

Design 4 Discovery



An Evangelistic Study
in the Gospel of Luke

Design 4 Discovery



Developed by
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Preface

For most people the thought of their two year old toddler running loose in a blown glass retail store and evangelism create the same emotional reaction -- fear, anxiety, an instant aerobic heart rate, sweaty palms, and frantic glances for the Exit signs.

Evangelism induced anxiety (EIA syndrome) can result from several reasons. Like with the toddler in the blown glass shop, most fear a disaster; as mild as embarrassment or as extensive as bankruptcy.

Many excellent books are written on the subject of evangelism. It would be redundant, if not presumptuous on my part, to add to the list. My purpose is more pragmatic. Assuming the heart and vision for evangelism is already present, my desire is to provide a way for every believer to reach out to the lost. In effect, reduce the EIA syndrome by providing a user and receiver friendly tool.

I am not an evangelist. My desire to reach the lost comes from my own personal relationship with Christ and my understanding of Christ's great commission. In sports some players are "naturals". They make it look easy. They give their skill little thought. They just do it. They often cannot understand why everyone else cannot just do it.

Evangelism did not come "naturally" to me. I have learned by observation, practice, mistakes, failures and more practice. I've adapted, experimented and persisted. It is out of this journey of discovery that I have developed this material.

I recognize that few believers are spiritually gifted in evangelism. In seminars I have led, usually only one out of 10 admit to having the gift of evangelism. Most don't want it, are glad others have it and are afraid of getting it! If we are to reach our generation, evangelism must not be limited to the gifted.

To have broad effectiveness, evangelism must not require teaching or leadership gifts. Gift based evangelism excludes many in the body who should get involved. Those with the more word oriented, up front gifts often set the norm for the rest of the body. Most of us are not skilled in apologetics or even want to be. I'm impressed when others readily answer those hard questions. I usually come up with a good answer.....two days after the question!

A few people are skilled or gifted in leading group discussions. Those who are not gifted tend to watch those who are. Some wisely join forces and form a team. To mobilize the body of Christ to reach our world, evangelism cannot rely on the professional or the gifted. We must understand that evangelism is a process and not simply an event. Everyone, regardless of their gifting, can contribute in that process.

The lost of our society are increasingly Biblically illiterate. They often are second generation unchurched. Even traditional Biblical stories are unfamiliar. They are fearful, threatened and somewhat suspicious when people move with conviction and ease in a text where they have little experience.

We must create an environment where the use of the Bible doesn't threaten and or put up unnecessary roadblocks. It must be attractive and inviting. Many people in Jesus' day rejected what he said, but were attracted enough to listen. An effective tool must break through the stereotypes and caricatures that people have of the Bible.

Flexibility in scheduling is also critical. The typical adult in our society is living on the edge in almost every area of life. The demands of work, family and relationships leave little flexibility in the average

person's schedule. Few are sitting around on Friday nights, looking for something to do. We must recognize that in a secular culture with over extended schedules, exploring Christianity is a low priority. Yet people will make room for what they perceive to be valuable.

To be effective, we must be able to reach one person or a small group. Many fail to reach an individual because they are still trying to form a group. While waiting for the interest of seeker two and three, seeker one loses interest or becomes too busy. Some seekers feel more comfortable in a small group while others feel conspicuous.

We also must connect with our society at the level of felt need -- theirs not ours. The bumper sticker that says, "Jesus is the answer" is nonsense to those who aren't even asking the question. An effective tool must introduce people to the gospel at their point of interest. For a generation raised on the philosophy of relativism, absolute truth is a giant jump. We need entry points to the gospel that are in step with the work of the Holy Spirit.

The agrarian metaphor of growing crops provides a practical and Biblical framework for thinking about evangelism. Every person's spiritual journey involves the process of sowing, cultivating and harvesting. For some the process is short and straight. For others it is long and serpentine.

Evangelism recognizes these stages and seeks to contribute to the process by design. Each phase requires different strategies and tools. A wheat combine effectively harvests the crop but is useless as a cultivator. For those who choose to be part of a planned, strategic outreach, development of proper skills and tools for each stage becomes critical.

Harvesting tools, those that summarize the gospel and bring people to a point of decision, are the most familiar. Tracts, like "Peace with God", "The Four Spiritual Laws" or summary illustrations like the "Bridge" are designed to harvest what is mature.

The purpose of these tools is to draw a line in the sand, to test to see if the harvest is ripe, to encourage a decision. Yet in the process of coming to Christ, many are still in the cultivation stage; exploring, seeking, asking, wrestling. Their need is understanding -- not a line drawn in the sand prematurely.

There are basically only three responses to the gospel:

1. "I'm not interested -- get lost,"
2. "I understand -- help me," and
3. "I'm not convinced -- but interested."

Paul, the great evangelist, received the same options in his address to the crowd on Mars Hill.

*"Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, **some began to sneer**, but others said, '**We shall hear you again concerning this**'!..... **But some men joined him and believed.**"* Acts 17:32-34 (emphasis mine)

The first two responses are the easiest to deal with: 1. Get lost and 2. Help me. However, most people are in the last category -- curious but not convinced. So what do we do with them? Do we wait a week and give them another tract?

We need a tool that exposes seekers to the reality of Christ in the Scriptures so that faith can grow. *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."* Rom. 10:17

Design 4 Discovery is a cultivation tool that will progressively help a person discover and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Design 4 Discovery will help a person answer four critical life questions:

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. What does he say about putting life together?
3. What are the implications for me?
4. How will I respond?

No tool is effective by itself. There is no substitute for prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. Neither is one tool universal. Skilled builders use different tools at different times.

My hope is that **Design 4 Discovery** will fit as one quality tool in your expanding ministry tool box.

There is a growing concern that the church today is strategically poised for a ministry of irrelevance. A polar drift is occurring putting distance between our society and the church.

The scene in America is like a culture lost in the mountains while the church is operating in the valley. Strategies and tactics that were effective in the past are now becoming increasingly irrelevant and ineffective in today's mountain culture. If we are going to be salt and light in this decade, there needs to be a radical change in the vision, values and life-styles of believers.

The Challenge

The need of the hour is for a band equipped to climb in the mountains survival, photography or search and rescue the survivors secularism.

Caleb was an Old Testament Caleb had been one of the original He and Joshua had given the possessing this land. The majority viewed the giants and walled cities resources. God's judgment on that generation was to hold them to their decision. For the next 40 years they roamed in the desert. God gave the privilege of entering the promise land to the next generation.

Classified
WANTED:
Mountain climbers to join expedition for search and rescue operations in the highlands of America. Training provided.

of mountain climbers conditioned and of our society. Their mission is not recreation. Instead, their mission is to trapped in the avalanches of sin, self and

mountain climber, a real mountain man. 12 men sent to survey the Promised Land. minority opinion on the feasibility of opinion broke faith in Yahweh. They as insurmountable considering their own mountain climber, a real mountain man. 12 men sent to survey the Promised Land. minority opinion on the feasibility of opinion broke faith in Yahweh. They as insurmountable considering their own

However, as a result of Caleb's faithful service, Moses gave a promise. Caleb's inheritance would be the land he viewed on that original mission. In Joshua 14, we read the account of Caleb staking his claim on that promise.

When Joshua began to allot the new land to the various family tribes, Caleb asked for the high country, the mountains of Hebron. It was where the walled cities and giants were 45 years earlier. It was the tough terrain, the hard job, the job yet unfinished. Unlike other tribes of Israel who had settled for the easy land east of the Jordan, Caleb went for the mountains.

What were those qualities that made Caleb a real mountain man? First he was **CONFIDENT IN THE PROMISES OF GOD**. "Now then give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day." (Josh. 14:12) Caleb believed God's promise made 45 years earlier. (Josh. 14:9) Time had not diminished the validity of God's word. The basis for requesting his inheritance was not his own merit but the promise of God.

Caleb took God at His word. God's promise was his source of hope during 40 trying years. It was God's promise that sustained him and gave him direction. By faith, he based his action on the promise of God, not on presumption.

Caleb was also **CONTENT IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD**. "And now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these 45 years...." (Josh. 14:10) Thankfulness in God's sovereign goodness was

still his attitude at age 85. He could have reflected on the injustice of spending 40 years living in a sand pile with a bunch of losers. He could have been bitter over being penalized for the mistakes of others. He could have easily considered the best years of his life wasted ...for doing right!

Yet Caleb's view of God's providence was one of humble acceptance. He could have argued with God, felt victimized, or gotten bitter. He simply accepted the cards God dealt him with gratitude and humility. Content in the providence of God, Caleb seized the moment of opportunity.

Too often, resentment over circumstances blinds us to the opportunities of the moment. Chained to the past through attitudes of ungratefulness and resentment, we fail to see what God is doing in the present. These attitudes deplete our emotional energy. We become weary and confused. Contentment with God's sovereignty made Caleb like the Energizer battery, he just kept going and going and going.

In addition, Caleb was also **COMPETENT IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD**. "Now then, give me this hill country...with great fortified cities, perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out as the LORD has spoken." (Joshua 14:12)

No illusions of grandeur here. Oh yes, he was still an eager and a wiry warrior. However, his strength was not the basis for success. Caleb knew that he could be victorious if Yahweh went with him. Maybe it was the model of Moses that left this principle indelibly etched on his mind. "If You do not go with us," Moses had said to God, "then do not lead us out from this place."

Caleb was not referring to God's omnipresence. Caleb was dependent on the experiential, personal presence of God that results from union with Him. The tabernacle was the center of Israel's life for 45 years. God's presence was there. Israel's unique God actually dwelt among them.

God dramatically displayed His desire to dwell among his people with the incarnation of Christ. Then when Jesus returns to His Father He said, "...and low I am with you always, even to the end of the age." No longer present in bodily form, He made provision for His continued presence through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

No mountain venture, no matter how commendable, can succeed without the presence and power of God. The dangers are too real, our resources too inadequate, the job too big. To climb in the rugged mountains of our society, we need to find our competence in His presence and power.

Caleb was a person with the faith and courage to take on the tough job. Highlighted in Biblical history, he was one who made a difference in his generation.

This generation also needs "Calebs". People who have the vision and courage to take on the tough job of climbing into the mountains of our culture. God is still looking for people with a vision for the high country; people not paralyzed by circumstances or popular opinion.

We cannot remain in the valley and send messages to those stranded in the mountains. Get well cards and road maps are inadequate for those trapped, starved and without hope. Ski trips, nature tours and photo sessions still leave lost people isolated, injured and scared.

The need of this hour is for men and women to leave the comfort and security of the valley. Their mission: To climb into the mountains of our society to reach people who need Christ. Few lost people today will accidentally wander out of the mountains into the valley to find the help they need.

It takes a certain kind of person to climb in the mountains of our society and rescue the lost. Although the view is breathtaking, the dangers are life-threatening. The mountains have injured many capricious climbers. Our newspapers eagerly report on the well-known climbers who have fallen. These tragedies discredit and paralyze the mission.

Those who would follow Jesus into the mountains in our day must be Calebs who are **AUTHENTIC**. When Jesus described what it meant to be his disciple, he used the word "tested" or "proven" disciple. (John 15:8) He was referring to a follower who was real. A follower of Jesus takes on Christ's nature and character. Discipleship is not a spiritual version of behavior modification. It is real life change...from the inside out.

