivid picture of the storm that took place, but Luke focuses on the construction of the foundations. Matthew focuses on the coming judgment, but Luke focuses on the necessity of being a follower of Jesus in this life. Luke describes the commitment and effort it takes to build a strong foundation. It doesn't happen overnight! He also points out that if we build on the wrong foundation, then all that we have worked for and aspire to will be destroyed. We must all consider what kind of foundation we are working towards, and know that the only foundation worth building takes time and work. May we commit to the task before us, and build a foundation that will not be moved by the storms of life.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 6:39-49

Luke 7:1-10

Why does the centurion send Jewish elders instead of going himself?

Was the centurion a wealthy man? (vs. 5)

Why does the centurion send the second group?

What did the centurion and Jesus have in common? (vs. 8)

How did Jesus respond to the centurion?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the world to recognize the authority of Jesus.

Practical Application: This story is important on several levels, but I believe it is a key for us to understand the rest of the passages on wealth and poverty in the Gospel of Luke. In some passages it seems as if Jesus is condemning people with wealth, while praising the poor. These passages can be confusing if they are isolated and not kept in the context of the rest of the Bible. This passage is helpful because it is about a wealthy man whom Jesus praises. This let's us know that it is not wealth that Jesus condemns, but one's attitude towards wealth. The centurion was a generous man who helped build a synagogue. As we continue through the Gospel of Luke and encounter more passages on wealth it will be helpful to keep this passage in mind.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 7:1-10

Luke 7:11-17

Why does Jesus heal the widow's son? (vs. 13)

Why did people stop and stare when Jesus touched the plank the body was being carried on?

How do the people respond to this miracle? (vs. 16)

Who do they say Jesus is? (vs. 16)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the compassion to help others.

Practical Application: In the story prior to this one Jesus healed the centurion's servant because of the centurion's faith, but in this story faith is not mentioned. Although Jesus often heals people because of faith He doesn't have to. In this story he is moved by the widow and her loss. He has compassion on her and brings her son back to life. If we are to be imitators of Jesus, then we must be compassionate individuals. We need to feel compassion for others, and help them when we have the opportunity to do so.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 7:11-17

Luke 7:18-35

Why does John the Baptist send his disciples to ask Jesus who He is?

How does Jesus respond to John's disciples? (vs. 22-23)

What is significant about the group mentioned in verse 22?

What were the people looking for when they went to hear John?

What do the Pharisees and lawyers say about John and Jesus? (vss. 33-34)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for a pure and honest heart that always seeks truth above everything else.

Practical Application: This story picks up a common theme found in Luke, "Who is Jesus?" It somewhat expands this theme by also asking the question, "Who is John?" This all begins when John, who is in prison, sends his disciples to question Jesus about who He is. Jesus does not give a direct answer, but instead has the disciples report back to John on the miracles and other great things Jesus was doing. Jesus then takes this opportunity to ask the crowds about who they believe John to be. Finally, the passage concludes by pointing out the unbelief of the Pharisees and the lawyers. Jesus points out their hypocrisy in contrasting the differences between Himself and John. What we should take away from this passage is the need to always seek truth.

Sometimes believers can have moments of doubt, and sometimes individuals are blinded to the truth because of selfish reasons.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 7:18-35

## Luke 7:36-50

In what ways did Simon neglect his responsibility as host? (vs. 44-46)

Did Jesus condemn Simon for his failure to do these things?

What is the purpose of the parable Jesus tells in vs. 41-42?

How does this passage relate to the many passages in Luke about the rich and poor?

Things to remember in prayer: Thank God for the gift of forgiveness.

Practical Application: Luke has much to tell us about rich and poor people, and although they are not specifically mentioned in this passage perhaps it still has something to teach us on the subject. Why are the poor praised and the rich condemned in the Gospel of Luke? I don't believe it is simply a matter of what one has or doesn't have. In this story we may assume that the sinful woman is poor and the Pharisee is wealthy. If this is true, then this story gives us some insight into why the poor are praised and the rich condemned. The sinful woman understands who Jesus is and that she is in need of forgiveness. The Pharisee is blind to these things. What causes his blindness? Perhaps it is pride, position, or wealth. We must seek to have a humble spirit as the poor often have, and not allow earthly things to blind us to seeing who Jesus really is.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 7:36-50

Luke 8:1-15

Why is it significant that Luke tells us who Jesus is traveling with?

