

Small Group Materials: Luke 12:35-59

Attitudes of Readiness

Study Summary and Learning Objectives

This study focuses on what it means to be ready for Christ's return and understanding how we can be "heavenly-minded" vs. "worldly-minded." This passage in Luke speaks to our attitudes in waiting for Jesus: being ready for His return and being good stewards in His absence.

Objectives

- To understand what it means, both practically and spiritually, to be ready for Jesus' return.
- To learn how to cultivate the time we have on earth and understand the responsibility we have to spread the Gospel.

Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- Read Luke 12:35-59.
- Take a look at the textbox with references to the 'fire' mentioned in verse 49. Read through Matthew 3 and Isaiah 43 for context on the use of this word and be prepared to discuss with your group if questions arise.

Questions for Discussion



Can you think of a time when you were unprepared for something? What happened as a result?

Possible Answers: Forgot to do your homework. Didn't come ready to a meeting, etc.

Leader's Note: It may be helpful for you to share first to open the discussion.

Read Out Loud: Luke 12:35-59 (NIV)

³⁵ "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. ³⁸ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. ³⁹ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

⁴¹ Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

⁴² The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? ⁴³ It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. ⁴⁴ Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵ But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁶ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

⁴⁷ “The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. ⁴⁸ But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

? What do you think the idea of “keeping your lamps burning” (vs. 35) means?

Possible Answers: “You can be ready to work all day long, but if you don’t have the proper equipment (such as illumination), your readiness doesn’t matter at all.” - David Guzik Bible Commentary. God’s Word is what helps us know how to live.

? What would it look like to *not* be ready for Christ’s return?

Possible Answers: Someone living without the expectation of Jesus’ return would be a poor steward. He may not treat others well, and he wastes his time and resources on unprofitable things.

? The second parable talks about a manager in charge of his servants. In what ways do we become impatient or irresponsible with our faith? How can we prevent this from happening?

Possible Answers: Failing to intentionally seek growth (be in the Word) or ask ourselves hard questions. It’s good to have accountability with friends/mentors to keep yourself in check. This could be compared to current day employment. You wouldn’t want to be caught slacking on the job!

? As Christians, we’ve been given much responsibility with the Gospel. What is being asked of us?

Possible Answers: Our duty is to share the Gospel. Don’t just focus on “me, me, me.” View our own needs above others. Love your enemies.

? What are the advantages of being prepared for Jesus’ return? And the consequences of not being prepared?

Possible Answers: Glorifying Christ in how we represent Him through our stewardship is an advantage. Putting your time and effort into something worth putting our lives into is another advantage. A disadvantage would be representing Jesus poorly, wasting time, etc.

Leader's Note: Depending on how far your group took the previous question "What would it look like to not be ready for Jesus' return?," you may be able to skip the second half of this question. Just make sure you land on the implications (vs. just what it looks like) at some point.

Read Out Loud: Luke 12:49-59 (NIV)

⁴⁹ "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵² From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

⁵⁴ He said to the crowd: "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does. ⁵⁵ And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is. ⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?"

⁵⁷ "Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸ As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled on the way, or your adversary may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

? How did Jesus' work on earth bring division? Where have you experienced division as a result of the work Jesus has done in your life?

Possible Answers: Don't expect the Christian life to be easy. John 16:33 says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Following Jesus may bring division between you and your family or friends. This may be the price to pay in following Him faithfully.
Leader's Note: Please be aware that this question might be sensitive for members of your group.

What is the "fire" mentioned in vs. 49? Some possible references include:

* **The Holy Spirit** - which came after Jesus died for us on the cross.

* **Purifying judgment/fire in Matthew 3:11-12**

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

* **Fire as calamity/confusion and God going through it with us in Isaiah 43:2-3**

"When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

? How can we prepare for the division (and other struggles) we'll encounter because of following Christ?

Possible Answers: Run to Jesus. Have Christian community that can encourage us and sharpen us. Pray for courage to make those hard decisions.

? Verses 54-56 talk about the importance of interpreting our present time as a whole rather than our daily going-ons. How can we remember to interpret God's overall will for us in life rather than just narrowly focusing on what one day will bring?

Possible Answers: Thank God on a daily basis for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us. Remembering His sacrifice whenever our day brings struggles and division will help to put things in perspective and to be more prepared for His return.

For Discussion and Accountability

? Is there a particular area of your life where you should be more prepared for responding to God? What would it look like for you to move in that direction?