



Week 3: God Gives Joy (Luke 1:26-56)

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal as we explore the idea that **receiving the gift of God's presence produces hearts of joyful worship.**

CONNECT

- Have you ever considered what the difference might be between joy and happiness? Where do you think joy comes from?
- What are things that stir your joy? How do they relate to your relationship to God, or do they?
- What is something in your everyday life that reminds you of God's nearness?

INTRODUCTION

As we continue examining the nature and character of God as the greatest Giver there ever will be, we unpack today the relationship between God's presence and our joy. We are building upon the scene directly following the angel Gabriel's annunciation to Mary that she will bear the Son of God. He informs her also that her relative, Elizabeth, is also six months with child at this point, so Mary and Joseph, her betrothed, arose and traveled to Judah to visit Elizabeth and her husband.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Luke 1:26-38

Discuss: The first move in our passage for today is an act of God's gracious giving. He gives his own Son to the young Mary: the very tangible presence of God on earth. How does Mary respond to this news? Can you identify worship for God in her response?

Read: Luke 1:39-45

Discuss: Upon arriving at the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah, there are several things that happen all at once. The fetal John leaps for joy in his mother's womb. Elizabeth herself is filled with the Spirit and blesses Mary with joy, and we see Mary's joy begin to pour forth in the following section. What can we conclude about the sharing the joy of God's presence with others?

Read: Luke 1:46-56

Discuss: In the last verses of our reading for today, Mary sings a song of praise to God commonly called the Magnificat. In it she extols God's goodness to her, despite her low standing, God's justice blessing the least of the world, and his character as a keeper of promises. Can you identify a correlation between our humility our capacity to magnify God through our joy?

APPLICATION

Through this vignette featuring Mary, Elizabeth, and the unborn John, we can take away at least three applications for our day to day lives. We must...

- Receive the presence of God as our greatest joy
- Share the presence of God with the world in joy
- Magnify the presence of God through our joy

PRAYER

- Let us pray that God's presence would be a fresh experience for us all, stirring us up to joy in him.
- Let us pray that he empowers us through his Spirit to share the joy of his presence with others
- Let us pray that we live lives that magnify God through our joy in him