Jesus said a trained disciple will become like his teacher. Followers of Christ who are in personal, dynamic union with Him are in the exciting process of inner change. They are more than "change agents"--they are "changed agents".

However, being authentic doesn't mean perfection. It does mean progress. It means to be proactive not passive. It means that we are "working out" that which God has placed within. (Phil. 2:12)

Authenticity is the spiritual prerequisite for mountain climbing. No wise person would venture into the mountains if he were not in good physical shape. Union with Christ as a daily growing experience is the spiritual conditioning needed to survive in the mountains of our culture.

Today's mountain climbers also must develop **INTEGRATED** lives. God desires to integrate Kingdom living into every facet of life. Jesus never separated life into the sacred and secular. Climbers cannot survive in the mountains with a compartmentalized, segmented approach to life. The Kingdom of God lays claim to every aspect of life. Living by the values and principles of the Kingdom is not simply a creed; it is a life-style.

Scripture is God's manual for integrated living. The Scripture is more than sermon material for pastors. It is the practical handbook for every generation and every individual who claims to be a follower of Christ. "The Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work." (II Tim. 3:17 Phillips) It sounds strangely hollow when a person claims to follow Christ and yet fails to practice (or even know) what God says about conducting the affairs of life.

Today's spiritual mountain climbers are also **CONNECTED**. No one survives the hazards of the mountains alone. One of Satan's favorite strategies is to isolate us from the support of the body. Search and rescue teams tie themselves together for support, encouragement and protection. "Two are better than one...For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up." (Ecc. 4:9-10)

Being connected means more than casual fellowship at church on Sunday morning. It means regular personal accountability and encouragement with fellow climbers. Climbers work together with those

of like heart and vision. Committed to each other and the mission, climbers form a working unit. They experience the dynamics of unity while focused on a specialized task. Each person, as part of the team, brings to the whole his gifts and strengths.

For years in my equipping ministry, I tried to prepare people to function on their own. Due partly to my American independent heritage and culture, I viewed operating solo as a mark of maturity. Gradually the dynamics of the body have come into focus. Jesus sent out His disciples in groups of two. Paul always worked with a team of people. He was reluctant to press the mission when his companions were not present.

Our vision is enhanced as we climb from the valley to the mountains. The trees, the snow, the horizon blend into a breathtaking panorama that expands our vision and heightens our senses. It is from the mountains that we can see the heart of God as He extends His grace to all the nations -- to every person. It is also from the mountains that one can see the destruction. Avalanches have trapped people and left them cold, starved and hopeless.

The easy job has been done. Reaching those who live in the valley has largely been accomplished. It is the mountain country that remains to be possessed. God is looking for the Calebs of this generation who will venture out of the security and comfort of the valley and follow Jesus Christ into the mountains.

Building on a solid foundation

"Good evening and welcome to Channel 5 news at six. I'm Darryl Dangerfield. Our headlines for this hour: 'Killer tornado sweeps through the peaceful town of Slumberland Gap about 4 o'clock this afternoon; leaving massive destruction in its wake.'"

"For an on the scene report we go now to Leslie Allen and our Channel 5 Mobile Unit 1."

The camera pans to the studio monitor and zooms in on Leslie standing in front of what looks like the city landfill. She is dressed in a bright yellow rain slicker.

"Good evening. I'm Leslie Allen. I am standing in front of what used to be the Kozy Korner Mobile Home Park here in the south side of Slumberland Gap. Just a few hours ago tornado strength winds greeted these area residents with a visit they will never forget.

None of the 30 homes that made up this little community are left standing. Luckily no one was killed as residents took heed of early warning and found safety in local tornado shelters.

Standing with me is Marcia Weatherspoon whose home was located on the very spot we are now standing. As you can see, there is nothing left but a few shingles.

Marcia, what are your feelings now that this tornado has wiped out your home and everything you have worked for 20 years to build...realizing that insurance can never replace the personal items that contained the memories of a life time?"

After more interviews and scenes of debris, Channel 5 switches to Mobile Unit 2 and Bob Harder.

"Good evening folks. I'm Bob Harder with Channel 5's Mobile unit 2. We are located only a few blocks from Leslie and the Kozy Korner Mobile Home Park."

Bob is dressed in a navy blue rain coat but with no hat since the rain has subsided to only a drizzle. In the background behind Bob, at the opening to a modest subdivision, a brick sign displays the name, Oak Acres.

"Here at Oak Acres, homes sustained only moderate damage in the face of the raging storm. No one was injured and damage was light. A few carports were blown down but that's about it! Residents here are a little shaken but grateful. These folks may not sleep very well tonight but at least they have their own homes to come home to."

"Back to you Darryl."

"Thanks Leslie and Bob. We will have more on the tragic storm that hit the town of Slumberland Gap later in the news cast."

This scene is familiar to viewers around the country as high winds seem uncannily to seek out and destroy mobile home parks. We expect it. TV reporters take advantage of it. Some suffer through it.

The adventure of life is somewhat like the tale of Slumberland Gap. Each of us is building our homes. Each home will be subject to the elements of sun, wind and rain. For some their life storms are severe. No one plans it that way. We all hope that it won't happen to us. Yet we build our life home hoping it will withstand the elements and provide the shelter we need.

Each home is unique yet they all have certain characteristics in common. The paint, wallpaper and shape will be uniquely different. However, the roof, walls, windows and foundation are common to every building.

Putting life together is the adventure we all share in common. At times we feel more successful than others. It is often when defects occur in the structure -- a crack, a leaky roof, a broken window or severe wind damage -- that we are most aware of the strength of the house.

For many, building their home is a random series of events that has little plan or design. Patterned in the wake of their childhood home, their design simply evolves. For many, they are surprised to look back after years of building to see how remarkably similar their home is to the one their parents built -- cracks and all.

Jesus gave a profoundly simple story one day to a group of his followers. ^{Math 7:24-27} His analogy was like that of Slumberland Gap. In his story, two parties each built their home. Each home was subject to the natural elements of wind, rain and floods. However, the homes were different in two distinct ways: The eventual stability and the effectual foundation.

Like a home, each life is built on some kind of foundation. Some are built on the frame of a trailer,

others on settling soil and yet others on solid ground. The firmness of that foundation is key to the stability of the house regardless of the strength and construction of the house itself. No home can stand the pressures of the elements when its foundation is shifting.

For many people their homes are built on the mobile frame of religion, or the shifting sand of philosophy, or the settling soil of tradition. Consequently they spend much of their life patching the cracks with wallpaper and plaster with little consideration of the problem that lies much deeper...in the foundation.

Covering a crack with wallpaper looks good for a moment, but eventually the crack reappears wider than ever. Fed up with superficial solutions and changing philosophies, many are willing to consider a closer examination of the soundness of their foundation.

It is at this very point that Jesus steps in with the challenge of a radically new foundation for life.

Reaching People Where They Are

One of the outstanding characteristics of Jesus was that he went where people were. The situations where he encountered people were as diverse as the people. A home, the marketplace, the temple, a meadow, a lake...all were strategic to Jesus. He had the knack (or strategy?) of meeting people on their turf -- where they were comfortable.

The Gospel records show that where ever Jesus went he drew a crowd. No one having encountered Jesus could ever be neutral. The reactions were varied: Awe, wonder, anger, resentment, worship...but never neutrality.

So magnetic was Jesus that people, having met him, brought others for a firsthand look. Philip found Nathaniel and said, "We have found him of whom Moses...wrote.. Come and see." The Madonna of Samaria, having encountered Jesus at the local watering hole, returned to her relational network and said, "Come, see a man who told me all things I have done."

With various motives, they came. They listened. They watched. Some touched. Some wondered. But having come, no one left the same.

During the three years of Jesus' public ministry, he demonstrated who he was, as well as how one was to live. His personal claims and life principles have been the foundation for countless individuals down through the centuries.

In a society that is drifting in a sea of relativity and the fog of humanism, we need to introduce people to the One who came as the Author and Restorer of Life. Too often we have subtly and erroneously been focusing on presenting church, religion, ourselves...rather than Jesus.

In a society that increasingly regards the institutional church as irrelevant at best, we need a new strategy and new tools. Since many are now a second and third generation outside the church environment, we need to recognize that they are living in a world view shift and a Biblical vacuum.

Although many have concluded that the church, as they perceive it, has little to say to a contemporary society, they still regard the Bible as relevant. We need a strategy that brings people into contact with the Jesus of the Bible. One that allows Jesus to meet them where they are, on their turf.

Design 4 Discovery [D4D] is a Bible discussion series that enables those who are seeking truth for their lives to take a firsthand look at the records regarding Jesus. D4D helps people get to know Jesus "up close and personal". This exposure will be for many the first personal encounter they have had with the Scripture. D4D enables people who are seekers to look at Jesus without first becoming skilled in religious tradition and knowledge. The questions asked will help guide people to understanding what Jesus did, said and implied. Prior knowledge and background in the Bible are not required.

D4D is a tool for climbing in the mountains of our society. D4D will go into the offices, restaurants, and homes where seekers are comfortable.

Learning through Illustration

Jesus lived and taught truth in a historical setting. It is often easier for people to grasp truth if they first observe it as an outside observer. Jesus was a master of first illustrating the truth and then teaching it. His method was illustrate, explain and apply. Having grasped the truth in an objective setting, application can then be made on a personal level.

D4D takes a series of incidents in the life of Jesus where he is demonstrating and teaching truth. In that original setting, people had to deal with his claims. Often the Gospel writers record for us the reaction people had to Jesus. Their reaction was the same as people have today. To a seeker, seeing these various reactions, can help them identify their own journey.

Most adults learn best through self-discovery. Most react to being told. We want to discover for ourselves. Real conviction comes as we discover and wrestle with it to make it our own. Many adults resist a fill in the blank approach to discovering Biblical truth as well. They suspect we are going to force our views on them. What many need is the opportunity to look at the Biblical records, discover, understand and come to their own convictions. Our role is to create the opportunity for guided self-discovery.

The gospels, especially Luke and John were written as either evangelism letters or early follow up letters.

"It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught." Luke 1:3-4

"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." John 20:30-31

D4D first helps a person see the facts surrounding a particular incident. This information is found in the text itself. Additional background information is given for each incident where it may prove

Design 4 Discovery



helpful in understanding the story. Key words are also defined so that no outside reference or prior knowledge is required.

Some of the questions will lead a person to read between the lines where there is no right or wrong answer. It allows each person subjectively to enter the story. This allows discussion regardless of how knowledgeable a person is in Scripture.

Design 4 Discovery is arranged in a simple -- user friendly format. Each Scriptural passage is contained on one sheet of paper along with questions and pertinent data. No Bible is required. This becomes a great equalizer for those with little Bible background. As the leader, you as well as the seeker are working off the same page.

Each passage is designed for one session of exploration. No prior work is required on the part of the seeker. A photocopy of the appropriate Discovery Guide is given to all those involved at the

time of the discussion. Both leader and seeker fill out the sheet as they progress in the discussion. This format does not require the leader to have a hidden set of questions that must be remembered or written out covertly. Each session for discussion proceeds in a similar manner.