Is it possible to change the quality of soil?

Why do you suppose people had a hard time understanding this parable?

What kind of soil best describes you?

Things to remember in prayer: Be thankful for the individuals who work tirelessly to support various mission efforts, even though they may not be recognized.

Practical Application: It's hard for us to grasp how people misunderstood the stories and parables Jesus told. We have heard them so many times that we know where the story is going before it's ever read aloud. It is a wonderful thing for people to know the Bible, but it is also good for us to take a step back from time to time to make sure we are not missing a vital point. It can be beneficial to view these familiar stories with fresh eyes. Keep on reading the Bible everyday, but don't always assume you know all there is to know about the text.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 8:1-15

Luke 8:16-25

Why does Jesus emphasize the need to “hear” in vs. 18 and vs. 21?

Which is more important to Jesus physical family or spiritual family? (vs. 19-21)

Which is more important to you physical family or spiritual family?

What does the miracle of the calming of the sea say about the identity of Jesus?

What characteristic describes the disciples during and after the storm? (vs. 25)

How does fear act as a barrier to faith?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for healthy spiritual relationships that will surpass any earthly relationships you may have.

Practical Application: In N.T. Wright’s commentary on Luke he states, “People today still judge Jesus by their expectations, instead of pausing and probing into the evidence to see what was really going on...Following the Messiah who is different to what we imagined is always demanding; but this is the only way to the kingdom of God.” We all hold preconceived ideas about Jesus. We cannot prevent this, but what we must do is get rid of our preconceived ideas as we encounter the truth of the word of God. This is especially difficult when we meet with challenging texts such as 8:19-21, which calls us to think more highly of our spiritual family than our natural family. This does not feel right, and we may be tempted to minimize or even ignore texts like these. Although these texts are difficult this is what being a disciple is all about. Jesus never promised it would be easy. If we ignore or minimize crucial texts of the Bible, then we are not truly following God.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 8:16-25

Luke 8:26-39

Why was this man naked and homeless?

Why do you think the people were afraid after learning what happened? (vs. 35-37)

Why do you think the man wanted to go with Jesus? (vs. 38)

Why does Jesus refuse his request? (vs. 39)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for people who are still seized with fear and unable to commit to God.

Practical Application: Jesus often invites individuals to follow Him, but this man does not receive any such invitation. In fact, sometimes Jesus will invite a person to follow Him, but they refuse (Luke 18:22). Why is this man, who has a strong desire to follow Jesus, not allowed to go with Him? It seems the best answer is that Jesus needed him elsewhere. Jesus saw a need in this man's community and commanded him to return there. We often think we know where we are needed most, but this may not be the case. This man thought he needed to be with Jesus, but Jesus tells him otherwise. If we are not given the job we want or the position we desire, we must not be upset. It could be that God has a different plan than we do. We must be faithful to the things that are put before us.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 8:26-39

Luke 8:40-56

What do these two stories have in common?

Why was it considered taboo in the 1st century to touch a sick person?

What role does faith play in both stories?

How does Jesus continue to touch us and take away our sickness?

Things to remember in prayer: Be thankful for Jesus who came to this earth to touch humanity and remove the sickness of sin.

Practical Application: Luke the physician gives us two great stories about the Great Physician. In the story about the woman who was bleeding we are told she had the ailment for twelve years and she had spent all her money on doctors. The other story is about a twelve year old girl who falls ill and eventually dies. Luke being a physician would have understood the circumstances of both of these stories better than most people, but even he sees no possible medical answer. In Luke's understanding of the events that are taking place there is only one solution, the Great Physician. How often do we look somewhere else when Jesus is the only one with the answer to our problems?

