



<sup>17</sup>And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

notes

John was consecrated from conception to prepare the way for Jesus.

Malachi 3:1 NASB

<sup>1</sup>“Behold, I am sending My messenger, and he will clear a way before Me. And the Lord, whom you are seeking, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of armies.

John is coming in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Malachi 4:5-6 NASB

<sup>5</sup>“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. <sup>6</sup>He will turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers,

Change starts in the home.

## **SO WHAT!?**

### **In disappointment we can choose our response.**

Our response shows what we worship.

### **In desolation we can choose to have faith.**

Petition: formal request. Philippians 4:6-7

### **In discouragement we can submit our will to God’s plan.**

If dependence is the goal, then weakness is an advantage.

### **God can use our disappointment, desolation, and discouragement for his Glory.**

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## GROUP DISCUSSION

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Prayer Requests:

### **Read out loud: Luke 1:5-17**

1. Zechariah and Elizabeth were old in age and Elizabeth was barren. For them this was a huge disappointment in life, and they have probably come to terms with not having a child. What disappointments have you faced in life? It is tempting to worship God for what he can do for us and not who He is. Have you experienced this?
2. Zechariah continues to have faith despite living in a time of Roman oppression and discouragement from being childless. He has continued to pray and make his requests known to God. What role has faith played in your life in desolate times? Is it easier for you to have faith in extreme struggles or more difficult? Do you think we are in one of those difficult seasons as a society? What impossible situation are you praying for right now?
3. Zechariah has submitted his will to God's plan. He continues to perform his priestly duties, he is known as righteous and blameless. He has not conspired to bear a child another way or divorced Elizabeth. He has determined to trust God's plan. What areas of life have you had to make up your mind to submit your will or preference to God's Plan?
4. Part of John's mission is to turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous. Change starts in our homes. Do you see what happens in your home as part of the change we need in culture? What does that mean to turn the hearts of the father back to their children? Have we lost our focus when it comes to parenting our children? What struggles do you face as a parent or grandparent?

**Family Time:** Ask your children if they know what a forerunner is. Give examples of a forerunner in sports, technology, science, music etc. Then read Luke 1:5-25 and share about the forerunner John the Baptist and the important role he plays in story of Jesus.