

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read Luke 3:2-15 aloud.

1. What was John's message (3)?

Is it redundant to say "baptism of repentance for forgiveness"? What is the difference between repentance & forgiveness?
Repentance is our acknowledgment of guilt and resolution to change. Forgiveness is God's free gift.

2. What actions did John call for to demonstrate repentance?
Sharing extra food & clothes, fair business practices, honesty, contentment.

How would a 1st-century priest answer a question about repentance?
Offer a sacrifice at the Temple.

Why was John calling for a different path to repentance than the priests? How was John's proposal better?
You could offer a sacrifice without making life changes.

3. How was John preparing people for God to reign?

As you look at the list of sins John confronted, how "serious" were they? How many of the big sins do you see?
No murder or idolatry or sexual sin. These are the kind of sins that good, religious people commit – selfishness, cheating, grumbling.

How do "minor" sins prevent God from reigning?

What blessings do we miss when God is not completely in charge of our lives?

4. What was John's tone as he addressed the crowd? Respectful, calm & reflective? *"You bunch of snakes! Turn or burn!"*

Why did John deliver such a fierce message to decent, religious people? Weren't they Abraham's children?
They needed to be revived. Their pride in their ancestry hindered their faith.

What might cause us to be complacent about our faith?
Going to the right church, coming from a good family.

5. What did people think about John's identity (15)?

Why were the Jews hopeful about the Christ/Messiah?
Christ was the Greek term, Messiah the Hebrew. Both indicated God's providing a deliverer who renews God's reign.

How well did John fit the expectations for the Messiah?

The Roman Empire continued to dominate Judea for nearly 400 years after John. In what sense did God reign in a new way after John and Jesus died?

6. What does it mean for God to reign in our lives?

How would our lives be better if God was truly in charge?

What are some areas where it is difficult to give God total control?
Money, relationships, total honesty, our "career path," etc.

Why are we reluctant to trust God with control of our lives?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

If God sent a messenger like John into our group to confront areas of spiritual laziness, what might the messenger point out?

Put another way, if we asked John what we should do (10), how might he answer?

III. Other resources

The point – Complacency about sin—even “minor” sin—will keep God from reigning and blessing like he wants to.

Prayer ideas

Pray for revival – in our group, our church, and around the world!
Ask God for courage to confront sin, even minor sins.
Thank God for the way his reign blesses our lives and the world.

Ask God to guide and bless Kevin, Chase, Reid & Trey Owen, and Jana Graves.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Stand in a doorway and press both arms as hard as you can against the frame for 30 seconds. Step out of the doorway and see what happens. Let everybody take a turn.

Alternative – set up a footrace between two kids, where one is older and should win. Give the faster kid a burden (weight, tie legs together, etc.) that makes it impossible to win.

Why didn't your muscles work like they were supposed to?

Read Luke 3:10-16 aloud.

What was the purpose of John's ministry?
Preparing the way for the kingdom of God.

What are some good things that happen when God reigns?

How did these instructions prepare people for God's kingdom?

How does sin get in the way of God's reign? How does it keep God from blessing us?



February 24, 2008

LIFE Group Guide

Luke 3 - Repentance

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **God's reign in our lives is limited by sin.**

John the Baptist confronted sin. He was tougher on good, religious people than on filthy, rotten sinners. Perhaps there is something for us to learn...

Our LG leadership team (Charles Morgan, Darrell Petree, Jeff Cherry & I) is hosting a series of lunches with LG leaders. We want to hear how your group is doing and how we could support you. 22 adults attended on Feb. 17, and there are openings on Feb. 24 & Mar. 2. Call the office to RSVP.

Leadership tip: Serve together. Your group will be blessed by the time you spend together, and you will be a blessing to the people you serve. This spring, there are a large number of projects where the need is great and your group could make a difference...

- **Habitat house** construction begins March 22. You've had several weeks to discuss. Now it's time to decide on a date. Sign-ups begin on Feb. 24, and several of the slots will fill up early.
- The **VIP** group is looking for hosts for their LG meetings on 3rd Sundays. You could host in your home (if it is wheelchair accessible), or at the church building. Lots of fun with a sweet group. Call Peggy Bell at 453-1604 for info.
- **Tornado clean-up** volunteers will be needed for weeks. Get more info at www.lafayettechurchofchrist.org.

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What is an embarrassing outfit you wore in the past?
- ❖ When have you heard “fire and brimstone” preaching?
- ❖ Try the kid-friendly activity. It is good for kids and adults.
- ❖ Take a goofy group photo & send it to Kevin Owen.