

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

Luke 1:24-45

LEADER'S STUDY

The Holy Spirit is Indispensable to Christ's Ministry

Luke 1:24-45

What is happening?

In this familiar opening to the Christmas story, we see the angel Gabriel telling a young girl named Mary that the Holy Spirit would conceive a child in her womb without the help of any human male. While struggling with this incomprehensible reality, Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was carrying a child conceived through a different sort of miracle. Upon hearing Mary's voice, Elizabeth's son became excited in the womb, confirming to Elizabeth everything Mary had told her about the conception. Even before the Son took his first breath on earth, the Holy Spirit was instrumental in his life.

The Spirit didn't simply set things in motion and then stand back and watch, for the scriptures tell us He was with Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:21-22), his temptations (Luke 4:1-2), his ministry (Acts 10:37-38), his death (Hebrews 9:13-14), his resurrection (1 Peter 3:18), and his instructions to his disciples upon his ascension (Acts 1:1-2). From start to finish, the Holy Spirit was an active participant in Jesus' earthly life. Except when enduring separation from the Father on the cross in order to pay for your sin and mine, the Son was never alone.

Where is the gospel?

After the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for forty days, the Spirit led him into Galilee proclaiming the gospel (Mark 1:14-15). What was that "good news"? That the Triune God was among His people, bringing His kingdom to them. The Jews had tried to bring heaven to earth by keeping the letter of the law, but they'd been unable to do it. (No one can!) So Jesus came to fulfill it for them. All he called them to do—and all he calls us to do—was repent of their futile attempts and accept the redemption he came to bring them. This is a work of all three Persons of the Trinity. Rather than it being a special project of the Son's, all of God is all in, in all of it!

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: Why should I care that the Holy Spirit was involved in all this? Does it suggest something to me that the Spirit led Jesus every step of the way? When I'm a Christ-follower, might the Spirit want to be involved in my life as well? How is God calling me to depend on Him more? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on these truths as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: Matthew 3:13-17; 12:28; Luke 3:21-22; 4:1-2, 14, 18-21; Acts 1:1-2; 10:37-38; Hebrews 9:13-14; 1 Peter 3:18.
What other places in scripture speak to this same truth?

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ Luke 1:24-45
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation. Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective.

In writing this account of Jesus' life, Luke gives specific historical details (eg., 1:1-5; 2:1-3; 3:1-2). Why do you think he included this information?

Might Luke have personally spoken to some of the people involved in order to verify the reports—including Mary? Did his inclusion of the details invite his contemporaries to do the same?

What does this say about Luke's certainty that everything he recorded was true?

Is it possible for a woman to conceive a child without ever having been with a man? (v. 37)

Would it have been easy for Mary's family and friends to accept her explanation for this pregnancy?

Is it important that we today accept that Jesus' conception happened the way the Bible says it did? Why?

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group.

In what way was Elizabeth's baby also miraculously conceived? (See vv. 7 and 13-23.)

Would Mary likely have been pleased with the situation in which she suddenly found herself?

Why might Mary have gone to visit Elizabeth at that time?

Did the Spirit minister directly to Elizabeth? (See v. 41.)

Did the Spirit minister directly to Mary during her pregnancy? (See vv. 46-47.)

When the Holy Spirit moves and causes events to happen on earth, does He also help people deal with what He's doing?

What seems to be the main point of this passage?

What do you learn about God from this passage?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Has God ever brought you into circumstances that seem impossible to explain?

Do you ever feel as if God has left you to deal with your problems alone? If so, why do you feel that way?

Do you ever balk at what you sense the Spirit wanting to do in your life? Why?

If you have not yet said "Yes" to Jesus as your Forgiver and Leader, do you think the Holy Spirit is a trustworthy enough guide to lead you into that relationship?

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?

(This is a critical part of growth that is often overlooked. If we can share it with someone else it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth and it blesses the one who hears it. Rom. 10:17)

Based on this passage, what can we pray about and how should we pray?