The Discovery

A Leader Guide is provided for you to use in preparation for each discussion. (See Leader Guide section for a sample form.) You prepare by using the verse by verse meditation forms to study each passage. Blank meditation forms are found on page 67. This will help you gain understanding of the passage and discover the key points before leading a discussion with others. You will **not** bring these pre-studied materials to the discussion. Rather, discuss the questions as a fellow participant; facilitating and contributing -- not primarily teaching.

When you prepare for a discussion with a group or individual, you will need to photocopy the Discovery Guide that contains the chosen passage for each participant (including yourself). It is important to keep the original Discovery Guide clean for future use with others. Each time you lead a Discovery group, you will start with a new Discovery Guide along with the others in your group. Each time you take a person through this material, the discovery process will be unique.

Design 4 Discovery is built around eight key questions. They are the same for each passage discussed. These questions allow the participants to explore the passage at their own level of understanding. They are designed to take the participants from a cursory discovery of what the passage says to a more critical level of meaning and implication.

The key questions are:

1. **WHO** are the main characters in the story? Jesus will always be one. Other individuals or groups of people may be identified by name and/or by description. The main characters are those that interact with Jesus or are acted upon by him.
2. **WHERE AND WHEN** does the action take place? Often the scene is described in terms of a location or setting. It is important to see that it was an actual event in real, space-time history. Certain stories will have more detail than others. Sometimes no information regarding time and location is given. However, developing a mental picture of the setting can aid in grasping the meaning of the passage.
3. **WHAT ARE THE KEY EVENTS, ACTIVITIES OR IDEAS?** Discover the action and activities that take place as well as the ideas that are key to each incident. This information is directly from the text and is the basis for further discovery. Discussing the action or events of the story gets people involved in the discussion and focused. It is important to discuss the events even if they seem obvious.

4. **RESPONSE & WHY?** This question seeks to identify the reactions of the main characters to what Jesus said and did. Sometimes the reaction is given in the text. Other times it can be surmised from the context. At other times, it must be merely speculation. WHY people reacted the way they did gives rise to critical discussion that allows people to enter the story in a subjective way.

5. **NAMES AND CLAIMS** made about Jesus? This question develops the understanding of who Jesus is. These names and claims can be stated or inferred. They can come from the main characters or by Jesus himself. Ultimately each story or incident was recorded by the gospel writer to tell us something about Jesus. Understanding these claims is the heart and focus of the D4D studies.

6. **VALUES?** Values are what is presented as having critical worth and importance. These values may be stated or implied in the story. Faith, for example, is often highlighted as a supreme value in Jesus' teaching. Because a person's behavior is derived from a core set of values, Jesus taught and modeled the values necessary for successful living.

7. **BELIEFS?** Beliefs are the concepts promoted in the story that are true. It may be in the form of a principle or idea. Again these beliefs will be either taught directly or implied by Jesus as being true. These beliefs may deal with the spiritual or physical dimensions of life. They may deal with character or conduct. Identifying the beliefs in the passage doesn't mean that those in the group have or need to have personally bought into the belief.

8. **CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS?** This question allows one to summarize what they have learned or feel is critical. It allows them to highlight key discoveries and to personalize the truth the Holy Spirit is emphasizing. This does not mean that each person will believe all that has been discovered. They may understand that a passage is teaching a point, and not believe it yet. This question leads to an **if....then** response. **If** this point is true...then what are the implications to life in general and to my life in particular?

The process of discovery is to allow the Holy Spirit to use His Word to penetrate the hearts of people in search of truth. His Word is powerful (Heb. 4:12-13) and is the resource of the Holy Spirit to bring understanding and conviction.

Our responsibility is to expose people to truth and help bring understanding. Only God can open the hearts of people so that His truth becomes personal and effective.

Planning

Leading a Design 4 Discovery requires some organization and planning. It involves knowing your audience and how best to meet their need.

One to one or small groups

D4D can be used either in a small group or individually. Most Bible study discussions are difficult to lead in a one to one setting since the leader asks the questions and the other person fills in the response. D4D allows mutual discovery as both persons explore the passage as fellow pilgrims. Each person shares what they discover. The D4D is asking the questions and each person is responding.

Open groups

The D4D format allows people to join a Discovery group after it is in progress. Although it is helpful to build a reservoir of understanding of what Jesus did and said, it is not essential to have a shared common Biblical reservoir of knowledge to participate in a Discovery discussion. The sequence of the material in the Gospel is not critical to understanding the truths. Each Discovery passage is related to a whole yet stands on its own. The fact that a story happens in Luke 10 rather than Luke 15 is not critical to seekers. The sequence is of less importance than the truths. If a person misses a discussion or comes in later, he is not "behind". This ongoing format allows new people to visit or join at any time rather than waiting until a new group forms.

Frequency

D4D allows the leader to set the frequency of discussions in keeping with his audience. For some, a weekly discussion is appropriate. For others, it may be monthly. Since there is no preparation on the part of the seeker, frequency is more an issue of availability.

Normally seekers can only absorb a little exposure at a time. It is better to have short, lively, stimulating discussions than long, dead ones. The D4D format easily fits into an early morning breakfast, a lunch period or an hour or so during the evening.

Team work

Working as a team is an asset in launching a Discovery group. One person leads the discussion; the others serve as hosts and hostesses. Everyone can participate in the Discovery discussion. A team approach allows complementary gifts to be used in creating an attractive atmosphere. *Your Home A Lighthouse* by Bob Jacks offers good material on using a team approach.

In the marketplace for example, a team of people can function well if all the participants work in the same vicinity. They each bring their seeker friend to the discussion for example over lunch or breakfast. One person facilitates the discussion while the others help develop the atmosphere of love and acceptance. It is important **not** to have more believers attend than seekers. The atmosphere changes when believers dominate. It can cease to be seeker friendly.

It is also critical that those believers who attend are sensitive to seekers and their process. The Discovery sessions are not to become preaching opportunities for favorite Christian issues. Christians must be sensitive to the fact that seekers may have a different world view.

Complimentary sequence

The D4D works well in conjunction with *The Navigators 2:7 Series* or the *Living Proof Video Series*.

One possible sequence could be to take a training group through the *Living Proof Video Series* as a starting point. As group members pray for a list of potential people in their networks that could be invited to a Discovery group, the group works through the material in D4D.

Once people are familiar with the material and ready to launch their Discovery group, they (or a team) begin their own small group using the D4D material. The original group then acts as a Base Camp ministry support group to encourage, pray and resource the Discovery groups.

If groups of people in a local church are involved leading Discovery groups, they could consider a periodic event where all the people in the Discovery groups are invited. For example a dinner, barbecue, or sporting event could be used to expose people to others in process. A credible speaker could share his or her testimony as a way of summarizing the gospel.

Where? Reaching the lost in today's society is an increasingly challenging mission. In the past some have found success in inviting seekers into a religious environment like the church -- some may still respond to this form. Yet increasingly people are unwilling or unable to meet us on our religious turf. Every follower of Christ has God-given networks of people who are lost in the mountains. Many would consider exploring what Jesus said about putting life together if it were on neutral turf.

Most strategies for evangelism require those that are lost in the mountains to meet us in the valley. For those truly lost, it is a difficult request. They have neither the capacity nor interest in valley functions. Our tools tend to require more religious orientation than many people have. We are now dealing with people that have been trapped in the mountains for a second or even a third generation.

Neutral ground is a place where both the leader and the seeker are comfortable. It is a place where both can feel safe and not threatened. By reducing the environmental obstacles, we allow people to focus on the discovery process. If anyone is to be uncomfortable, it should be the Christian. The role of a person with a mission (missionary) is to adapt to the culture of those he/she is seeking to influence.

The office, a restaurant, a home are all potential neutral settings. It depends on whom you are trying to reach. Many women feel very comfortable in each other's homes -- especially if they are in the same general socioeconomic strata. Yet for some men, another person's home may make them uncomfortable. It is too intimate and personal. It may be too foreign to their experience or relational level. Yet for others it may be a warm, friendly environment.

Where you meet may be influenced by when you meet. If it is early morning or over a lunch hour, a home is usually not accessible. The best place then may be a conference room in the office or a restaurant close by.

Who? Begin to pray about those you know who might have an interest in looking at the life of Christ to discover what he has to say about putting life together. Making a list will assist you in consistent prayer. More help is included under **Recruiting** on page 16.

What content do I cover? As you consider who you will invite, you will need to reflect on where they are on their spiritual journey. Some will need more background than others. D4D is designed to accommodate those with little background as well as those with more. You can select from the passages in the D4D to set up the sequence that best fits your audience. You can include as many or as few as you need. See page 22 for an overview of the D4D passages and their key content. You will also find some suggested sequences based on various time options.

How many times do we meet? Usually people will want to know how many times you are inviting them to meet with you. They need to know the beginning and the end point. Will it be three times or seven or open ended? The number of times you plan to meet, will be a factor in what content you select from the D4D.

The purpose of this style of Bible discussion is to help seekers understand truth. This is not intended to be an in-depth type study that would appeal to Christians. You will need to keep your audience in focus since it is difficult to create a discussion where both seekers and Christians are mutually challenged. This study is designed to build truth upon truth -- little by little. Seekers usually cannot take a great deal of content at one time.

Helping seekers understand truth is essential for personal faith. Paul tells us in II Cor. 4:4 that Satan is the one who blinds the minds of the unbeliever. It is a spiritual battle for the minds of men and women. Our arguments and logic are inadequate to release people's minds to truth. Exposure to His Word and prayer are our spiritual weapons against a powerful foe.

The D4D uses short passages through which the seeker can discover some truth. Constant exposure over a period of time allows the Holy Spirit to build line upon line. Don't be concerned if only a few truths are understood from a passage. Don't expect the seeker to see all that there is in a passage. Your contribution should add some to what they discover but not too much. You are not primarily to be a teacher but a fellow traveler.

This type study lends itself to the cultivation phase of evangelism. It allows discovery of truth without drawing a line in the sand. There is a place for commitment and decisions. But if we use a reaping method when the ground needs to be cultivated, we can alienate our audience. Remember coming to Christ is a process. We want to move each person closer to Christ and a personal commitment of faith.

Preparation

As a leader, you need to personally study the passages before you lead a discussion with seekers. This study does not need to be extensive but sufficient for you to become familiar with the passage. As you become familiar with the text, you will be able to guide others in discovery without dominating or manipulating the discussion. Your study will also give you a reservoir of insight from which to draw. It doesn't mean that all your insights need to be shared. In fact, you should anticipate that the seeker will have observations that are new to you. Without a church background, seekers will often see things that are refreshing and challenging. Each time you lead a discussion on a passage, you should anticipate new insights.

Study forms are included for your use in the section "Leader Guides". These guides are a tool for purposeful verse by verse meditation. The passage may be familiar but allow the Holy Spirit to give new insight -- especially regarding values and principles. The form on page 66 gives some initial mediation on Luke 4:1-13. Remember that the preparation study is always left at home. As the leader, you bring a clean copy of the Discovery Guide for everyone in the group -- including yourself. This allows each member of the group to discovery together. No two discussions are the same -- even though the same passage is used.

Notes that you take during a discussion can be added to your study preparation material. You can record new insights and questions that came up during your discussion that will help you be more prepared in the future.

Facilitating

Leading a discussion using Design 4 Discovery is really a matter of guiding or facilitating. Eight questions serve as a guide to explore each passage. Each one stimulates discovery and discussion. Not all the questions will be equally profitable for every passage. The benefit of the question can vary with the passage, group or individual. The questions are meant to serve the leader not confine him. As you become more confident in guiding the discussion, you will discover greater freedom in using the questions and adding your own.

