

The New Inductive Study Series

THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS

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The Cost of Following Jesus

Jesus made it very clear: If you want to be His disciple, then you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him.

He made it clear, and in doing so, to use the proverbial statement taken from a tennis game, *He put the ball in our court.*

What will we do with it? Granted, it is a high-powered ball—a difficult serve, but not impossible to return. Will we let it go by, not return it, and lose what we could have won—the highest of all callings? What fools we would be! What profit would it be to gain anything else, even the whole world, and lose our lives and their purpose?

What about the cost? The cost is high. Jesus urged us to count it. That's what this survey study of the Gospel of Luke will help you do.

The cost is denying self, which in this day and age, even in Christendom, is not popular teaching. The cost is death to self, when in our times many people are trying to discover self and take care of self. The cost is to follow Jesus as a habit of life for the rest of your life! That's not easy when you are playing it out in the world's court, and the grandstands are filled with a multitude shouting, "Fool! You're a fool! Get off the court!"

Oh, my friend, if you are going to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus, you had better know with certainty whom you are following, what He is like, what He believes, how He lived in this adverse world, and why and how He died. You also better “know that you know” whether His death was the end of it all or only the beginning.

Discovering all this is the purpose of your study of the Gospel of Luke. Although this is a survey course, as you get information you will become awed at your familiarity with the content of this Gospel and of the inductive study methods that will become habits by the repeated doing of them.

Whether you do this study on your own or with others, I promise you it will be a profitable 13 weeks. However, it will only be as profitable as the discipline you put into it—enough discipline to truly see and understand what it means to be a disciple.

Then, having come face-to-face with the claims and call of Jesus Christ, you can make a rational, sane decision about denying self, taking up your cross, and following Jesus. Your decision, one way or the other, will change the course of your life and consequently have eternal ramifications.

Week 1

Nothing Is Impossible With God

DAY ONE

Simply read through Luke 1, the whole chapter, to put you into context. As you read, note to whom this Gospel was written and why it was written. When you discover this information, you will also know how Luke lays out his material. When you find the verses that give you this information, you might want to write the following in the margin of your Bible: *Purpose for writing*.

DAY TWO

As you saw yesterday, Luke lays out his material in consecutive order: chronologically. It is the only Gospel which does this fully, and therefore it is very valuable to us because it gives us a chronological timeline of the events of Jesus’ life from birth through death. Therefore the timing of all the events recorded in the other Gospels can be determined by Luke.

Read through Luke 1 again today.

- a. Watch for the various events covered in this chapter. Jot them down in your notebook.
- b. Watch for any references to time, such as verse 5: “in the days of Herod, king of Judea.&” *Underline or color these references to time in a specific color that you can use*

all the way through your study of Luke. Then every time you see this color (blue, for example), you will know that it is a reference to time. Or you might want to draw a little clock.

- c. In another color underline every reference to location. For example, the angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth (verse 26). Underline *Nazareth* in green. If you will mark geographical locations in the same way throughout Luke, you will be able to see where Jesus went and what happened in each place.

DAY THREE

Read Luke 1:5-25. You might want to mark every reference to Zacharias in one distinctive way (or color) and every reference to Elizabeth in another. Mark the personal pronouns that refer to them (*he, she*) in the same way that you mark their name. Then in your notebook list what you learn about *Zacharias* and about *Elizabeth*. What do you learn from their lives? (As you make your lists on different people, be sure to leave space to add to the lists so you can continue to record what you learn as you go through Luke.) Describe the event covered in this passage in as few words as possible. If you wish, write this in the margin of your Bible next to verse 5.

DAY FOUR

Read Luke 1:26-38. In a color or way that is distinctive from Zacharias and Elizabeth, mark every reference to Mary and then every reference to her Son, Jesus, along with the personal pronouns. Then list in your notebook what you learn from marking these references. The list on Jesus will be especially important, for this is the One who will later call us to follow Him. We want to know all we can about the One we might choose to follow. How would you describe the event covered in these verses? Write it out, and if you wish, record this in your Bible as you did yesterday.

DAY FIVE

Read Luke 1:39-56. Continue to mark the reference to each of the main characters in this chapter, and then add what you learn to the lists that you have begun. What happens in these verses? Record it in your Bible next to verse 39 if you desire.

DAY SIX

Read Luke 1:57-80. What event is covered in these verses?

As you have been doing, mark each reference to your main characters and add what you learn to the list you are making about them. If you have time you may want to review Luke 1 and make a list of everything you learn from this chapter about God the Father and about the Holy Spirit. As you see what you learn about God, give special attention to verses 67 to 79.

Record the theme of Luke 1 on the LUKE AT A GLANCE chart (page 77). The theme of a chapter is discerned by observing the subject or the person which is dealt with the most in that chapter. You may also want to record the theme in your Bible by the chapter number.

DAY SEVEN

Store in your heart: Luke 1:17. Read and discuss: Luke 1:67-80 and Malachi 3:1, and what each student learned about John and the events surrounding his conception, his birth, and the years previous to his public ministry.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- Who wrote the Gospel of Luke and why? What do you learn about the writer? How does this information help you accept this Gospel? How would a familiarity with Luke help you with the other Gospels?
- What do you learn from Luke 1 about God and His ways? How does such information affect you?
- What did you learn about Jesus from this chapter? If you were to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him, whom would you be following? Is He just another man? Why or why not?
- Share one thing you learned from the lives of the different people mentioned in Luke 1 that spoke to your heart personally. What kind of impact did that insight have on your thinking or the way you are going to live?
- What does this chapter teach about the virgin birth? Is it important to believe it? Why? You may want to look up the following verses: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Romans 5:12; 1 Peter 1:18,19.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

God does what He says He will do—in *His* time and in *His* way. This truth is seen in more than one way in the first chapter of Luke: “Nothing will be impossible with God” (verse 37), or, put in another way, “not any word of God is impossible, void of power.” The blessing comes to those who believe: “Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord&” (1:45).

May we be like Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Mary: May we believe what God says and may we so know and trust God that we say as Mary said, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word&” (1:38).

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