

DISCUSSION GUIDE

FEAR NOT

Fear Not

God is up to something

Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds...all the Christmas story characters were invited to play a role in God's plans that didn't make sense. Each invitation started with a simple phrase: "Fear not."

There are plenty of opportunities to be afraid in this life: circumstances that seem overwhelming or impossible; challenges that cause us to lose heart. But no matter the situation, God is always up to something and calling us to Fear Not.

This Christmas you are invited to play your role in God's story. And when you find yourself outside your comfort zone, hear God say, "Fear not."

How to Use this Guide

Sermon Discussion Guides are designed to propel you into life transformation. Here's how it works:

1. **Worship** at one of LCC's 3 worship gatherings. If you have to miss, watch the sermon at www.lccaltoona.org/sermons.
2. **Meet** with your group (or with your family, spouse, or other friends) and discuss the questions for each week together. If you aren't connected in Jesus-centered community, go to www.lccaltoona.org/adult to find great opportunities.
3. **Read** the daily Scripture readings. Use the info on the next page as a guide.
4. **Experience** God move in your life in awesome ways!

Hearing from God Daily

God desires that we find courage in His Word on a daily basis. This Guide includes daily Bible readings to empower a living conversation with God as we interact with His Word. But how do we do that? Here's a simple way...

1. Start with a short prayer. Ask that you would be open to God during your time together.
2. Read the Scripture passage.
3. Ask these four questions, record your answers in the following pages, and share the answers with God in prayer:
 - **P:** Based on this passage, what can I PRAISE God for? Is there an attribute of God or one of His blessings that you can give thanks for?
 - **R:** Based on this passage, what do I need to REPENT of? What sin is God pointing out in your life that you need to confess and receive forgiveness for?
 - **A:** Based on this passage, what do I need to ASK God for? Where do the needs of your life and what God offers intersect?
 - **Y:** Based on this passage, what do I need to YIELD to God? What is God calling you to do in response to His Word today?
4. Do what God has called you to do!

Session 1
Believe in Christmas

1. Benjamin Franklin said, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” What are you certain about in this world?
2. What do you believe is the main message of Christmas? What things get in the way of believing that message?
3. Read John 1:10-12.
4. What was the response of “the world” to Jesus being in the world (vs. 10)?
5. What does it look like to “recognize” Jesus today?
6. As you think about your plans and to-do lists for the month of December, will you be prepared to recognize Jesus in your daily life? Why or why not?
7. What was the response of “his own” (the Jews) to Jesus coming to them (vs. 11)?
8. If you were to fully *receive* Jesus as Lord of your life, what would change?
9. What do those who receive Jesus become (vs. 12)?
10. What does it look like to be a child of a perfect Heavenly Father? What kinds of attitudes and perspectives does God want his children to experience?
11. Pray together for faith to recognize and receive Jesus, so that we might live as His children.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday - Genesis 15:1-6

Tuesday - Exodus 4:1-5, 29-31

Wednesday - Psalm 78:17-35

Thursday - Psalm 106:6-12

Friday - Matthew 8:5-13

Saturday - Matthew 21:28-32

Session 2
Zechariah

God chooses you.

1. What are the most common things people are afraid of?
2. “Fear not” is the most common commandment in all of Scripture. Repetition means importance. Why do you think God is so adamant about us not being afraid?
3. Read Luke 1:5-7. What do you learn about Zechariah from these verses: what was his job? What was his relationship with God like? What was his biggest disappointment in life? What was his age?
4. What was the likelihood of Zechariah having a child at this point in his life?
5. Read Luke 1:8-17. It was no mistake or random chance that Zechariah was in the temple that day. He was chosen by God through the practices of the priesthood. God was up to something and had chosen Zechariah to be part of it. Do you think everything happens for a reason or that sometimes things are just coincidence? How do you know when God has chosen you for something?
6. What is Zechariah’s reaction to seeing the angel and his being chosen by God? What then does the angel say in response? What does the angel say that God is up to?
7. Read Luke 1:18-25. Zechariah doesn’t trust that God has chosen him. Does Zechariah’s unbelief cause God to take His promise of a son away from him? Were there any consequences? What does this teach you about God? Tell about a time when God was gracious to you, despite your unbelief?
8. What is something that God has chosen you for? How do the words, “Fear Not,” empower you to start or continue in that calling?
9. Pray for courage and faith to follow Jesus into His plans for you.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday - Deuteronomy 1:19-31

Tuesday - Deuteronomy 7:17-23

Wednesday - Deuteronomy 11:22-25

Thursday - Deuteronomy 20:1-4

Friday - Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Saturday - Deuteronomy 33:26-29

Session 3

Mary

God favors you.

1. Describe the first time you remember someone (a parent, spouse, etc.) saying, “I love you,” to you.
2. Read Luke 1:26-38.
3. What did the angel first tell Mary (vs. 28)?
4. The Greek word for “highly favored” is used only twice in the New Testament (Luke 1:28 and Ephesians 1:6). Both times it refers to God extending Himself to freely bestow grace (favor). Some scholars translate the word “full of grace” because of God’s initiative in a person’s life. Given this understanding, did Mary somehow earn the right to be Jesus’ mother? If not, how did she get chosen?
5. What is Mary’s response to this message (vs. 29)? Why do you think she was “greatly troubled at his words”?
6. Do you think God favors you? Why or why not?
7. Why is it hard to accept sometimes that God loves/favors you?
8. When someone does not trust that God loves him/her, what is the result? Striving, stress, fear, discouragement, shame? What has been your experience?
9. What does the angel say to Mary after she is “greatly troubled by his words” (vs. 30)? Why do you think the angel repeated the same message again?
10. God is persistent in His message of grace to each of us. Tell about a time when you experienced God’s favor/love for you in a real way?
11. Pray and thank God for His love/favor for you.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday - Lamentations 3:19-33

Tuesday - Hosea 2:19-23

Wednesday - Hosea 11:1-11

Thursday - Zephaniah 3:14-17

Friday - Jeremiah 33:1-11

Saturday - Daniel 9:1-19

Session 4

Joseph

God guides you.

1. Tell about how you made the decision to marry your spouse OR to pursue the career you went into?
2. Read Matthew 1:18-19. What options did Joseph have after he found out Mary was pregnant? What do you think Joseph's emotions were like as he discerned what to do with Mary? Why do you think he chose to "divorce her quietly"?
3. When you face a big decision, what emotions do you have?
4. Read Matthew 1:20-21. How did God guide Joseph? What did the angel say God was up to?
5. Read Matthew 1:24-25. What did Joseph do in response to God's guidance?
6. Has God ever stopped you from making a bad decision? What happened?
7. Do you believe God wants to guide you? Why or why not?
8. How can you better listen for God's guidance in your daily life?
9. How does having a God who is all-wise and all-knowing and who wants to guide you change your perspective on making decisions?
10. Pray and ask God to guide you daily in the big and little things of life.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday - Exodus 13:17-22

Tuesday - Exodus 15:1-13

Wednesday - Nehemiah 9:19-21

Thursday - Isaiah 42:10-17

Friday - Isaiah 58:9-12

Saturday - Isaiah 63:11-14

Christmas SERVICES

Wed Dec 19 at 7 pm

Mon Dec 24 at 3, 5 & 10 pm

(3 and 5 pm have children's message)



ROCK SOLID FINANCES

**WEDNESDAYS
6:45-8:00 PM**

*Begins January 9
4-week series*

Register at
www.lccaltoona.org/adults

Next Session Begins
Sun, Jan 13

5:30-7:30 pm

Register at
www.lccaltoona.org/alpha

Alpha