Record your own thoughts on Luke 8:40-56

Luke 9:1-17

What two things were the twelve sent out to do? (vs. 2)

What purpose do you see, if any, behind the command in verse 3?

Why do think Herod wanted to see Jesus? (vs. 9)

What two things did Jesus do when the crowds began to follow Him? (vs. 11)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the kingdom of God to be recognized by all.

Practical Application: The mission of Jesus and His early followers was clear. It was to proclaim the kingdom of God and help those who were in need. Our mission today has not changed. Jesus is Messiah, Christ, and Lord. These are all ways of saying that Jesus is our King. Our loyalty is to His kingdom. We should be continually engaged in helping and advancing the kingdom of God any way we can. Part of the mission of the kingdom of God is to help those who are in need, especially those who are on the fringes of society (Luke 4:18). If we are not working to tell others about the kingdom of God and helping people in need, then we are not serious about following Jesus.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 9:1-17

Luke 9:18-27

What was Jesus doing when His disciples gathered around Him? (vs. 18)

Why is Jesus' question an important one? (vs. 18, 20)

What does it mean to deny yourself? (vs. 23)

In what ways have you denied yourself and are now following Jesus?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray to God everyday, "Less of me, and more of You."

Practical Application: In this section Jesus begins with a question, "Who do you say that I am?" but that question quickly leads to a command, "Deny yourself and follow Me." We cannot separate faith from action. What we believe about Jesus directly affects the way we live and the choices we make. If we believe Jesus to be our King, then we are no longer going to live for ourselves. If Jesus is our King, then we are going to do what He says and follow in His footsteps. The question for Christians today is this: If beliefs affect our actions, then can people see that we are followers of Jesus? If they cannot, then we need to reevaluate our priorities. Perhaps, we are placing less important things above following Jesus.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 9:18-27

## Luke 9:28-45

What are Jesus, Moses, and Elijah discussing? (vs. 31) Why might this be significant?

What does Peter want to do when he sees the three men standing on the mountain? (vs. 33)

What does God want the disciples to know? (vs. 35)

What is the significance of mountains in this text? (vs. 28, 37) How does this relate to the other uses of mountains in Luke and the rest of the Bible?

Why is it significant that the disciples are unable to cast out the demon? (9:1-2)

Things to remember in prayer: Whether you are at a peak or in a valley remember to always talk to God.

Practical Application: This section could very easily be divided into two sections, but these stories seem to go together. These two stories are found together in each of the synoptic gospels. They are also connected by language. In verse 28 they go up to the mountain to pray, and in verse 37 they “come down from the mountain.” Although these two stories have much to teach us on their own, together they remind us of the peaks and valleys we face as Christians.

Sometimes we can have a moment when everything is going right. We think we are exactly where God wants us to be, and all of a sudden everything comes crashing down around us. This is what happened to Peter, James, and John. Remember that peaks and valleys are part of the Christian life. If you’re in a valley just remember that the only way you can go is up.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 9:28-45

Luke 9:46-62

What do you think is the main point of this section?

What is significant about the phrase “He set His face toward Jerusalem”?

(vs. 51, 53)

What do verses 57-62 teach us about being a disciple?

If we discussed the sayings found in verses 57-62 with someone preparing to be baptized how do you think they would respond?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the strength and courage to place following God above everything else.

Practical Application: This section of brief stories and sayings is about discipleship and following Jesus. Jesus sets His face toward Jerusalem and we are expected to follow. N.T. Wright has stated, “Traveling in obedience to God’s call is one of Luke’s central pictures for what it means to be a Christian.” The disciples may have been on a literal journey with Jesus to Jerusalem, but we are all called to begin a spiritual journey with Him. Jesus makes it clear in this section and other places that this is a difficult journey. He demands we place following Him above everything else in our life. The journey may be difficult, but the reward at the end is well worth any trials we face along the way.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 9:46-62

Luke 10:1-16

What are the benefits, if any, to Jesus sending out the disciples in pairs? (vs. 1)

Do you think these traveling instructions are at all related to the previous section?

(Luke 9:46-62)

Why will it be worse for these cities than Tyre and Sidon?

