

**Sermon Discussion Guide for Cumberland Fellowship Church Sermon Series:
Believe It – December 4, 2022**



*This guide is a supplement to the weekly sermon. We encourage families and groups to use it. When we hear God's Word, we need to do more than listen. The Bible says, "Be doers of the word, not hearers only (James 1:22)." **Step 1: GATHER** with your family or group. **Step 2: REVIEW** and **DISCUSS** the key points and scriptures from the sermon. **Step 3: PRAY** for the prayer requests shared by your family or group.*

DISCUSSION STARTER

Ask your group, "When was the earliest experience you recall of struggling with believing or doubting someone?"

DIGGING DEEPER 1

Read Luke 1:11-25. Say, "The very last words of the last book of the Old Testament read: "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6). This prophesy is fulfilled through Zechariah and Elizabeth in the birth of their son John (John the Baptist)." Say, "Zechariah and Elizabeth prayed for years for a child. Now they are old and past childbearing years. However, their prayer is answered!" Ask, "What does this speak to you about our need to keep praying, believing and trusting in God?" Say, "In spite of Zacharias' godliness, his obedience to the Law, and his lifetime of ministry, his faith was weak when it came to believing such a marvelous promise. He doubted and asked for a sign instead of believing." Ask, "Do you think Zechariah's consequences were too harsh? What does this tell us about Zechariah's trust of God?" Ask, "Are you quick to believe God's promises or hesitant because of your circumstances? Why?"

DIGGING DEEPER 2

Read Genesis 15:4-6. Say, "Here in these verses we see a contrast between the doubt of Zechariah and the belief of Abram. God tells Abram that he will have a son of his own flesh to be his heir. But God is going farther here with his plan. He says you will have even more offspring, like the stars in the sky. Abram would be the start of the whole nation of Israel. Look at Abram's response to this amazing promise in verse 6, 'Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.'" Ask, "Why do you think Zechariah doubted, while Abram (Abraham) believed?" Discuss, "Why do we tend to doubt instead of believe?"

DIGGING DEEPER 3

Read Luke 1:26-38. Say, "Let's Compare and contrast Gabriel's response to Zechariah's "how?" and Mary's "how?" Ask, "How does Gabriel's response to each reveal the heart attitudes behind the question?"

DOING THE WORD

Say, "It's human to face doubt, but it's not healthy to live in doubt. Doubt is completely natural, but it's crucial that your doubts start discussions. Ultimately, those honest discussions will fuel your faith. If your mind is filled with questions, please be open and honest about your doubts. Bring your questions to Jesus. Your goal isn't to know all the answers. Rather, it's to grow closer to the One who does. We eclipse our doubts when we walk in faith. That's your calling today. Walk forward in the faith you have, even if it's small. Close by praying that God increases your faith while at the same time extinguishing your doubts."