

The Long View Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What home have you lived in the longest in your life?
2. Do you read the instructions first, or do you dive right in?

Read the following passage: Luke 1:5-25.

This passage describes what was arguably the greatest day in Zechariah's life. After decades of faithfulness, Zechariah's priestly duties gave him the opportunity to enter the Holy Place in the Jewish Temple. While performing his sacred duties in the Temple, an angel appeared to Zechariah and announced the almost unbelievable news that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son. Zechariah is a great example to us of the benefit of taking the long view.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Why do you think taking a long-term perspective is often so difficult for us? In what areas of life have you found it difficult to embrace a long-term perspective?
2. Read Luke 1:6-7. Zechariah did what was right, even when it did not appear to be paying off in any obvious way. What are some ways we may be tempted to substitute what is convenient or what has the quickest return for what is right?
3. Do you ever think about life after death? Read 1 Corinthians 15:30-32. How did Paul's thoughts about the afterlife affect how he lived in the present?
4. Do you think you are a resilient person? Explain. How can we become more resilient without also becoming cynical or hard-hearted?
5. Read 2 Timothy 2:20-21. How can we prepare ourselves to be used by God? At a practical level, what does it look like to live in holiness?
6. What do you think you can do in your life to be better equipped for whatever God may call you to? Do you view yourself as being on a mission with God? Explain.
7. The angel's message to Zechariah had repercussions far beyond his individual life. What can we do to see the bigger picture of what God is doing around us? How do you see your life fitting into God's larger purpose for your family, your church, your community, or the world?
8. What are some practical ways you can "take the long view" in your life?

Pray