

August 16-22

(Monday) Luke 1: One Final Hope

What astounding facts does Gabriel announce to Zechariah (v. 11-17)? How is the second birth announcement even more extraordinary (v. 26-56)?

Compare Zechariah's response in v. 18-22 to Mary's. What kind of God does Mary believe in (v. 46-55)?

What is the purpose for recording the neighbors' response in such detail (v. 57-66)?

When is it difficult for you to hope in God?

Prayer Focus: Thank God for being the only source of true hope

Family Devotional: Read verses 26-38. How would you respond if God told you what he told Mary? How is Mary's response in verse 38 a great model for us?

(Tuesday) Luke 2: No Fear

What do the historical details (v. 1-4) and description of Jesus' birth (v. 5-6) say about the way God came to live among his people?

Shepherds were outcasts of society. What in the angels' message would be incredible to them (v. 9-14)?

How are the prophetic messages of Simeon and Anna similar, yet different?

How do all the details recorded in this chapter help you to understand Jesus as the promised one?

Prayer Focus: Praise God for being Immanu-El, "God with us."

Family Devotional: Read verses 4-7. Is this how you would expect the King of Kings to be introduced to the world? Why did God make his entrance in such a humble way?

(Wednesday) Mark 1: Immediate Impact

Verses 2 and 3 quote Malachi and Isaiah. How do they explain John's ministry of preparation for Jesus?

How do the events surrounding Jesus' baptism prepare him for his temptation in the desert?

How does Jesus summarize his mission at the beginning of his ministry?

How can you "prepare the way for the Lord" in your own sphere of influence?

Prayer Focus: Ask God to help you magnify Jesus' greatness to the people around you

Family Devotional: Read verses 2-4. John prepared the way for Jesus by calling people to repentance. What is repentance? How does it prepare us for the arrival of Jesus in our lives?

(Thursday) Mark 2: Signal Fires of Opposition

How does Jesus' response to the lowered man shock the teachers of the law (v. 1-12)? Why?

Contrast the Pharisees' attitude toward the "sinners" with the attitude of Jesus (v. 15-17).

On what grounds are Jesus and his disciples criticized in verses 18-27? Why would Jesus open himself up to this criticism?

What types of opposition might Jesus-followers expect in our culture today?

Prayer Focus: Pray for extreme faithfulness, no matter the cost

Family Devotional: Read verses 1-12. Why is it more important for our sins to be forgiven than for our lives to be comfortable? How can our family emphasize this priority more?

(Friday) John 3: Late-Night Rendezvous

What does Nicodemus seem to be focused on (v. 1-21)? Why does he respond in amazement (v. 9)?

How can we become totally unashamed (v. 20-21)?

How would you summarize John's view of the character and ministry of Jesus (v. 22-36)?

John joyfully glorified Jesus over himself. Does your life reflect the same outlook?

Prayer Focus: Ask God to help you emphasize less of you, and more of Jesus

Family Devotional: Read verses 16-21. What are some things in our lives we try to keep in the dark? Why does God want to bring them into the light? How can we do things "through God?"