Is Jesus teaching that some will be punished more harshly than others? (vs. 14)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray that those who have an opportunity will accept the gospel and not reject it?

Practical Application: Jesus recently sent out the twelve apostles to “proclaim the kingdom of God,” but now he sends out 72 disciples to do similar work. There seems to be a sense of urgency about this commission. They may not pass this way again, and the people in these towns need to decide where they stand. Many people today do not have a sense of urgency. They think they have all the time in the world to make up their mind concerning issues related to eternity. The people that Jesus spoke to may have lived for days, months, and even years after he delivered His urgent message. The thing about following Jesus is that it is not just about the afterlife. It is about this life also. If one puts off the urgent message to follow Jesus they may live for a long time, but they are still wasting precious time right here and right now.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 10:1-16

Luke 10:17-24

What good thing should the disciples be thankful for? (vs. 20)

How does vs. 21-22 help us understand the trinity?

Who are the wise and the infants in verse 21?

Why were the disciples more blessed than the great men of faith who came before them? (vs. 23-24)

Things to remember in prayer: Thank God for the blessings and privileges you enjoy.

Practical Application: In this passage Jesus reveals the special position his disciples are in. They are a witness to things that prophets and Kings had wanted to know about for years. Not only do they have the advantage of living at the time the Messiah came, but they get to sit at His feet and learn from Him. Jesus tells them they are blessed, but I wonder how many of them realized the position they were in. We often find ourselves in remarkable positions, but do we realize it? We were blessed to be raised in a country that is predominantly Christian. Most of us grew up in homes where all our needs and quite a few of our wants were met. We live in a country where freedom of religion and speech are rights for everyone. Do we take these things for granted, or do we thank God every chance we get for the blessings He has bestowed upon us?

Record your own thoughts on Luke 10:17-24

Luke 10:25-37

Why does this teacher of the law ask Jesus these questions? (vs. 25)

Are the commands in verse 27 original to Jesus? (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18)

Why does Jesus use a priest and a Levite in His story?

What did Jews think of Samaritans in the 1st century?

What is the point of this story for us today?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the vision and courage to be just like the Samaritan.

Practical Application: This story is one of the most famous stories in the Bible and there are many lessons that can be gleaned from it. I want us to notice something that may have been missed, but is a theme throughout Luke. Jesus is concerned for people on the fringes of society. He uses a priest and a Levite in His story, because they represent this societal system that marginalizes the poor, sick, downtrodden, and outcasts of society. The priest and the Levite would not have been wealthy men. This is not a story about rich and poor. It is a story about who is accepted in society (the priest and Levite), and who is not (the Samaritan). As we look at this story it should cause us to examine our own lives. Are there any people we push to the margins? Do we look down upon certain people because of their race, appearance, social status, etc.? If we do, then we need to change our attitude immediately.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 10:25-37

Luke 10:38-42

In what ways are Martha and Mary different?

Are you more like Martha or Mary?

What does it mean to be “anxious and troubled about many things?” (vs. 41)

Why is it important to make time for God even though our life may be very busy?

Things to remember in prayer: When you are at the busiest point of the day stop for a moment and pray.

Practical Application: We all live busy lives. We cram as much as we can into one day. We work at our jobs. We set aside time for family activities. We go and go, neglecting our spiritual life, because we feel like we're too busy. Most of us probably identify more with Martha than Mary. We may want to be more like Mary, but we just can't find the time. If we are not careful the cares of the world may end up taking over our life. We may find ourselves “anxious and troubled” about so many things that we fail to make time for God. Before it is too late we need to put off our Martha ways and seek to be more like Mary. No matter how busy we think we are, we should always make time to sit at the feet of Jesus.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 10:38-42

Luke 11:1-13

Why do you think Jesus spent so much time in prayer?

Do we need to be taught how to pray?

How does studying the prayers of others help us to pray?

What kind of a father is God? (vs. 11-13)

Things to remember in prayer: Thank God for the avenue of prayer and all the rich blessings God bestows on us.