Begin by reading the passage or having others read who you know are able and willing. It is not necessary to begin or end this discussion with prayer. Prayer should be invested prior to and after the discussion. Praying with a seeker can create an environment where he feels like an outsider rather than a fellow participant.

You can launch the first question by saying something like, *"Let's identify the main characters in the story and highlight what we know about them."* You want to stick primarily to what the passage itself reveals. If it doesn't say much, that's OK.

After this general information is identified, a subsequent question could be, *"What can we learn about where this story takes place? What is the setting -- surroundings?" "What do you picture it would be like?"* Background and key words may be helpful at this time.

In some passages it may be helpful to trace the events of the story. The events should be fairly obvious and allow even the most reserved person to make some observations. This type question helps people gain some confidence and success before you get to the more difficult questions.

Referring to the identified main characters, make observations as to how each reacted in the story. *"Was their reaction predictable? Why do you think they acted as they did? How would you have reacted if you had been at the scene?"*

This question gives some room to speculate beyond the text. It allows people to enter the story subjectively. It allows them the opportunity to express how they feel through the eyes of another. They may feel safer, for example, saying the crowd felt Jesus was suspect rather than saying that's how they feel.

The next question could be, *"Usually in these incidents with Jesus, he makes some claims about himself or others make claims about him. Let's discover what they are in this story. What are the people in these paragraphs saying or thinking about Jesus? What do you feel you would be thinking if you had been there?"*

Having explored the more obvious aspects of the passage, you now want to bring out the important transcendent truths. Ask, *"What are the values that you see Jesus demonstrating or teaching?"* Initially you may need to give an example of what you mean by values. (See page 10) Your example may come from the passage or from life in general. Some of the values are obvious from what Jesus taught. Others are more subtle as they are inferred by how Jesus acted and related.

A similar question deals with the truths or principles that Jesus taught or demonstrated. It is not important

that there is a clean differentiation between these last two questions. They are asked simply to bring out the key truths of the passage.

In the passage, for example, of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), love is a key value. It is unimportant whether it surfaces in your discussion as a principle, truth or value. It is only important that it is observed and discussed. The questions are designed to look at the passage from various angles in order to discover its meaning. Use them with freedom and flexibility not rigidity.

The final question should give your group the chance to summarize what they have heard and stimulate personal reflection. You could ask, *"What are the implications of these key truths to our lives today? How would our office, neighborhood or society look if we followed these truths? If, for example, we believed that love as demonstrated by the Good Samaritan was a critical value, how would it effect our lives?"*

Don't force personal application. It is easier to talk in generalities then in personal specifics. You can count on the fact that each person in your group will be wrestling with the truth personally even though it is being discussed generally. God will be using the truth of the Scripture in lives even if they don't verbalize what they are learning. One of the values of the story form is that it heightens retention. The more of a mental picture each person develops during the discussion, the easier it will be to recall and reflect. It becomes a mental hat rack on which to hang the key truths that are emerging.

You can conclude your discussion by giving a preview of the next discussion. A statement to arouse curiosity and interest will help create a sense of anticipation.

The discovery guides are designed to enable people to take notes. As the leader, your model will be contagious. As you write down key observations that come from the group, others will follow. Taking notes, however, is not essential. Some may initially be more comfortable just listening. Some people are more wired to write. Don't force those who aren't. Let each do what is most comfortable for them. Remember that seekers are not interested in doing Bible study. The advantage of having the handout, is that each person can take it with them regardless of whether they have taken notes or not. The Scripture passage is readily available to them without having to find it again in a Bible they may or may not have.

Key points to remember as you facilitate the discussion:

- **Give people time to look and share.** The passage may be unfamiliar. They may be slow readers. They may be insecure in sharing in a group or even out loud. Initially people may not understand what you are looking for as you ask the questions. The advantage of using similar questions for each session is that people learn what to look for. They will gain confidence with each discussion they participate in.
- **Don't dominate the sharing.** Model what you are looking for without giving all the answers or taking away the more obvious ones. It is more important that a seeker discovers and shares the answer than it is to have the leader share it. People will come unglued with motivation as they discover truth for themselves. The more success a person has, the greater the participation.
- **Be content not to exhaust all the truths in the passage.** You may have a notebook of observations that you don't share. Insure key concepts are surfaced but don't worry about being comprehensive. The goal is not to impress others with your knowledge or overwhelm them with truth. God will use a little bit of truth in a big way. Too much new information can cause many seekers to

retreat. Be sensitive to what the Spirit of God is doing and stay in step. Get excited about what others discover.

Recruiting

Recruiting can be defined as the process of one person enlisting others to join a group or a cause. A motorist whose car is stuck recruits those passing by to help him push it out. An organization recruits volunteers to assist at the annual blood drive. The PTA recruits parents to help in the school functions.

These examples of recruiting are viewed positively by our society for two reasons. One is that people have been offered a choice to participate rather than being coerced. The other is that some benefit of time and energy expended will be realized by those recruited. The people will find some satisfaction in the accomplishment of the task.

The stereotype car salesman on the other hand is generally viewed as pressuring people into buying a car they don't want, with money they don't have, at a price that's too high! Society views this as negative because of unfair pressure.

Unfortunately this negative view of recruiting has discouraged us from recruiting seekers to investigate the claims of Christ. We find ourselves questioning the value of what we have to offer. We may wonder if they really need to have it. We question if we are benefiting them or just intruding into their lives.

Recruiting involves more than simply making information available. A person washed overboard off a ship needs more than the knowledge that there is a life ring on board. He needs someone who will get the ring into his grasp.

Scripture makes it clear that every person has a spiritual dimension to his or her life. When Jesus encountered people, he saw more than their outward appearance. He also saw their spiritual condition. In Matt. 9 Jesus describes people as distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. In light of this observation, he was willing to offer the good news of the Gospel to them. He recruited them to truth by taking the initiative graciously.

To take the initiative graciously in recruiting, the following steps may be helpful:

1. IDENTIFY. Identify those in my God given networks that I could invite into a D4D. My networks are relationships where I live, work and play; those with whom I share some common ground -- common interests. Out of all those possibilities, who specifically is God putting on my heart to recruit to a D4D. Write those names on a 3x5 card and begin to pray for them daily.

2. INTRODUCE. Next, introduce the topic of spiritual issues with those on your prayer list. The more we have been able to discuss a variety of topics with a person, the easier and more natural it is to discuss spiritual topics. One way to bring up spiritual issues is to reflect on the four major dimensions of life: Physical, spiritual, social and intellectual. I tell people that I am interested in all four. Most people have given some thought to each one to some degree. I mention that I'd be interested in their thoughts on the spiritual dimension. I ask for their permission to ask a couple of questions that will give them a chance to relate what they think.

Possible questions could be:

- If you were to take a snapshot of your life ten years from now, what would it look like?
- What are the critical factors that are necessary for you to feel successful?
- An author went around the country recently asking people, "What is the meaning of life?" If he were to ask you that question, how would you respond?
- What role does God play in your snapshot, critical factors or view of the meaning of life?

My objective is not just to ask questions but to open a dialogue on a spiritual level.

3. INVITE. The next step is to invite them to investigate what Christ says about putting life together. I am not recruiting them to consider what the church says, or Christians say or even what the Bible says. These may be viewed by the seeker as irrelevant or incomprehensible. I want them to look at what Jesus says. And what he says happens to be recorded for us in a particular part of the Bible. I will say that Jesus has made some unique claims about himself and putting life together.

I then clearly and specifically ask if they would be interested in investigating what He has to say. It is critical to let the person answer. Often they will have questions or concerns about how this will take place. I then can address each concern honestly. As the person realizes that the D4D is personal, practical, and relevant, they are more likely to give it a try.

4. INFORM. The last step is to inform them of the specifics. Tell them how long we will meet, who will be there, where we will meet, etc. You need to have decided the logistics in advance. Some will respond to an open-ended type format. Others will want to know that it has a fixed length with a clear beginning and end.

Summarizing

In the process of coming to Christ, each person has a history. God has been using people and circumstances in each person's life to move them closer to Himself. We need to be aware and build upon that process. As we learn and value the person's journey, we communicate love and build a stronger bond of trust.

Spiritual Journey

One way to find out about a person's spiritual journey is to make observations from things they say over a period of time. Another way is to ask them to describe it. You may say, "Bob, I make the assumption that everyone is on a spiritual journey. I'd be interested in hearing about yours. If you could graph it over time, what would it look like?"

They then can describe it verbally or use a graph to indicate the significant events, people and impact. If you do this with a group, you can hand it out as an assignment for a future time or do it spontaneously. It is not surprising that once you ask a person for their spiritual journey, they will ask you about yours.

Since each person's story is personal, it is imperative that it be shared in an atmosphere of trust. This may be the first time they have ever exposed themselves in this area. For some it is a risky exposure. They will be asking, "If you know this about me, will you still accept me?" People will be more willing to share if they feel you sincerely want to know and value it.

See the Appendix for a copy of the Spiritual Journey Illustration. You can photocopy this form and hand it out for people to share from when you feel it would be appropriate.

Personal faith

It was after many months of ministry and exposure that Jesus asked the disciples the critical question, "Who do you say that I am?" Today, as people are in the process of discovering truth about Christ, they also need to be asked that same question. This question is to lead them to a personal faith commitment.

There are a variety of ways to summarize the gospel of Christ so that a person can make a faith response. There are various tracts such as *Peace with God* or *The Four Spiritual Laws*. Each of these gives a person a concise summary of the gospel with key questions to ask as you read through the presentation.

The Bridge Illustration is another tool that allows you to draw out a summary picture of the gospel. If you memorize this illustration, you will have a tool that you can use at any time. A copy of this illustration with a suggested presentation is included in the Appendix. You could use the abbreviated form as a handout in making your presentation to those in your D4D group.

The summary illustrations give you the opportunity to bring in other verses from the Bible that give additional insight into the gospel message.

It is highly recommended that a summary presentation be made to each person that is involved in a D4D group. This could be done individually or as a group. An effective follow up would be to meet individually with those from your group after they have attended 3-5 sessions. This also gives the leader a chance to see what the Holy Spirit is doing on a personal level. Often people are more transparent in a one to one situation than in a group.

A summary illustration is also a nonthreatening way to help those who have not attended all the D4D sessions to get an overview of the gospel. You could say, "*John, how about getting together for coffee next Thursday. I'd like to go over what we've been covering in our Discovery group. I can summarize what the key issues are by looking at an illustration. I'd also be interested in what you think about the discussions so far.*"

Another possible summary tool is the "Basic Laws of Spiritual Economics." This is included in the Appendix, page 76. It is written in terms that communicates to someone in the business world.

Discovery Guides



The pages in this section may be photocopied as needed

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14

Design for Discovery includes twenty one passages for use in a Discovery setting. The selected passages are samples from the life and ministry of Christ. Some deal more with his claims and identity. Others deal with his teaching on life principles. Still others focus on the key elements of the Gospel.

Each leader needs to select the passages that will best meet the needs of those he/she is trying to reach. Some seekers would benefit from more understanding of Christ's identity. In that case, select more passages that deal with his claims as to who he was.

