

Our goal in studying the Bible is two-fold. One part of the goal as we read is to engage with our **mind**, to grow in our knowledge of who God is as he has revealed himself in his word. The other part of our goal is to engage with our **heart**, by responding to God as we read with our love, praise, gratitude, confession, needs, questions, and desires.

Engaging with our mind *and* heart as we seek the help of the Holy Spirit helps us grow in an intimate relationship with God through Jesus our Savior as we see him more clearly, know him better and love him more.

Day 1- Read Luke 3

- How is God revealed in this chapter? What is he like? Who is Jesus shown to be? What is he like?

Pray: Spend time in adoration and thanksgiving.

- What is human nature shown to be like in this chapter? Is this true of you in your life right now?

Pray: Spend time in confession and repentance.

- What does this passage of Scripture show that you need from God? How does your heart need to move to align with what you see in Scripture? Is there something you need to believe? Is there action you need to take?

Pray: Spend time asking God for what you need to live for him.

Meditation: *Luke 3:21-22 "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son with you I am well pleased."*

Day 2- Luke 3:1-7

1. What was the spark, stated in verse 2, which launched John's calling?

2. According to verse 3, what was John calling people to?

Scholar's Note: "**Repentance** is not merely... a superficial remorse over the consequences of sin. It is a radical turning from sin to God; a repudiation of the old life and a turning to God for salvation from the penalty and dominion of sin.¹

3. Why do you think awareness of personal sin was essential to John's ministry of preparing a way for the Lord?
4. What was John's goal in preparing the hearts of the people by preaching about repentance and forgiveness of sins according to Isaiah's prophecy in verse 6?



Isaiah's prophecy is a picture of hearts that are a wilderness of sin. Sin is what separates us from God. Valleys, mountains, crooked paths and rough terrain all speak of seemingly immovable objects that represent sin and must be removed to make way for the Lord. This does not mean we have to clean up our act before we come to Jesus. Jesus is the only one who can remove these stubborn obstacles from our hearts. Without repentance there is no salvation. The salvation of the Lord comes to us when we respond to the Holy Spirit and turn away from our sin to Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing.

Have you ever repented of your sin and turned to Jesus for salvation? If not, you can do so now by praying. Talk to your discipler or another believer more about this.

"For a true Christian, an ongoing spirit of repentance is not only a sign of salvation but is a necessity for spiritual health."² Spend some time in prayer asking God to reveal hidden sins in your life so that you can turn away from them to healing and fullness in Jesus. Pray through these thoughts:

- ❖ What mountains of pride need to be brought down in your heart?
- ❖ What crooked paths of deceit need to be straightened out?
- ❖ What rough places need to be smoothed out? Obstacles and hindrances like unbelief, self-centeredness, bitterness or envy...

Day 3- Luke 3:8-14

5. According to verse 8, what is it that proves someone is genuinely repentant? Why does baptism not prove genuine repentance?

Digging Deeper: Read the following scripture:

Isaiah 29:3 "And so the Lord says, "These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote."

-Why does taking part in rituals not always reflect reality?

6. Some who were coming to John for baptism were not sincere in their desire. Why did they think they were safe from God's judgment according to verse 8?

-How do you see this happening in the church today?

7. Since baptism alone does not indicate genuine repentance, some of the people who were sincere wanted to know in verse 10, what true repentance looked like. How would you summarize John's answer?

Digging Deeper: Read the following passages:

Matthew 7:16a-20. "You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act...A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions."

*James 2:14, 17b-18. "What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?
...Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds."*

John 14:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

-Why is it personally important that there is proof of genuine repentance and faith?

-If you don't see evidence of fruit in your life, what is the answer?

Day 4- Luke 3:15-20

8. How does John depict Jesus and his ministry as being superior to him in verse 16?

9. What is the difference between John's baptism with water and Jesus' baptism with the Spirit and fire?

Scholar's Note: "Spirit baptism and fire baptism refer to the same work. Fire represents the Spirit's ongoing work of purification and cleansing."³

10. In verse 17 John uses the analogy of chaff to illustrate unbelievers that claim to be believers, and wheat to illustrate genuine believers. How is John showing that Jesus is superior to him in knowledge and judgment?

For Discussion: We saw back in chapter one that John was filled with the Holy Spirit even while he was in the womb (v.15) and that he grew strong in the Spirit as he prepared for his ministry (v.80). John 16:14a tells us that part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus. Looking at John the Baptist as an example, what can we expect Spirit filled people to do?

11. Verse 18 says that John preached good news to the people. From what you've seen of John's preaching in chapter 3, how was what John preached good news?

Day 5- Luke 3:21-38

Digging Deeper: Read the following scripture:

Matthew 3:13-15 "Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?" But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him."

-According to Matthew why did Jesus want John to baptize him even though he was sinless?

Picture and Ponder: Jesus was baptized because he was fulfilling all that God required. Because He is holy, God requires perfection to be in relationship with him. As sinful people, even when we come to God in repentance, we don't do it perfectly. We don't see every sin we need to repent from, we don't see completely accurately how offensive our sin is to God, there may be fear and doubt involved in our repentance. Jesus fulfilled every righteous requirement on our behalf, including perfect repentance. When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, God treats us as though we have lived the perfectly sinless life that Jesus lived.

12. What was Jesus doing at the same time he was being baptized according to verse 21?

13. Describe the unity and relationship you see between the three persons of the Trinity in verses 21-22.

Scholar's Note: That the Holy Spirit descended and remained (John 1: 32– 33) upon Jesus does not imply that up to this point He did not have the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's descent here was merely a symbolic act, indicating publicly His empowerment for Jesus' life and ministry.⁴

14. What two things did God the Father testify to in verse 22 for everyone to hear?

15. Mark 1:10 tells us that as Jesus was baptized the heavens were torn open. John 1:32-33 lets us know that John saw the Holy Spirit descending from heaven onto Jesus. Since John was able to see this exquisite sight then the crowd might have been able to see it as well. Imagine the remarkable scene and think about what it might have meant to those present.

Jesus-

John-

People-



Jesus' baptism and the stunning confirmation of the Father inaugurated Jesus' public ministry. The Holy Spirit, prayer, and assurance of God's love were the fuel that powered Jesus in his ministry. If Jesus in his humanity needed this, how imperative is it for us?

If you are in Christ you have these blessings. Jesus has invited you into the love and fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Take some time and reflect on the following thoughts:

- ❖ How cooperative are you with the Holy Spirit? When you hear his voice do you ignore it and make rationalizations or do you listen and obey?

- ❖ How intimate is your prayer life? Does it consist of you only talking or is it combined with hearing God through his word and responding to him?

- ❖ How grounded are you in God's love for you? Do you live out of the assurance and abundance of being God's beloved?

16. What is one more way in verse 23 that Luke makes it clear that Jesus is the Son of God?

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?

¹ MacArthur, John F. (2011-02-21). Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) (Kindle Locations 4048-4050). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

² Hughes, R. Kent. *Luke, That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word series*, (Crossway, Wheaton Ill. 2015), p. 86

³ Ibid.

⁴ MacArthur, John F.

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