## STOP, LUKE AND LISTEN

**THIS IS A GUIDE** to help us stop and listen to God through Luke's writings in his two books, Luke and Acts. We'll use it during Lifegroup for ten weeks this fall.

**THIS IS NOT A BIBLE STUDY,** but a time as community to listen to the Holy Spirit through Scripture. Our hope is to encounter God in his word as we listen.

WHEN WE LISTEN through Scripture, the Bible calls it meditation. According to Richard Foster in Celebration of Discipline, meditation in the Bible means, "listening to God's word, reflecting on God's works." And "Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God's voice and obey his word."

**WE LOVE** this quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "... just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. That is all. That is meditation."

**OUR HOPE** is that as we take time to stop and listen, to meditate on God's word, we will hear him in fresh ways, our community will be encouraged, and our lives will be transformed.

**IF YOU WANT TO DIG** in a little more during these ten weeks, we are also providing a schedule for reading through Luke's books, some verses to memorize and a spiritual discipline to practice each week.

"...just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did.

That is all.

That is meditation."

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

STOP & JOURNAL

#### WHAT ARE WE DOING DURING LIFEGROUP?

# PRAY READ MEDITATE JOURNAL

STOP & JOURNAL

#### 1) MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURE

During Lifegroup, use the Scripture for each week in the following pages.

- PRAY Begin by praying for the desire and grace to be still and listen.
- READ Ask one person to read the passage aloud slowly two to three times.
- MEDITATE The group will spend about ten minutes in silence, meditating, listening, soaking in the word, letting the Scripture sink in as you get quiet and still.
- JOURNAL Feel free to journal the thoughts you have and re-read the passage during this time. How is God encouraging, comforting or instructing you, what is He bringing to your attention?

#### SUGGESTIONS THAT MAY HELP YOU LISTEN:

- RANDOM THOUGHTS will come about other things; just let them go and come back to the passage.
- PAY ATTENTION to a word or phrase that may catch your attention, something that encourages or convicts.
- LISTEN FOR PERSONAL WORDS, like instructions (often very practical) or edification, rather than facts or abstract ideas. We are not looking for information or Bible trivia here. This is a personal encountering of God in his word.
- WHAT MIGHT GOD WANT YOU TO SEE OR HEAR? It may help to imagine yourself in the scene. What emotions come up in you? Talk to Him about it.

#### 2) SHARING WHAT WE HEARD

This is time to share on a personal level what you received from the passage. Please do not offer commentary or advice about what others share. Prayer needs, encouragement, repentance and obedience may flow out of this sharing.

#### WHAT ARE WE DOING DURING THE WEEK?

#### **READING LUKE AND ACTS**

Do you ever wonder what to read in your own time with God? Do you ever feel alone trying to figure it out?

We thought it would be cool to read through Luke and Acts as a community. If you want to join in there are about five chapters to read each week. You'll find the schedule for each week under *This Week's Reading*.

#### **SPIRITUAL PRACTICES**

We've chosen a spiritual discipline for each week. Do you hate that word discipline? Think practice, something you actually do, instead of just thinking about it. These are things Jesus did and talked about a lot -- things like prayer, simplicity, sharing the good news and loving our neighbor, even if they are our enemy. We will highlight one of these each week.

Maybe grab your family or a friend or your small group and practice these together.

Sow a THOUGHT,
Reap an ACT;
Sow an ACT,
Reap a HABIT;
Sow a HABIT,
Reap a CHARACTER;
Sow a CHARACTER,
Reap a DESTINY.

#### **MEMORY VERSES**

There are a couple of verses to memorize each week to fill up our minds with the good stuff.

STOP & JOURNAL

## **WEEK 1 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 11** 

# "YOU WILL CONCEIVE AND GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND YOU ARE TO CALL HIM JESUS"

STOP & JOURNAL

"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her."

Luke 1:26-38 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 1-5

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 1 - 5

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: BREATH PRAYER

Breath prayer is a very short prayer, 6 to 8 syllables, said to the rhythm of our breathing. It includes a name of God such as, Jesus, LORD, Holy Spirit or Abba, and a praise or request. We breathe in deeply as we call on God and breathe out our prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYERS
Abba God, I praise you.
Holy Spirit, fill me.
Jesus, help me know your love.