The chart on page 22 gives a list of the passages used in the D4D and a summary of their content. Your own study of the passages will add to this summary overview. Each passage has a code letter to give you an idea of its focus:

I = Identity. Jesus is demonstrating his identity as God in the flesh.

L = Life Principles. Jesus is teaching how to live life with kingdom values, beliefs and behavior.

G = Gospel. Jesus is dealing with core issues regarding his role as Savior.

I/G = Identity and Gospel. Jesus identifies himself around a core Gospel issue.

Each time you lead a Discovery series, the number of sessions may vary. Once you are comfortable with the material, you will be able to adapt your passages easily to your audience. Remember that the seeker is not looking for a survey of the Bible or even a book. Therefore, it is not essential that you take the passages in any particular order. The advantage of using D4D is that it allows you to focus attention on the truth that is pertinent to your audience.

The following are options that you could use:

OPTION A: A 5 session Discovery series

1. Luke 4:14-30 (I)
2. Luke 5:17-26 (I/G)
3. Luke 23:33-47 (G)
4. Luke 24:1-12 (G)
5. A summary presentation using the Bridge Illustration

OPTION B: A 7 session Discovery series

1. Luke 5:17-26 (I/G)
2. Luke 7:36-50 (I/G)
3. Luke 6:20-49 (L)
4. Luke 12:15-34 (L)
5. Luke 23:32-47 (G)
6. John 3:1-16 (G)
7. Summary presentation using the Bridge Illustration

OPTION C: An open ended series where you go as long as people remain interested.

In this type series where there is no set termination point, you can proceed slower and cover more passages. If new people are joining your group, you may want to cycle back through the major truths using different passage selections.

Passage Summary

Passage	Code	Description	Claims, Values, Beliefs
Luke 4:1-13	I	Jesus tempted by Satan	Reality of Satan, spiritual conflict
Luke 4:14-30	I	Jesus states his mission in home town	Prophecy fulfilled, compassion
Luke 4:31-44	I	Jesus' healing ministry	Power, authority, compassion
Luke 5:1-11	I	Jesus calls disciples to follow him	Authority, knowledge, worthiness
Luke 5:17-26	I/G	Jesus heals a paralytic	Authority to forgive, deity, faith
Luke 5:27-38	I	Jesus calls Levi to follow him	Repentance, love for sinners
Luke 6:20-49	L	Jesus teaches on life principles	Heart problem, mercy, humility
Luke 7:1-10	I/G	Centurion's servant healed	Humility, faith, authority, hope
Luke 7:36-50	I/G	Immoral woman finds forgiveness	Compassion, grace, forgiveness
Luke 8:40-56	I/G	Jairus' daughter healed	Power, faith, peace
Luke 9:18-27	I	Disciples confess Christ's deity	Deity, life, death, resurrection
Luke 9:28-36	I	Christ's transfiguration	Jesus supersedes law and prophet God verifies Christ's identity
Luke 10:25-37	L	Parable of good Samaritan	Compassion, love, sacrifice
Luke 12:15-34	L	Rich and foolish man	Spiritual riches, God's care, real treasure, priority
Luke 14:15-34	G	Parable of the banquet	Kingdom invitation, must respond
Luke 15:11-32	I/G	Parable of prodigal son	Love, hope, forgiveness/repentance
Luke 17:20-35	G	Jesus predicts his return	Judgment, Christ returns
Luke 23:1-25	G	Pilate tries Jesus and finds innocent	Christ's innocence
Luke 23:32-47	G	Christ's crucifixion	Suffering, innocence, death
Luke 24:1-12	G	Resurrection of Jesus	Historic resurrection of Jesus
John 3:1-16	G	Jesus dialogues with Nicodemus	New birth, love, faith in Christ

Code Symbol

I = Identity. Jesus is demonstrating his identity as God in the flesh.

L = Life Principles. Jesus is teaching how to live life with kingdom values, beliefs and behavior.

G = Gospel. Jesus is dealing with core issues regarding his role as Savior.

I/G = Identity and Gospel. Jesus identifies himself around a core Gospel issue.

Luke 4:1-13

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

⁸ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; ¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

¹² Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus began his public ministry at about the age of 30. Prior to that time he had lived with his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, in the town of Nazareth. Joseph was a carpenter so Jesus would have learned the trade as well.

The incident in the desert came early in Jesus' public ministry. He had been in the area of the Jordan River where John the Baptist was having his ministry. While there, John had introduced Jesus to the crowds as "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world".

Key Words

Devil: Chief of the fallen spirits. Chief adversary of God and man. Also called Satan.

Jordan: Only large flowing body of water in Israel. Connects Sea of Galilee with the Dead Sea.

Lord: Expresses a varied degree of honor, dignity and majesty.

Scripture: Collection of holy, inspired writings.

Son of God: Term used to designate his co-equal, eternal deity and yet human nature.

Luke 4:14-30

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰ 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, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

²² 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.

²³ Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

²⁴ "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. ²⁷ 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."

²⁸ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹ 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 down the cliff. ³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus read from the Old Testament book of Isaiah. The passage dealt with the prophecy of a deliverer, a prophet...a Messiah. His claim was to be the fulfillment of that expectation.

Key Words

Synagogue: Congregation of the Jews for the purpose of religious instruction and worship apart from the service of the temple.

Sabbath: The seventh day of the week (Saturday) as the day of rest and religious observation among the Jews.

Galilee: An ancient Roman province in Israel. An area north of Jerusalem which included the Sea of Galilee and the hometown area of Jesus.

Nazareth: A town in lower Galilee; hometown of Mary and Joseph and the town where Jesus grew up.

Isaiah: An Old Testament prophet. His Old Testament writings include many prophecies regarding the coming Messiah.

Capernaum: A town on the NW shore of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus made his headquarters during his ministry in Galilee.

Elijah/Elisha: Old Testament prophets who conducted many miracles during their lifetime.

Zarephath: An ancient Canaanite city that was near the coast north of Israel.

Luke 4:31-44

³¹ Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. ³² They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.

³³ In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ³⁴ "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"

³⁵ "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.

³⁶ All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" ³⁷ And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

³⁸ Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. ³⁹ So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

⁴⁰ When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. ⁴¹ Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

⁴² At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³ But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." ⁴⁴ And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, if....then)

Background

New Testament writers were aware that illness and abnormalities were attributed to both natural causes as well as demon-possession. Demon-possession was the control of a person by an foreign (evil) spirit.

Knowledge of Christ's divinity was common among the demonic spirit world. But they were not certain as to his purpose.

Key Words

Simon: Also called Peter, one of the initial followers of Jesus and one of the 12 Apostles.

Christ: Means "anointed one". Hebrew word was Messiah. Old Testament prophesy expected a deliverer who would bring about a new kingdom where peace and righteousness would reign.

Luke 5:1-11

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, ² he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus was teaching the crowds the word of God. His message was also referred to as "the gospel of the kingdom" which dealt with the reign of God in the hearts and lives of people.

Jesus used any convenient spot to teach about the kingdom. Sometimes he used the Synagogue. Yet more often he used the natural surroundings where people were. Here the lake served as a good acoustical background as well as the center of activity.

By the time Jesus asks Peter to go fishing it is probably about noon. An unlikely time as demonstrated by the fact that the commercial fishermen had been out all night and were using the day for repairs.

This encounter with Jesus was not the first time Peter, James and John had been around him. They had spent time with him in the months preceding as he traveled and taught in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Key Words

Lake Gennesaret: Same as the Sea of Galilee.

Simon: Also called Peter, one of the 12 apostles.

James & John: Brothers who also became part of the 12 apostles. Like Peter, they were fishermen by trade.

Master: Substitute for the title of Rabbi. Rabbi was a title given by the Jews to the teachers of their law.

Luke 5:17-26

¹⁷ One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. ... He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

The incident takes place at a house in Capernaum. Capernaum was the headquarters from which Jesus carried out his ministry in Galilee. The house was filled with a variety of people listening and watching. The Pharisees were especially observing Jesus to determine if there was legitimacy to the claims he made.

Key Words

Pharisees: One of the three most prominent societies of Judaism at the time of Christ. The most strict and influential. They were a society of experts in the interpretation of Scripture. They were the religious leaders.

Teachers of the Law: Often called scribes, they were the men who studied, taught, interpreted and transmitted the Mosaic law. God's real law was often buried beneath tradition.

Blasphemy: To speak lightly or carelessly of God was a mortal sin. In Israel the penalty was death by stoning.

Son of Man: A phrase used by Christ to describe himself. It had its roots in the Old Testament and referred to the One who was coming again to rule the world.

Luke 5:27-38

²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, ²⁸ and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

²⁹ Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.

³⁰ But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

³¹ Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

³³ They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking."

³⁴ Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? ³⁵ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast."

³⁶ He told them this parable: "No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. ³⁷ And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸ No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Tax collectors were outcasts among their people. They were considered traitors, and reputed as extortioners. They would be especially distasteful to the religious elite like the Pharisees and scribes.

The Pharisees and scribes had, in their zeal to be holy to God, created an elaborate system of rules and traditions that went beyond Old Testament Scripture. They now considered their tradition as authoritative as Scripture. It was this tradition that Jesus rejected and attacked. Consequently he incurred the constant scrutiny and wrath of this religious elite.

Key Words

Tax collector: One who collected tolls for the Roman government on merchandise passing through the area. They were known for graft and corruption. If done by a Jew, they were also regarded as a traitor.

Levi: A Jew; also called Matthew; became one of the 12 apostles.

Sinners: One who had "missed the mark" in terms of God's standards.

Righteous: Those who consider themselves worthy.

Repentance: Conversion; a complete transformation; change of mind, heart, will and conduct.

John's disciples: John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. John had a ministry of prophesy announcing that the 'kingdom of God is at hand'.

Fast: A voluntary abstaining from food for a period of time for religious purposes.

Luke 6:20-49

²⁰ Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor (in spirit), for yours is the kingdom of God....". ²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you..... ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you....."

³⁹ He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?"

⁴⁰ A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. ⁴¹ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

⁴³ "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

A summary message Jesus gave to his followers on how to live as part of his kingdom was delivered on a mountain hillside and is commonly referred to as the "Sermon on the Mount."

Although given primarily to his followers, the intended implication was for all who would listen.

Key Words

Disciple: A follower of Jesus. Some were more committed than others. Earlier in this same day, Jesus had selected 12 men who were the core group of his disciples.

Poor: Spiritual poverty not material poverty; poor towards God. Those who recognize their spiritual bankruptcy.

Heart: The core of a person's being.

Beam: Heavy piece of wood used for rafters in building.

Speck: Small piece of wood or straw.

Luke 7:1-10

¹ When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. ³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." ⁶ So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." ¹⁰ Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Capernaum: A city in the province of Galilee. Jesus used it as his base of operation as he ministered in the province.

Centurion: A commander of 100 soldiers in the Roman army.

Synagogue: A congregation of the Jews for the purpose of religious instruction and worship apart from the service of the temple.

Luke 7:36-50

³⁶ Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, ³⁸ and 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.

³⁹ 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."

⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹ "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

People usually ate their meal in a reclining position on low couches around the table. Their head would face the table and their feet extend backwards.

It was not unusual for uninvited guests to come to a dinner party and sit around the wall of the room and observe - sometimes even enter into the conversation.

