

Hey Ladies! We are starting to get the portion of the study where there is so much material. 36 PAGES THIS WEEK! Don't expect to be able to cover it all in your group. If necessary, you can pull out one or two passages read through them as a group and discuss them. The ladies are hopefully doing the homework on their own. Your time together is only meant to supplement what they are doing on their own. XOXO Alisa

Week 4 Unexplainable Jesus

Day 1

There is so much in this day- here is a suggestion on how to tackle it. You could have the ladies share which miracle or teaching covered in this day stood out to them the most and why. What did they learn about Jesus? What does Jesus expect from us, His followers?

After going around the group, you could pitch out the discussion questions at the bottom of page 103:

- Do we merely want something from Jesus or do we want intimacy with Jesus?
- Do we have undisclosed agendas and expectations of Him?
- Do we trust Jesus to do what He wants with our lives, or have we placed demands and stipulations on how He is able to use us?

Day 2

Erica makes a great summary point at the beginning of this day that might be worthwhile to share with your group: Those who were truly ready to follow Christ- to seek relationship with Him- would be given the secrets of the kingdom, witness the power of the kingdom, and be invited to join Jesus in His work and mission of building the kingdom. That is our ultimate goal ladies, to have that kind of heart toward Jesus. Those who were just intrigued by Him, but were unwilling to submit to Him, missed the point of His teachings.

The feeding of the 5,000 is in each one of the gospels. Erica points out that this miracle involved the disciples more than most. They participated in feeding the crowd, and perhaps the 12 baskets leftover were for each one of them to eat and reflect on what Jesus just did.

Erica states that Luke 9 represents a turning point in Luke's gospel. Jesus has established who He is to the disciples, and now He is trying to get the disciples to understand what it will be like for them as His followers. They are starting to get the "inside information" on what discipleship looks like. They will be able to exercise power and authority over spiritual darkness, they will see Jesus for who He is (the transfiguration), and they must prioritize their devotion to Christ over all other things (Jesus' interactions with the different men who wanted to follow Him.)

Luke 9:27 might raise some questions. In the passage, Jesus states, "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." Here is a little blurb from Got Questions that might be helpful:

See also Matthew 16:28 and Mark 9:1 for the parallel quotes. In each of the synoptic Gospels, the next event immediately after this promise from Jesus is the transfiguration. Rather than interpreting Jesus' promise as referring to His coming to establish His kingdom on earth, the context indicates that Jesus was referring to the transfiguration. The Greek word translated "kingdom" can also be translated "royal splendor," meaning that the three disciples standing there would see Christ as He really is—the King of heaven—which occurred in the transfiguration.

The "transfiguration" refers to the event described in the above cited passages when Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of the mountain, where He met with Moses and Elijah—representing the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament—and spoke with them. The disciples saw Jesus in all His glory and splendor, talking with a glorified Moses and Elijah. This is a glimpse of what will occur in Jesus' kingdom. The disciples were dumbstruck at the sight and "fell on their faces" (Matthew 17:6).

It seems most natural to interpret this promise in Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1; and Luke 9:27 as a reference to the transfiguration, which "some" of the disciples would witness only six days later, exactly as Jesus predicted. In each Gospel, the very next passage after this promise from Jesus is the transfiguration, which shows Jesus in all His glory which will be seen again in the Kingdom of God. The contextual links make it very likely that this is the proper interpretation.

Another tough passage is Luke 9:41. I am not sure of the correct interpretation of this passage- it seems that the disciples could not successfully cast out the demon because they "were faithless"- but what that specifically means, I do not know. Maybe they temporarily prioritized the results of their ministry over their intimacy with Christ?

Day 3

In this day we take a close look at how Jesus works through us. Just like Jesus' commission to the 12 disciples extended to the commission of the 72, so we are commissioned to spread the good news of Jesus to the world. We are to go out ahead of His second return and preach the good news! We can tell by this account that Jesus expects His followers to experience rejection for the most part. So we cannot be discouraged when we feel rejection too.

This might be a good time to poll your group- as they reflect on the ministry that God has for them in their individual lives, how do they think it is going? Are they seeing God's power? Are they feeling rejected and/or misunderstood? You may want to pitch out the questions on page 116:

- In ministry do they wonder "am I the most important?"
- Do they worry that someone will take their place?
- Do they wonder if God can do powerful things through them?

- Do they worry that they will not be able to perform, and if they don't, will God still love them or approve of them?

Day 4

In this day, we look at how we, as Christians even, can get tripped up by failing to see the world as God sees it. How do we view our neighbor? Do we focus on the temporal or the eternal? Erica sums up her struggle with two words: rationalization and responsibility.

First, we look at the parable of the Good Samaritan. I think Erica does a great job unpacking the cultural backdrop of this story- that is so easy to miss, since we are not first century Jews. If you want, you could take your whole hour and just read this parable and Erica's commentary on page 120-121 and discuss it. How can we relate to this story? Even if you just focused on this one portion of the homework, it would be well worth it!

Then, we look at the scene of Mary and Martha. As women, I think we are pretty familiar with this passage. I thought Erica brought up a good point that I had never considered before: 1) Martha was heaping her personal expectations on Mary 2) Jesus was not condemning Mary, a woman, for sitting at His feet and assuming the posture of a student. This concept was just earth shattering in that culture! Jesus loved and valued women- there is no question.

Day 5

This last day has lots of material too- it focuses on prayer. God gave us a format to pray- the Lord's Prayer. In His template we see that we are to worship Him, we are to ask that His will be done on earth, we are to ask Him for what we need, we are to ask Him for forgiveness, we are to ask Him for strength to forgive others (because He expects us to), we are to ask Him to protect us from temptation and sin. There is nothing we cannot go to God with!

I like Erica's perspective of Luke 11:5-13. If someone woken up in the middle of the night is going to give his neighbor food for an unexpected guest, how much more will God give us what we need? He will not give us a scorpion instead of an egg, or an eel instead of a fish. We can go to God with our needs and know that He is a loving trustworthy Father. Like my mother-in-law told me once, God does not play dirty tricks on us.

I have been asked before, "If God knows everything, then why do we have to pray to Him?" I think there is a purpose in the practice of prayer- it is not to enlighten God about all the things He does not know. The purpose of prayer is to work to align our heart's desire with God's desires. We do that as we navigate life's changing circumstances daily with God. We get His input. We learn how God moves in our lives through prayer journals. We are changed through prayer. Our priorities change. Our view of others change. Our perspectives change.