Spend a few moments each day in a quiet place saying your breath prayer, maybe increasing the time throughout the week. This has potential to help you "pray without ceasing" as you go about your day. And it may even help us remember to breathe deeply in this stress-filled world.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES: Luke 1:37-38

STOP & JOUR	NAL

## **WEEK 2 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 18** 

# "I SEE HEAVEN OPEN AND THE SON OF MAN STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."

STOP & JOURNAL

"When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him.

Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison."

Acts 7:54-8:3 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 6-10

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/ chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### This Week's Spiritual Practice: Confession

Confession is a broad discipline. Most Christians realize the importance of confessing our sins to one another. James 5:16 tells us that confession of sin is part of our healing process, but even more important, we must confess that we are sinners in need of a great savior, namely, Jesus Christ.

For this week's practice, make sure to confess your sins to a trusted brother or sister in Christ. If possible, publicly confess and repent of your sin in Lifegroup. Make sure that you do not focus only on confessing sin, but make sure to confess Jesus as Lord over your life.

Seek out an opportunity this week to confess

Jesus as Lord to others in your life, your work, school, etc.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES: Acts 7:55-56

## **WEEK 3 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 25** 

# "...BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR."

STOP & JOURNAL

"He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum." "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way."

Luke 4:16-30 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 11-15

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: WITNESS

Kenneth Boa says "to witness is to choose to go beyond our circle of believing friends and to walk dependently in the power of the Spirit as we invest in relationships with those who have not yet met Christ."

This week, as we practice bearing witness, here a few suggestions: first, brainstorm with your community! Sometimes we get stuck and need new perspective on our relationships and situations. Community can help us find ways to bear witness and build relationships. Second, be vulnerable in your conversations with friends who do not believe. Vulnerability is hard, but it breeds intimacy and trust.

Ask God to help you seek out a new friend who does not follow Jesus. Share a meal or a break time at work or school to build a friendship that might one day prove to be fertile ground for your witness to Jesus.

As you go through your day, ask God to highlight someone you can tell about his love, his goodness and his grace in your life.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES: Luke 4:18-19

## **WEEK 4 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF OCTOBER 2** 

## "THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU..."

STOP & JOURNAL

"While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When he said this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand."

This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop."

Luke 8:4-15 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 16-20

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: PHYSICAL LABOR

Jesus uses the metaphor of seeds in different types of soil to reveal the condition of our hearts. This week get your hands in the dirt to get more revelation about why Jesus uses such an earthy thing to talk about our hearts.

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS:

Do some yard work.

Plant something,
a tree, a bush, a flower.

How much attention
does it need to thrive?

Plant some seeds
in different soils:
rocky, weedy and healthy
observing how they grow.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES: Luke 8:14-15

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## **WEEK 5 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF OCTOBER 9** 

# "WHY DO THE NATIONS RAGE AND THE PEOPLES PLOT IN VAIN?"

STOP & JOURNAL

"On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one. 'Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." Acts 4:23-31 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 21-ACTS 1

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: PRAYER

Find a quiet time to say the Lord's Prayer each day.

"Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power And the glory forever. Amen."

**SONG SUGGESTION:** Our Father by Bethel Live **THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES:** LUKE 11:2-4

## **WEEK 6 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF OCTOBER 16** 

## "YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU, GO IN PEACE."

STOP & JOURNAL

"When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is-that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Luke 7:36-50 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: ACTS 2-6

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

## This Week's Spiritual Practice: Hospitality

Hospitality is about how we treat strangers; how we treat guests. Hospitality is a spiritual gift, but Romans 12:13 reminds us that hospitality is also a spiritual practice. We treat those around us as guests, who sit in the place of Christ. When we host others, we demonstrate our hospitality to Christ himself. Our attitude is the most important part of hospitality.

PRACTICE HOSPITALITY.

TREAT OTHERS AROUND YOU

AS GUESTS TO BE HONORED

AND SERVED FOR

CHRIST'S SAKE.

The ideal way to practice hospitality is to invite a stranger into your home. If your living situation makes that difficult or impossible, then invite someone you don't know well out to lunch. Offer to drive and pick up the bill. Throw a party. Order pizza for your students or coworkers. Bring donuts and coffee for breakfast.

#### THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES:

1 Timothy 1:16 and/or Luke 15:24

## **WEEK 7 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF OCTOBER 23** 

## "DO NOT BE AFRAID, LITTLE FLOCK, FOR YOUR FATHER IS PLEASED TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM"

STOP & JOURNAL

"Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Luke 12:22-34 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: ACTS 7-11

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: SIMPLICITY/FRUGALITY

"Simplicity starts in the heart, seeking the kingdom of God and trusting that he will provide all things necessary for life. Simplicity sets us free to receive the provision of God as a gift that is not ours to keep and can be freely shared with others." ~ Richard Foster

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS:

Consider buying only what you need this week rather than what you want.

De-accumulate to simplify the complexity of caring for many possessions.

Wear "old" clothes that are still in good shape rather than buying something new.

Enjoy things that are free like, parks, museums, libraries and walks in the neighborhood.

Consider a day with as little technology as possible.

Enjoy the peace and extra time.

Sell something so you can give to the poor.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES: Luke 12:31-32

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## **WEEK 8 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF OCTOBER 30** 

## "LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."

STOP & JOURNAL

up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise.""

"On one occasion an expert in the law stood

Luke 10:25-37 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: ACTS 12-16

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: SERVICE

Being a servant is a huge part of our identity as followers of Jesus. We serve because he's created us in Christ to do good works. Jesus tells us to let our light shine before others so they may see our good works and praise God. This is his followers living in a way that helps others see God. That's beautiful! He also warns us to be careful not to do our good works in front of others because we want people to think we're amazing.

ASK THE LORD
TO SHOW YOU WAYS
TO SERVE THIS WEEK.
DO SOME OF THEM IN SECRET
TO HELP KILL THE DESIRE
FOR ATTENTION.
SERVE IN A WAY
YOU'RE NOT "GIFTED"
IN JUST BECAUSE
IT NEEDS TO BE DONE
AND WILL BLESS OTHERS.
CONSIDER SERVING SOMEONE
YOU DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES: Luke 10:27

## WEEK 9 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION WEEK OF NOVEMBER 6

## "BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS AND YOUR WILL BE SAVED-YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD"

STOP & JOURNAL

"The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped, but Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God-he and his whole household. When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

Acts 16:22-36 NIV

#### THIS WEEK'S READING: ACTS 17-22

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: FASTING

Jesus expected that his disciples would fast, but he does not desire that we fast as punishment for our sins, but teaches us that fasting is a tool for tuning our hearts. We fast to help us focus and become sensitive to the things of God. As followers of Christ, it serves us well to learn obedience to Christ by voluntarily giving up things that can steal our focus away.

#### PRACTICE FASTING

This week, practice fasting. Give up a meal, or a day's worth of meals. Give up TV, or Facebook. Help your kids fast from sugar. As you fast, practice obedience and sharpen your focus upon Jesus. Remember, don't harm yourself. Fasting is spiritual practice, not spiritual punishment. Just as it takes time for your body to adapt and adjust to strenuous exercise, fasting takes practice and preparation if you want to do it for an extended amount of time. If you have never fasted before, ask someone in your Lifegroup who has experience with it.

#### THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES:

Any or all of Luke 9:23-25

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### **WEEK 10 • LIFEGROUP MEDITATION**

**WEEK OF NOVEMBER 13** 

"WHY WERE OUR HEARTS NOT BURNING WITHIN US WHILE HE TALKED WITH US ON THE ROAD AND OPENED THE SCRIPTURES TO US?"

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One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus." He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread." Luke 24:18-35 NIV

## THIS WEEK'S READING: ACTS 23-28

As you read a chapter it may be helpful to use Discovery Bible Study's questions.

- 1. What does this passage/chapter say about God?
- 2. What does it say about people?
- 3. Does it say anything about a way to obey God?
- 4. In light of what I know about this passage/chapter, what is God calling me to do this week?

#### THIS WEEK'S SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: STUDY

The gospel of good feelings is far too prevalent in our world today. In our worship, and our time with God, we seek out certain feelings. We want to sing loudly and worship with exuberant hearts. We want to pray, animated and full of the Spirit. However, in searching out a certain type of spiritual experience, we often neglect what is desperately needed and lacking in our discipleship and growth. We neglect study.

This week, practice the hard work of study. Study is not devotional. Study is analytical. As you read Acts 23-28, practice understanding what Luke is writing. Practice interpreting what Luke means and why he writes down the things that he does. Practice evaluating and applying the principles that you read. Study involves repetition, concentration, comprehension, and reflection. Study requires humility and practice. You will not be an expert the first time you try it, but keep practicing, and you will see that what we study begins to transform us!

#### THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES:

Luke 24:27 & 32

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