The customary tokens of hospitality offered to invited guest were to be greeted by the host with a kiss, have their feet washed and be given oil for anointing their head. Simon's treatment of Jesus would have been considered cold and discourteous.

It was not considered proper at this time for a woman to let her hair down in public.

Key Words

Pharisee: By the name of Simon was not the same as Peter the apostle.

Alabaster Jar: Vase of expensive, white perfume; a fine grained gypsum. It was often used as an offering of thanksgiving.

Denari: A days wage for a common laborer in Jesus' day.

Woman - a sinner: One with a bad reputation, could have been for a variety of reasons.

Luke 8:40-56

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. ⁴¹ Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house ⁴² because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. ⁴³ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

⁴⁵ "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

⁴⁷ Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

⁴⁹ While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher any more."

⁵⁰ Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." ⁵¹ When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵² Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." ⁵³ They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" ⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus just returned from the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee where he had healed a demon possessed man. In response, the people there had asked Jesus to leave. He returns to the area of Capernaum on the western side of the Sea of Galilee where he had spent considerable time before.

Jarius was a ruler of the Synagogue. The Synagogue was the local place for worship and religious instruction. It was run by a board of elders. Jarius would have been on that board. It was a position of high social and religious standing.

The woman with the bleeding is not named. She had an incurable problem with the therapeutics of the day. She had lost her health as well as her wealth. Twelve years of seeking treatment had used up her resources. Her particular illness would have been considered ceremonially "unclean". This implies she had also lost her social standing in the community.

It was generally not considered proper for a woman to speak in public in that culture. For her to do so was a risk and took great courage.

The wailing people at Jarius' home were part of the traditional funeral observance. Often professional mourners were hired. This group seemed especially large and unruly possibly due to Jarius' status in the community.

Luke 9:18-27

¹⁸ Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"

¹⁹ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

²⁰ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

²¹ Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. ²² And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

²³ Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it ²⁵ What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? ²⁶ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷ I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus was traveling with his 12 disciples in the area of Caesarea Philippi. An area 24 miles north of Capernaum. It was a Gentile area which afforded Jesus more personal time to teach the 12 disciples.

Jesus restrained the public proclamation of his claim as Messiah possibly due to the people's enthusiasm for a political deliverer from the oppression and domination of Rome.

Key Words

John the Baptist: John was Jesus' cousin and had a primary mission of declaring that the kingdom of God was at hand. He introduced Jesus earlier as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John had recently been executed by Herod.

Elijah: A famous Old Testament prophet who had done many miracles during his life.

Christ: A title meaning Messiah, God's anointed, the long awaited One. The Old Testament Jewish expectation for a coming Messiah incorporated a Mediator as Chief Prophet, only High Priest and Eternal King.

Son of Man: An Old Testament title Jesus frequently used for himself which conveyed both his deity and humanity. It was not as inflammatory as Messiah.

Elders, chief priests and teachers of the law: Privileged religious rulers and theologians responsible for the religious interests and welfare of the people.

Kingdom of God: Used in various ways but always implying "that where God rules." Here Jesus is referring to that new historical reality that would result from and directly precede his death and resurrection.

Luke 9:28-36

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

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Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

The departure that was being discussed refers to the death, burial and resurrection that was about to happen in Jerusalem.

The shelters likely represented Peter's attempt to prolong Jesus' stay. Yet Jesus was determined to steadily keep moving towards his goals.

Moses and Elijah traditionally represented the Law and the prophets respectively.

Key Words

Peter, James and John: These men were the most visible of the 12 disciples. They often accompanied Jesus on key events.

Moses: Old Testament character who led Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom. He was responsible for giving Israel the Law of God.

Elijah: Key Old Testament prophet.

Master: Lord, Rabbi, teacher, title of deep respect.

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ 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.'"

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins 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.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

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Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

The demands of the Law were summarily stated by this religious lawyer. The demand was for perfect compliance to God's standard of absolute love both of God and others. The lawyer recognized the implications of such demands and sought to justify himself by limiting his responsibility.

The law was not given as a means of obtaining right standing with God. It was given to show God's high moral nature and as a teacher of man's inability to attain God's standard of righteousness. Romans 3:20 states, "Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his (God's) sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."

Key Words

Eternal life: Refers to both duration and quality.

Jerusalem to Jericho: A 17 mile trip through rugged, rocky, dangerous terrain. Robbers would often victimize even wary travelers.

Priest/Levite: Those who served in the temple. They were of the official religious order, probably on their way home after fulfilling their temple duty in Jerusalem.

Samaritan: A group of people who were ethnically half Jew and half Gentile. There was a mutually hostile/hate relationship between the Jews and Samaritans. A Jew at that time would have considered a "good Samaritan" an impossibility.

Luke 12:15-34

¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' "

²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹ "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

²² 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. ²³ Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ 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! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

²⁷ "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ 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, O you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³² "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus is teaching the crowds in general and addressing the 12 disciples in particular.

When Jesus makes the statement to "sell your possessions and give to the poor," it was in the context of the rich/foolish man who had hoarded all his wealth. Jesus did not say to "sell **all** your possessions and give the **entire** amount to the poor" as some have misinterpreted his teaching throughout history.

A person's treasure is that for which he/she ultimately strives. It could include power, prestige and wealth.

Key Words

Greed: The thirst for having more.

Solomon: An important king of Israel and son to king David. Solomon was the king that built Israel into a wealthy, respected and prosperous nation. He built the original temple which had been destroyed and subsequently rebuilt.

Pagan world: Term for the unbeliever in contrast to the believers or disciples.

Luke 14:15-24

¹⁵ When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

¹⁶ Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.

¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

¹⁸ "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

¹⁹ Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

²⁰ "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

²¹ "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

²² "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

²³ "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.' "

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus was presently eating at the home of a prominent Pharisee. He had been discussing the merits and demonstration of humility. There were obvious positions of power and prestige being sought after by those in attendance. He challenged his host to give a banquet and invite those who could not repay the favor. Jesus said the reward for such action would not come from the guests themselves but at the resurrection of the righteous.

It was in reference to this "resurrection of the righteous" that a guest makes the initial statement in this story.

The feast in the kingdom of God is referring to the future joys and delight of eternal life. Jesus did not give details of what this future life would entail. He did, however, picture it as a banquet. In the broadest terms, the banquet would represent the joyful communion of God and his people for eternity.

It is in reference to this great banquet that Jesus tells an additional parable.

The double invitation was common in Jesus' day. The guests had been invited and were being reminded. It is in the context of the reminder that the initial guests refused to come. Most likely Jesus is referring to the Jews of that generation who had refused to respond in belief to his invitation and claims.

The invitation was now to be extended to the Gentiles as well. Those now invited represented the undeserving and unlikely.

Luke 15:11-32

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

According to Old Testament law, one-third of the parental estate would go to the younger son upon his father's death. Two-thirds would go to the elder son. In this case the estate was probably divided up and a portion sold for cash to accommodate the younger son's request.

According to Jewish custom, it was a curse to take care of pigs. The job of feeding pigs would have been considered the lowliest point of humiliation.

A hired man was usually a day-laborer. The term didn't even apply to a regular full-time servant.

The best robe, ring and sandals were symbols of authority. He was not to be a servant but a freeman.

The fattened calf was reserved for special occasions when important guests were expected.

Luke 17:20-35

²⁰ Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, ²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is among you."

²² Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. ²³ Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. ²⁴ For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

²⁶ "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

²⁸ "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

²⁹ But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

³⁰ "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. ³² Remember Lot's wife! ³³ Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵ Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left."

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

The **Kingdom of God** was a concept that was prominent in Jewish thought. At this point in history, the Jews anticipated a physical, visible, earthly kingdom where they would have a key role. **Kingdom** can be used to mean either kingdom or kingship/reign.

Pharisees: The very strict and influential religious leaders.

Son of Man: An Old Testament title for the One who was to come and rule. Jesus frequently used this title for himself.

Noah: The one righteous person that, along with his family, survived the great flood.

Lot: The nephew of Abraham. Lot lived in the wicked city of Sodom. God destroyed the city but Lot was spared. Lot's wife also escaped the city but in disobeying God's command not to look back, she turned into a pillar of salt.

Luke 23:1-7, 13-25

¹ Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. ² And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."

³ So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. ⁴ Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."

⁵ But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

⁶ On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷ When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.....

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."

¹⁸ With one voice they cried out, "away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" ¹⁹ (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

²⁰ Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again.

²¹ But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

²² For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

²³ But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

Jesus had been arrested during the night and had been brought before the Jewish High Priest for a religious trial. There he was accused of breaking traditional religious laws. Failing to present a legitimate case, they raise the issue of blasphemy, his claim to be equal with God. Under oath, Jesus is finally asked, "Are you the Son of God?" His reply was in the affirmative. Their response was to demand his death.

But in 30 AD, Rome had removed the death penalty from Jewish control. Under Jewish law, the death penalty was carried out by stoning. Under Roman law it was carried out by crucifixion for non Romans.

Failing to have the power of death, the Jewish leaders had to turn to Rome to have their desire carried out. Therefore, they brought Jesus to Pilate and created a civil case against him. The charges they brought to Pilate were lies designed to appeal to his interests.

Political conditions in Rome had left Pilate insecure and his loyalty to Rome suspect. As the crowds threatened him with rioting and charges of treason to Rome, Pilate gave in to their demands.

Under the tradition of releasing one prisoner as a mark of good will, Pilate tried to appease the Jewish leadership. His gesture was rejected since their minds had been made up.

Key Words

Pilate: The Roman procurator of the provinces of Judea and Samaria.

Herod (Antipas): The ruler of the province of Galilee. He happened to be in Jerusalem at the time of this trial.

Chief Priests and rulers: The Jewish leadership that conducted the late night trial of Jesus and demanded his death.

Luke 23:32-47

³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: This is the King of the Jews.

³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

⁴³ Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

⁴⁷ The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

The superscription over Jesus' head read in full: This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews". It was written in 3 languages: Aramaic, Latin and Greek. Normally the superscription noted the crime. Here it was a title given by Pilate as a response to the Jewish leaders.

The mocking of Jesus by the various groups of people had 2 things in common: a. They mocked his claim of Messiah b. They challenged him to come down from the cross.

At the time of his death 3 events took place as recorded in the gospel records. The temple veil was torn from top to bottom - signifying access to God by all people through Christ. There was a significant earthquake. Tombs of recently deceased saints were opened.

Key Words

Place called the Skull: It was the location of Christ's execution. The exact location is not known. It was near Jerusalem and outside the city.

Casting lots: Probably throwing dice, lottery system. There were four soldiers at a crucifixion and 5 pieces of garments. The seamless tunic was put into the lottery rather than being divided.

Christ of God, Chosen One: Terms referring to his claim to be the Messiah.

Sixth hour: 12:00 noon. His crucifixion began at 9:00 a.m. and was over by 3:00 p.m.

Temple curtain: The cloth curtain that separated the Holy area of the temple from the most sacred area called the Holy of Holies. It was Jewish belief that God's presence was in the Holy of Holies.

Luke 24:1-12

¹ On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

The tomb was sealed with a large stone. In other accounts, the women discussed how to handle the stone closure.

Other accounts in the Bible record the appearance of angels in the form of men. The dazzling appearance was fitting the spiritual beings from the realm of glory and purity.

The eleven disciples were now minus Judas who had committed suicide following his betrayal of Jesus.

