

BIG IDEA

It's hard to see Jesus when you keep demanding more.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO KNOW?

How much information do you typically need before moving forward with a project or idea?

Ask your group this question to help them start the process of self-reflection. Having this dialogue early will help the group to have better conversation later on in the study.

Read Luke 1:5-17. How does Luke describe the character of Zechariah? How do you think he will respond to the angel's message based on what you know about him?

Zechariah is presented to us as someone who is priestly, righteous and blameless before the Lord. If anyone should be expected to trust God, it would be him! Based on the way that Luke sets up this story, one might expect Zechariah to respond with thanks and praise.

Read Luke 1:18-25. Why might the angel respond to Zechariah the way he does?

Zechariah's response shows a lack of trust in God. He had all the knowledge and experience he could have needed in order to trust in God's ability to provide a child in his old age—God has done this kind of thing before-- but he wanted proof. If it wasn't enough for Zechariah to be visited by an angel of the Lord, then what would have been enough? Ironically, the fact that Zechariah was struck silent acted as a kind of sign to Zechariah that God really would do what he promised.

Read Luke 1:26-38. Compare and contrast Mary's response to the angel with Zechariah's response. How were they similar? How were they different?

Both Mary and Zechariah had questions in response to the wild news they received from the angel, but Mary's question is a little different. Zechariah asked, "How can I be sure of this?" Mary asked, "How will this happen?" Mary's question is trusting while Zechariah's demands proof.

What can we learn from Zechariah and Mary about responding to God?

WHAT IS MY INITIAL REACTION?

Who do you relate to more: Mary or Zechariah? Explain your answer.

What demands are you currently making of God? How are these demands impacting your relationship with him?





LIFE GROUPS

LEADER GUIDE

Respond to the following John Maxwell quote:

Most Christians are educated way beyond their level of obedience.

Sometimes we think we need more knowledge, when really more knowledge is the thing that is keeping us from being obedient!

Be honest: is it lack of knowledge that holds you back from obedience or something else?

Sometimes we don't obey God because we are stubborn, or scared, or selfish. Sometimes we just don't trust him enough. We have plenty of reasons why we say "no" when God asks us to move. Unfortunately, wanting more information can become a clever way for us to avoid what is really going on in our hearts.

Read 2 Peter 1: 2-4. How would your life change if you lived as if this passage was true?

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

In what ways is Jesus still pixelated to you?

What demands do you need to surrender in order to see Jesus more clearly?

Where have you been seeking signs and avoiding obedience?

What practical step is God leading you to take in response to this study?

When you are selecting questions for your group this week, make sure to focus on a few of these application questions. Gaining knowledge about Zechariah and Mary will only be helpful if we put the lessons they teach us into practice in our own lives. Otherwise, we will continue to educate ourselves beyond our level of obedience!