Practical Application: The disciples were faithful Jews who had grown up listening to people pray and had prayed many times themselves, but somehow they felt they needed more instruction on this subject. I think most of us feel this way. We know what prayer is. We have grown up hearing people pray. We've even prayed ourselves, but somehow we feel we could learn more. How does one learn how to become better at praying? For some, prayer comes naturally, but for most of us it is something we have to work at. Here are a couple of things that will help improve one's prayer life. First, be purposeful about prayer. Jesus didn't just pray before meals. He set aside time to pray and He often sought out quiet places where He could be alone and wouldn't be distracted by other things. Second, we can learn from others. Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. We can learn from Jesus, as well as all the many prayers that are recorded for us in the Bible. We can also learn from faithful Christians we know, or others who have written down their prayers and preserved them for others.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 11:1-13

Luke 11:14-28

What did the people who saw Jesus perform miracles question?

Where do you find other references to the “finger of God” in Scripture? (vs. 20)

How did Jesus answer His critics?

What is likely to happen if we don’t fill voids in our life? (vs. 26)

Things to remember in prayer: Pray that your life be stripped of the things that interfere with your relationship with God, and be filled with things that draw you closer to Him.

Practical Application: In the middle of this section we find an interesting story about a demon who leaves a person, only to come back stronger than before. We may be tempted to dismiss this story because it seems as though it doesn’t apply to us, but that would be a mistake. Jesus is teaching His disciples a principle that Paul will later expand on. Whenever we rid our lives of sin we need to replace it with something good. Many have heard the old adage “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” Although this saying is never found in the Bible the idea behind it is Biblical. We need to stay busy doing good. We need to replace our evil ways with good ways. Just getting rid of sin will not do. We must commit ourselves to accomplishing God’s will.

Record your own thoughts on Luke 11:14-28

Luke 11:29-41

What does the “sign of Jonah” have to do with repentance? (vs. 32)

What is significant about the contrast between light and darkness in Luke?

What was Jesus challenging when He did not wash his feet? (vs. 38)

Are you ever guilty of focusing more on the outside than on the inside?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray to be filled with the light of Christ.

Practical Application: Repentance is hard for many of us because pride will not allow us to admit our faults. The sign the people in Jesus’ day were to receive was a sign of repentance. Nineveh, an evil city, had repented when Jonah went to them. Jonah did not want to go, nor did he spend much time trying to convince them to repent, but they did anyway. Jesus now goes to the Jews, the people of God, and asks them to do the same thing. Jesus even performs miracles and is more convincing than Jonah. Will the people repent or not? Some will and others won’t, but the ones who do not have no one to blame but themselves. If they failed to repent it was only because pride stood in their way. We now have the word of God and the same call to repentance. Will we humble ourselves before the Lord, or we will also allow our pride to stand in the way?

Record your own thoughts on Luke 11:29-41

Luke 11:42-54

Why is Jesus harsh with these Pharisees and scribes, but is gentle with many sinners?

What do you think Jesus is referring to when He chastises the Pharisees for neglecting “justice and the love of God?” (vs. 42)

What is the connection between these scribes and their fathers who killed the prophets?

Things to remember in prayer: Pray for the humility to admit wrongdoing when it is pointed out by others.

Practical Application: These words of Jesus may seem harsh to us, but there are a few things we must consider.

1. In the culture Jesus lived in discussing religion was a common occurrence. This is radically different from the culture in which we live. Discussing religion in our culture is almost taboo. Tolerance can be a good thing, but our culture is so obsessed with tolerance that we have cut ourselves off from publicly discussing the issues most important to us.
2. These were men who knew better. They were intelligent, educated men who understood what they were doing. This was probably not the first time Jesus had spoken to these men. He had probably warned them before, and after rejecting His teaching Jesus rebuked them.
3. Jesus knows the hearts and minds of everyone. He has an ability that we do not have. We may know someone is in the wrong, but we may not know their motive or their knowledge of the subject. If we are ignorant or uncertain about these things it is best to be gentle, instead of offering a harsh rebuke.