In addition to the 12 disciples that followed Jesus closely, there was also a group of women who had been part of the intimate group of followers. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James, were but some of this group of women who discovered the empty tomb.

Key Words

The tomb: Belonged to Joseph of Arimathea; carved out of the rock. It was likely close to Jerusalem.

Spices: Used to anoint a body for burial. The burial on Friday evening had been hurried due to the approaching Sabbath. The proper procedure had not taken place.

The two men: The other accounts identify these men as angels.

Son of Man: The title Jesus identified with that meant the One who was coming.

John 3:1-16

¹ Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

³ In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

⁹ "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Highlight the main and minor characters.

Where and when does this story take place?

What are the key events, activities or ideas?

How did the characters respond? Why?

How is Jesus described (by himself or others, claims made, character traits displayed)?

What values were taught/demonstrated by Jesus?

Beliefs (truths, principles taught or demonstrated by Jesus)

Conclusions (implications, ifthen)

Background

During the period of Jewish history when the people left captivity in Egypt and were traveling in the desert, they rebelled against God. God in judgment sent a "fiery serpent" among the people resulting in many deaths. When the people confessed their sin, God told Moses to make a brass image of the serpents and place it on a pole in the camp. When those who were bitten looked at the brass serpent, they were restored to health.

Key Words

Pharisee: One of the three most prominent societies of Judaism at the time of Christ. The most strict and influential. They were a society of experts in the interpretation of Scripture. They were the religious leaders.

Nicodemus: Held a very prominent position. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, a scribe (a teacher of the law), as well as a Pharisee.

Rabbi: Master or teacher.

Kingdom of God: Used in various ways but always implying "that where God rules."

Son of Man: A phrase used by Jesus to describe himself. It referred to the One who was coming again to rule the world. It was not as inflammatory as the title of Messiah yet conveyed both deity and humanity.

Leader Guides



Text: Luke 4:1-13

Leader Guide

Date: _____

Verse	What happened	Response & why	Names/claims	Values	Beliefs
1	<i>returned from Jordan</i>	<i>led by Spirit</i>	<i>full of Holy Spirit</i>		
2	<i>tempted 40 days</i>	<i>ate nothing, hungry</i>			<i>Satan is real, enemy of God</i>
3	<i>test: stones into bread</i>		<i>Son of God</i>		
4		<i>quoted Script./direct.</i>		<i>life more than physical</i>	
5	<i>showed kingdoms</i>				
6	<i>test: worship Devil</i>				
7					
8		<i>quoted Scripture/true</i>		<i>worship God only</i>	
9	<i>test: jump</i>		<i>Son of God</i>		
10	<i>Devil quotes Script.</i>				
11					
12		<i>quotes Script./authoritative</i>			<i>Scripture is authoritative and rule for life</i>
13	<i>Devil leaves</i>				

sample

Conclusions/implications: Satan is real. There is a spiritual battle going on between God and the Devil; a struggle that effects the welfare of man. Jesus didn't give into Satan's temptations. He was always obedient to his Fther's will. Jesus knew who he was (the Son of God) and didn't need to prove it to Satan. There is more to life than the physical. The spiritual is also real and ultimately the foundation for life.

Leader Guide

Text:_____

Date: _____

[illegible]

Conclusions/implications:_____

Leader Guide

Text:_____

Date: _____

[illegible]

Conclusions/implications:_____



Leader Guide

Text: _____

Date: _____

[illegible]

Conclusions/implications:_____

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Text:_____

Date: _____

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Conclusions/implications:_____

Leader Guide

Text:_____

Date:_____

[illegible]

Conclusions/implications:_____

Appendix



Basic Laws of Spiritual Economics

1. We have been created to know God but our independence has offended His holy nature leaving us alienated and spiritually bankrupt.

Romans 3:23 *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Romans 3:10 *"As it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one;'"*

2. The currency of personal merit is debased and worthless to God. No amount of reorganization will deliver us from debt.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast"*

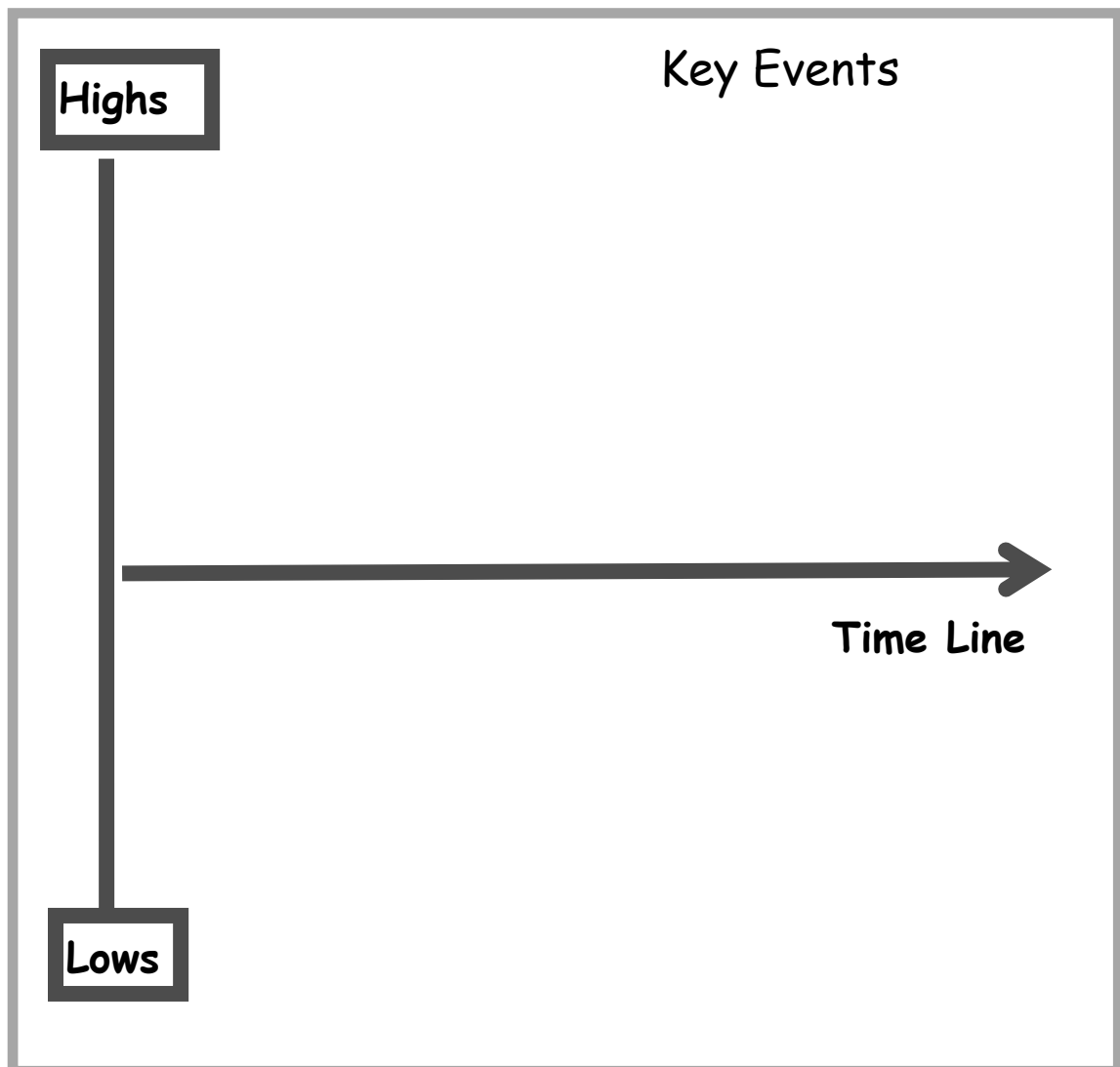
3. God's love is expressed in Jesus Christ. His death on the cross is the only currency that can adequately satisfy God's holiness and secure our debt in full.

Romans 5:8 *"But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

4. Through declaration of personal, moral bankruptcy and faith in Christ, we can receive deliverance from our debt, initiate a personal relationship with God and receive the gift of life that is eternal.

John 5:24 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."*

Spiritual Journey



Bridge Illustration

A summary of the Gospel

A visual presentation

The following presentation is to be drawn out and presented using a blank sheet of paper and the Bible. This presentation is most effective after having gained permission to share a summary of what the Bible teaches regarding becoming a real Christian.

The illustration uses 4 verses of Scripture. These should be looked up and read together. They form the authoritative basis for the principles presented.

The illustration is built around 5 points or principles:

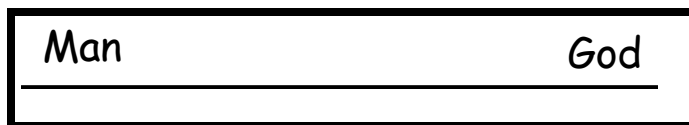
1. God's Purpose
2. Man's Problem
3. God's Plan
4. God's Provision
5. Man's Prerogative

This forms the outline for a concise presentation. If a person memorizes these 5 points and the 4 verses that go with them, he can make a clear presentation in a relaxed, conversational manner.

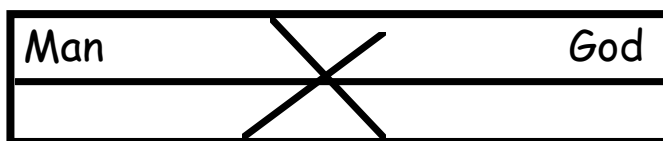
1. God' Purpose

The Bible begins by showing us that originally God created man to share His image and an intimate relationship. Man and God were in perfect union. I will let the following line represent this union and fellowship.

However, that union was broken by man's decision to become morally independent from God. That independence is also called disobedience or sin.



This sin resulted in alienation or separation from God. The intimacy was gone. Man and God no longer experienced a personal relationship. Man became spiritually dead. That condition has been historically passed down through every generation since Adam.



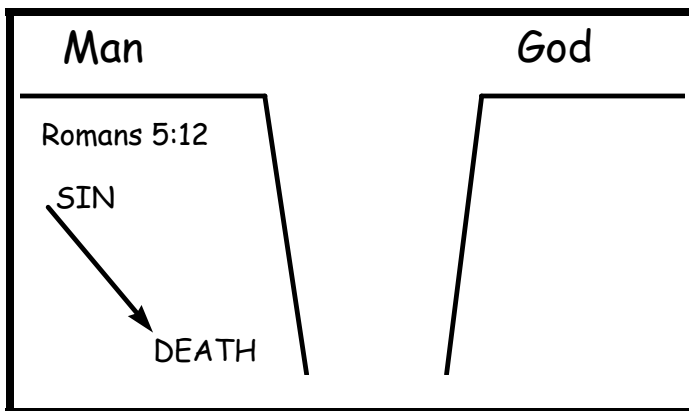
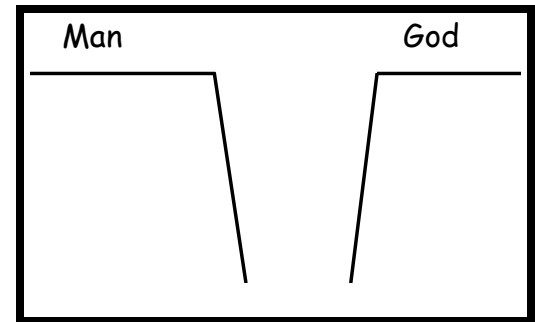
I will highlight that separation by drawing two cliffs with a gulf in between. Man is on one side and God is on the other.

