

# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

## CHILDREN FOLLOWING THE MAN WHO IS JESUS

# TALK IT OVER

### Key Scripture

<sup>5</sup> “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, <sup>6</sup> but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matthew 18:5-6 (ESV)

“And [Jesus] took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.” Mark 10:16 (ESV)

<sup>46</sup> An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. <sup>47</sup> But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side <sup>48</sup> and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.” Luke 9:46-48 (ESV)

<sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” Acts 2:38-39 (ESV)

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### Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a high and low.
- Who is someone that was an example of faith for you?

### Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 18:15-17. What had the people seen from Jesus that made them want to bring their kids to him for a blessing?
- Read Luke 18:15-17. The original Greek word in the text is *Brephe*, which is a word that refers to the unborn or newborn infants. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God like an infant?

### Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Children, especially infants, must rely on their parents for everything that they need, receiving what they need as a gift. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How must we approach salvation the same way?
- What is the opposite of child-like faith?
- Use a question from N.T. Wright’s “Luke: For Everyone” (108-109).

### Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Baptism is a gift that we receive as a new Christian. If you haven’t been baptized, check out our website for more info!
- Evaluate: how child-like, how solid and unflinching is my faith in Jesus? Is there something he’s asking me to trust him on? Something to confess? A decision to make in accord with His principles? Something relinquish control over?

### Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Lord, help me not to doubt, but to trust in your promises. By your Holy Spirit please give me the fully trusting faith of a child, that I might have every confidence in your ability in my life. Give me daily reminders that your salvation is a gift, which I am called to cherish, embrace, and live out. Amen.

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. What was a memorable passage from your Life Journal (or other Bible reading plan) reading this past week?
2. What’s something you’d like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. What good can we do around here (are there any community needs God is calling us to meet)?
4. Pray for one another.

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: ADVENT PROPHECIES THE BIRTH OF JOHN FORETOLD

# TALK IT OVER

### Key Scripture

*"A voice cries] "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 40:3-5 (ESV)*

*"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?" Malachi 3:1-2 (ESV)*

*"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" <sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup> "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3:1-12 (ESV)*

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### Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a high and a low.
- What's the longest camping trip you ever took?

### Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 1:5-25. Scripture is filled with stories of remarkable and improbable births. What are some other ones you can think of?
- Compare Luke 1:5-25 and Genesis 18:1-15. What is similar?

### Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Use a question from N.T. Wright's "Luke: For Everyone" (pg. 13-15).
- People in scripture always seem to be frightened when angels appear. Why do you suppose that is?
- Why do you think God likes to use miraculous births?
- If you were John's parents, what would you think of the angel's prophecy?
- John's major ministry was preparing people for Jesus. Do you feel prepared for His return?

### Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- If you had to pick one thing that was said of John or his parents, and have it be true of you, what would it be? Pray for that thing in your life this week.
- In John 9:3, Jesus uses a man's blindness to display God's works in him. Is there a hurt in your life that you wish God would turn into an opportunity for praise. Sooner than later? Pray for that this week and recognize that you may not be able to see how God is working in the midst of it – but He is!

### Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- "God, Kings have messengers that announce their coming. Thank you for sending the angel, John the Baptist, and others to point us to your son. Thank you for the way in which your word proclaims your presence in my life through faith. Help me to believe it when I heart it and treasure it! Amen."

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. How did you see God at work in your life this week?
2. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. What kind of conversations are you having with non-Christians?
4. Pray for one another.

# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: ADVENT PROPHECIES THE BIRTH OF JESUS FORETOLD

## TALK IT OVER

### Key Scripture

*"<sup>14</sup> The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." Genesis 3:13-15 (ESV)*

*"<sup>12</sup> Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)*

*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)*

*<sup>31</sup> "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. <sup>33</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34 (ESV)*

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### Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a high and a low.
- What's something you're celebrating this week?

### Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 1:26-38. What significance do you think the virgin birth plays in the identity of Jesus?
- Read Luke 1:26-38. Why do you think God chooses a "nobody" to give birth to His son?
- Read Galatians 4:4-7. Why do you think it was the right time?

### Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Use a question from N.T. Wright's "Luke: For Everyone" (pg. 15-17).
- Do you think you would have responded as Mary did?
- Contrast the promises about what Elizabeth's son would do in Luke 1:15-17. Vs. what Mary's son would do in Luke 1:31-33.
- Why do you think it was important to salvation that God also become a man? What are the errors that can come in denying either his divinity or his humanity?

### Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- God chose to live a human life, in part in order to identify with our experiences. How will it help you this week to know that your savior has "been there?!"
- God keeps his promises – chief of which is to redeem the world from the crushing weight of sin. What's a sin you have felt guilty or ashamed of that you can give over to Jesus?

### Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- "Father, the birth of your son Jesus is a moment I celebrate today. Thank you for not abandoning us, or not just flooding the earth again, but desiring to redeem all of creation (including me) from sin. As you work to make this world right again, give me a right spirit within me that seeks to honor and serve you. Amen."

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. What has God been teaching you in His word this week? Is there anything you need to repent of?
2. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. How's your weekly 3-2-1 challenge going? (3 Conversations with New People, Learn 2 Names, Make 1 Meaningful Connection)
4. Pray for one another.

# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: ADVENT PROPHCIES MARY'S SONG

## TALK IT OVER

### Start Here

This song is often called the Magnificat (Latin translation of the first few words - My soul magnifies the Lord)

Jesus' identity as our Savior is the ultimate demonstration of God's grace in the lives of His children. We did nothing to deserve a Savior, but through God's Son, a way was made for us to experience redemption, the atonement for our sins and eternity with God. The truth of God's grace was a source of immeasurable joy for Mary.

### Key Scripture

*"<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; <sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.' <sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home." Luke 1:46-56 (ESV)*

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### Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- How would you define authentic joy (vs. happiness?)
- Can you share a time when you were joyful, but not happy?

### Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 1:46-56. What reason did Mary give for her joy in 1:48?
- Read Luke 1:46-56. What attributes of God does Mary sing of?
- Read Luke 1:54-55 and Genesis 22:16-18. How was Jesus' birth related to God's promise to Abraham?

### Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Use a question from N.T. Wright's "Luke: For Everyone" (pg. 18-20).
- What attributes of God cause you to rejoice? How does reflecting on those attributes affect the way you worship?
- Throughout scripture, recounting the deeds of God is an important expression of worship. In verses 51-53, what works of God did Mary mention (this is a different question than God's attributes)?
- In hindsight, when has God provided for you in ways that said "only God could have come through in this way?"

### Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- What's something you're waiting on? Give it to God in prayer. What's some language from Luke 1:46-48 that you can work into your own prayer life?
- For one week, try keeping a "Gratitude Journal." Every day, reflect on the happenings of your day and record something you're grateful for. Read it at the end of the week and see if it doesn't give you joy!

### Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- "God, you give us almost no greater comfort other than you "remember us." Wherever we're at, whatever we're struggling with, you have us in mind, and are actively working for our good. This week I pray for reminders of your presence, that I might also be reminded to give you praise! Amen."

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. What was a memorable passage from your Life Journal (or other Bible reading plan) reading this past week?
2. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. What good can we do around here (are there any community needs God is calling us to meet)?
4. Pray for one another.

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: ADVENT PROPHECIES ZECHARIAH'S SONG

# TALK IT OVER

### Key Scripture

*<sup>57</sup> Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. <sup>58</sup> And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup> And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, <sup>60</sup> but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." <sup>61</sup> And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." <sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. <sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. <sup>64</sup> And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. <sup>65</sup> And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, <sup>66</sup> and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him. <sup>67</sup> And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, <sup>68</sup> "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people <sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, <sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, <sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; <sup>72</sup> to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, <sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us <sup>74</sup> that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. <sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, <sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, <sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high <sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." <sup>80</sup> And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel." Luke 1:67-80 (ESV)*

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### Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a high and a low.
- What are your Christmas plans?
- Do you ever just make up songs on the spot?

### Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 1:57-80. What's something that sticks out to you?

### Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Use a question from N.T. Wright's "Luke: For Everyone" (pg. 20-21).
- Circumcision (in Luke 1:59) was the sign of the Old Testament Covenant God had with people. What's the sign of the New Testament Covenant?
- What might you learn if you couldn't speak for several months?
- Why does Zechariah mention David in his song? Check your People's Bible Commentary on Luke if you need help!
- We are usually not great students of the Old Testament, and think of it stereotypically as filled only with law. However, what is Zechariah's view of God's disposition based on the Old Testament?

### Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- What's a promise of God in Luke 1:67-80 that you can remember this week?
- What's one way you can share the joy of Christmas with others?

### Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- "God, we cannot overstate, over-praise, or over-adore you for what you have done in sending your son to be our redemption. Thank you for your mercy and salvation. Make me a person of peace in my neighborhood and workplace, that others may know to ask me about the reason for my joy. Amen."

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. How did you see God at work in your life this week?
2. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. What kind of conversations are you having with non-Christians?
4. Pray for one another.

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: CHRISTMAS SIMEON'S SONG

# TALK IT OVER

### Start Here

Simeon's Song is often known by its Latin name; the Nunc Dimittis.

### Key Scripture

*"Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine."* Exodus 13:2 (ESV)

*See OT Childbirth purification instructions in Leviticus 12.*

*"he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."* Isaiah 49:6 (ESV)

*"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."* Matthew 1:21 (ESV)

*and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."<sup>10</sup> And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."<sup>11</sup> And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him."<sup>12</sup> And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."* Romans 15:9-12 (ESV)

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### Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a high and a low from Christmas!

### Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 2:22-40. Why do you think Simeon's song came to be used as one of the 5 most influential songs of worship for the early church (in the first few centuries of Christianity)?
- How does Luke 2:22-40 build off of the Angel's announcement to Mary in Luke 1?

### Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Use a question from N.T. Wright's "Luke: For Everyone" (pg. 25-26).
- Read Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 49:6, and Romans 15:9-12. At the time of Jesus' incarnate ministry, the Jews had a very poor attitude toward the Gentiles (non-Jews) as being people God didn't want to save. Why do you think they missed the clear statements of scripture? How can we keep from being blind to things scripture is telling us?
- Read Luke 2:34. Who would rise and who would fall?
- How would you define the "favor" of God (Luke 2:40)?

### Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Christmas is technically supposed to be observed for the next two weeks. What's one way you can "take Christmas with you?"
- Are there people that you'd rather not interact with or share the Gospel with? How can you get some relational time with those people in order to understand and empathize with them?

### Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- "Lord, I may not have physically gotten eyes on Jesus like Simeon did, but to know Him as proclaimed in your word, to have His Spirit dwelling in my heart – that gives me great joy. May the knowledge of your son give me great peace in this life, and whenever I depart from this life. Amen."

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. What has God been teaching you in His word this week? Is there anything you need to repent of?
2. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. How's your weekly 3-2-1 challenge going? (3 Conversations with New People, Learn 2 Names, Make 1 Meaningful Connection)
4. Pray for one another.

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: CHRISTMAS WISDOM AND STATURE

# TALK IT OVER

### Key Scripture

*“<sup>41</sup> Now [Jesus’] parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. <sup>43</sup> And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, <sup>44</sup> but supposing him to be in the group they went a day’s journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, <sup>45</sup> and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” <sup>49</sup> And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” <sup>50</sup> And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. <sup>51</sup> And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.” Luke 2:41-52 (ESV)*

*“<sup>18</sup> For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” <sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (ESV)*

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### Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a high and a low.
- How did you ring in the new year?

### Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 2:41-52. We always want to have perfect kids, but do you think it would be hard to have a literally sinless kid?
- Read Luke 2:41-52. What is the significance behind Jesus saying “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” What are other times that the Gospels tell us Jesus visited the temple in Jerusalem?

### Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Use a question from N.T. Wright’s “Luke: For Everyone” (pg. 26-27).
- Look up the definition of the word stature (Luke 2:52).
- Jesus’ “humiliation” is that he did not fully or consistently take advantage of his divine omnipotence, omniscience, etcetera. How can God grow in wisdom (Luke 2:52)?
- It doesn’t seem that Jesus had advanced synagogue schooling. Many times people also mention that his father is a carpenter, or he is from Nazareth, as reasons to be incredulous about his wisdom. How do Jesus’ humble origins with amazing wisdom bear witness to the power of God? Would there be a reason that God would not want his son’s wisdom to be seen as being taught by a certain synagogue or rabbi?

### Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. For a dose of the Wisdom of God, visit [scriptureonthego.com](http://scriptureonthego.com). Follow along with the reading plan and podcast this week.

### Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- “Lord, let me know go after the wisdom of the world, which is a chasing after the wind. Fill me with your wisdom, your word, your truth, and your love. In the name of Jesus, Amen.”

### Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. What was a memorable passage from your Life Journal (or other Bible reading plan) reading this past week?
2. What’s something you’d like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. What good can we do around here (are there any community needs God is calling us to meet)?
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