

TALK IT OVER

Sermon Discussion Guide

The 3 Wise Women of Christmas 3 Wise Choices That Will Bless the Rest of Your Life

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"I am the servant of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Luke 1:38 NCV

We can recognize wise people because of the wise decisions they make. We've all heard of the three wise men of Christmas, but the three wise women are not so familiar. In this discussion, we'll look at the three wise women of Christmas, a married woman, a young virgin and an elderly widow: Elizabeth, Mary and Anna. The decisions they made are the same ones we need to make in our lives: to trust God's plan instead of being bitter; to believe God's word instead of our fears; to focus on God's presence and talk to everyone about Jesus.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

"But the angel said to him, 'Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. You are to name him John.'" Luke 1:13 GNT

1. A delayed answer to a prayer is not a denial. God promises that persistent prayers are heard. How might 2020 change if you truly trust in God with a persistent prayer and what would that prayer be?
2. Have you ever had a prayer answered after what felt like a long time only to realize God's answer came at just the right time? Share your experience.

"The angel said to her, 'Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you.'" Luke 1:30 GNT

3. Mary was young, but wise to trust God though she was afraid at first. Share a time when you were frightened and/or confused but you took a step of faith by trusting God.

"And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.'" Luke 1:38 ESV

4. How did Mary's understanding of God's character help her to not be afraid? Why is God's character important to those that are afraid?
5. Why do we feel uncomfortable sharing about God's character and actions with others? What is the easiest part of Jesus' story to share with others for you? What is the hardest?

"At that moment she came up to Mary and Joseph and began to thank God. She spoke about Jesus to all who were waiting for Jerusalem to be set free." Luke 2:38 GW

6. Can you think of an example of God prompting you to do something?

Diving Deeper (optional)

"For nothing will be impossible with God." Luke 1:37 NASB

1. Will you commit to believing that God will bless you with something that seems impossible today? What would that be?
2. Ask God to show you people who are looking for redemption and freedom that you could lead to Christ. What are some ways we can open ourselves up to spiritual insight to find them?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.



Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week's Study

- Ice Breaker: Share your favorite holiday memory.
- The goal is to help the group understand how to trust God, believe God's word, focus on his presence and talk to everyone about Jesus.
- Prayer: Father, we thank you for the greatest gift of all your son Jesus Christ, for sending him to pay for our sins, and for your promise of eternal life to those who accept this gift. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with faith to trust in the Father's promises as Elizabeth, Mary and Anna, the 3 wise women of Christmas taught us. Help us choose to trust God's plan instead of being bitter, believe God's word instead of our fears, focus on God's presence and talk to everyone about Jesus. Amen.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.