2. Man's Problem

The Bible describes man's problem in a statement found in Romans 5:12. Would you read it? I'd like to have you identify a couple of key points.

From that statement, what characterizes all men and women? [Sin]

What does it say is the result of that sin? [Death]

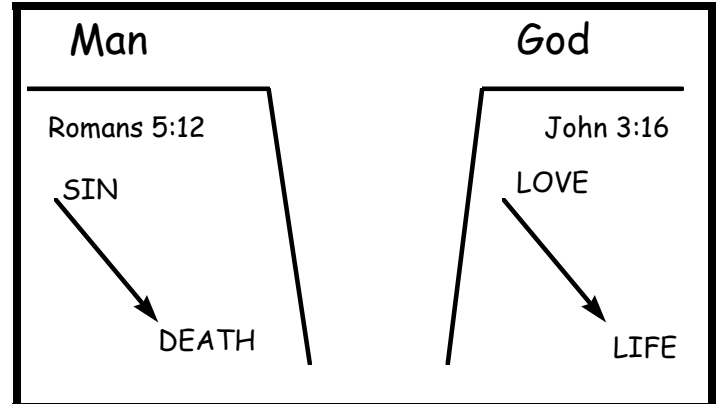


The basic meaning of the word death is separation. Death in its various forms resulted from man's sin. That death is experienced in every area of life: Physically, emotionally, socially, psychologically and spiritually. Ultimately death leads to an eternal separation from God and His purpose.

3. God's Plan

The Bible also reveals God's plan. Read this statement in John 3:16 and I'll have you highlight some concepts from it.

The Bible reveals a lot about the character of God. What is the characteristic that this statement highlights? [Love] What does this statement say is the result of God's love? [Life!]



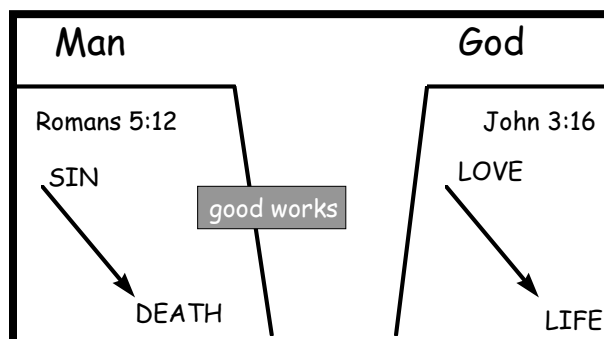
Like death, life has various aspects. The Bible teaches that God desires to put life back together in every aspect that was destroyed by sin. Ultimately God desires to give us life that is eternal; life that has no end and restores the union and intimacy that was lost.

4. God's provision

Throughout human history, man has tried to reach God in various ways. Basically it boils down to man attempting to do more good than bad. He hopes that the good works will balance the scale in his favor.

Man's good works are always inadequate to span the gulf created by sin. Self effort in any form falls short of God's standard of holiness.

God is consistent with both His love and His holiness. His holiness demands that man's sin has to be accounted for and His love demands a response of grace. God's provision for man deals with the sin issue through His grace.

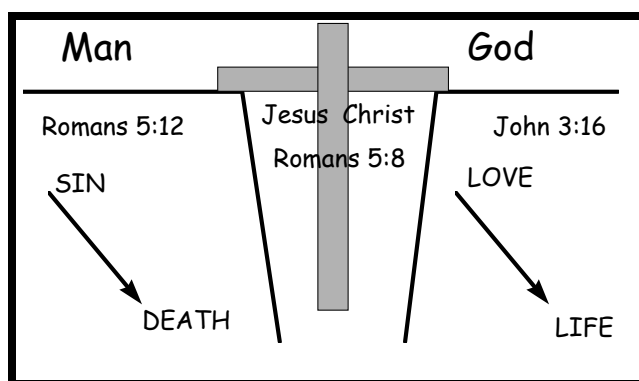


Read the statement in Romans 5:8 and we'll notice how this provision works. Notice the progression as it follows the illustration: God.. love..us.. sinners.... Christ...died...for us.

Jesus Christ was God's provision for the problem of man's sin. His death and resurrection provided the bridge that can reunite man with God. It is the only means by which this union can be restored. Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me."

5. Man's prerogative

One other statement from John 5:24 explains how an individual can cross over the bridge that Christ has provided. After you read it, I want to ask you a couple of questions that highlight the main concepts.



From that statement, what is Christ offering man?

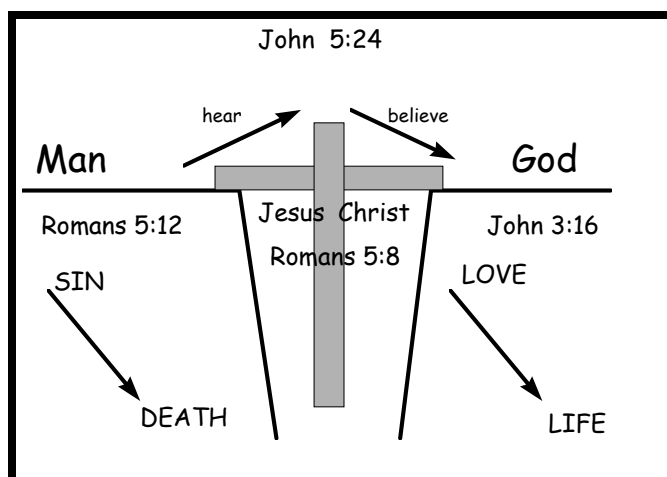
1. Eternal life
2. No judgment
3. Passage from death to life

What then is necessary to receive this offer?

1. Hear my word
2. Believe in him who sent me

The term "belief" in the Bible means more than acknowledgment of facts or information. The words "believe in" mean to trust in, commit to, rely upon or receive.

A person becomes a child of God and is reunited to a personal relationship with Him when he/she comes to a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ. God's provision has been extended to us. It is a



gift. As a gift, we cannot work for it -- only receive it.

Does this illustration make sense to you?

Have you ever heard these concepts before?

What questions do you have?

** Where would you place yourself along the diagram?*

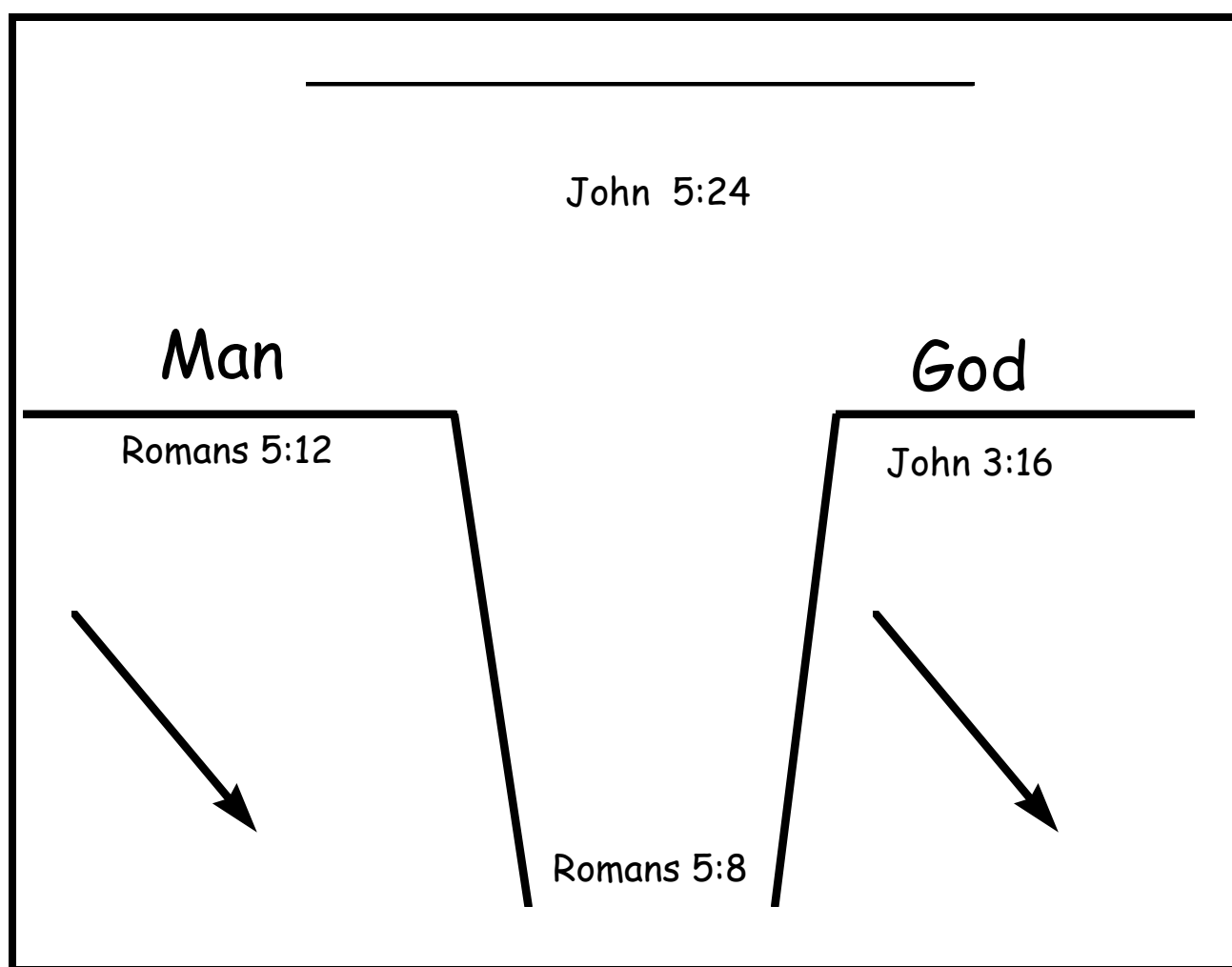
** Would you be willing by faith to accept Christ as your bridge to God right now?*

You can express this step of faith in a simple prayer in which you need to tell God:

- 1. I recognize that I am separate from You as a result of my sin*
- 2. I recognize that Christ was Your provision for me.. to die for my sin.*
- 3. I want to accept by faith Your gift of forgiveness through Christ.*
- 4. I thank you for Your forgiveness and accepting me as part of Your family.*

I John 5:11-12 gives a birth certificate for those who receive Christ. It would be critical to read and explain the significance of these verses.

Bridge Illustration



Helping others discover the solid foundation for life

Design 4 Discovery is a user friendly—seeker oriented method to help God's people guide others in discovering foundational truths for themselves; truths that can lead to personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Design 4 Discovery creates a nonthreatening environment to help a person answer four critical questions:

- Who is Jesus Christ?
- What does He say about putting life together?
- What are the implications for me?
- How will I respond?

Design 4 Discovery is Christ centered as it guides the discovery of truth through the gospel of Luke. Twenty selected events in the life of Christ provide the basis for discovery. You select the passages that best fit your audience. The Biblical text and discussion questions are contained on a single sheet of paper. This easily reproducible format allows for discussion and discovery to take place in the marketplace, home or restaurant. **Design 4 Discovery** can be used with a group or an individual.

Design 4 Discovery contains what you need to begin reaching people in your network of relationships with the Good News of Jesus Christ.



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