

Luke 17

A Faithful Response to Duty

Study Summary & Learning Objectives

This study will focus heavily on the first part of Luke 17, which includes instructions and warnings on sin, rebuking, and forgiveness. It then goes on to address the need for faith and an understanding of our duty when carrying out these commands.

Objectives:

- To understand sin, faith, and duty in relation to each other.
- To understand our responsibility toward other believers.
- To learn what it looks like to lose our life for Christ's sake.

Steps To Prepare (For Leaders)

- Have a laptop available for your small group to watch a video.
- There is some optional reading on the Kingdom of God at the end of these materials. Take a look at those passages to decide if it would work well with your group or not.

Pray for your time together as a group.

Leader's Note: Watch this video together and then answer the following question:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liQ4SNkx_Z8.

? Do you think it was the girl's duty to help her rival runner to the finish line? How would you define "duty"?

Possible Answer: Leaders, be prepared to give your own thoughts on the definition of duty.

Dictionary.com defines it as "Something that one is expected or required to do by moral or legal obligation."

Another way to look at the term "little ones"

"We may find referents to the phrase 'little ones' in Lazarus, 16:19-31; the lost son, 15:11-32; and the poor, crippled, blind, and lame, 14:12-14 –In which case 'cause to stumble' would refer to the injustice and indifference of inhospitality on behalf of those in need."- (*The Gospel of Luke, New International Commentary on the NT*)

Read Out Loud: Luke 17:1-19 (NIV)

¹ Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. ² It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. ³ So watch yourselves.

"If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴ Even if they sin against you

seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them."

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

⁶ He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."

⁷ "Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? ⁸ Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? ⁹ Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' "

¹¹ Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Rebuke - synonyms: reprimand; admonish (Dictionary.com)

In Luke, we've seen Jesus rebuke evil spirits (4:35, 9:42), the wind (8:24) and a fever (4:39). Proverbs 13:1 connects rebuke with a father's discipline: "A wise son accepts his father's discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke." These examples show the many sides of rebuke. It can be sharp disapproval, loving correction, or different shades in between.

? What instructions does Jesus give to His disciples in this passage?

Possible Answers: Don't be a cause of sin for someone else (vv. 1-2), rebuke others when they sin (vs. 3), forgive others without a limit on the number of times (vv. 3-4).

? What effect can a lack of repentance and forgiveness have on our community with other believers?

Possible Answers: Christian community is severed by sin. Our goal should be for the sinner to be restored and welcomed back into community as many times as is necessary. Without repentance and forgiveness, we also wouldn't have a supportive environment where we can depend on each other.

? Can you think of and share about a time when someone close to you repented and asked for your

forgiveness in a way that was honoring to God? What impact did that have on your relationship?

Leaders' Note: Be prepared to offer an example from your life, but be aware that this could be a sensitive topic. If someone isn't comfortable sharing specifics, they could consider just answering the second part of the question.

? How do the disciples respond to the commands given to them in this passage? What should our response look like when we are called by God to do something? What is your response?

Possible Answers: They immediately ask for more faith in order to carry out their instructions. However, as Jesus explains in His mustard seed analogy (vs. 6), we don't need to be concerned about the amount of faith we have because even a small amount of faith can do great things.

? Verse 10 talks of servants carrying out their duties without deserving a reward for it. What are some other things culture tells us are worthy of reward, but should really be a part of our daily lives?

Possible Answers: Laying down our preferences/loving our neighbor as ourselves, being generous of our time/talent/treasure.

? In what way does the gravity of Jesus' instruction regarding sin, faith, and duty prompt you to change your relationship with other believers?

Possible Answers: Leaders, please think of an example ahead of time that you can share with the group to prompt discussion. Example - Jesus emphasizes that forgiveness must not be limited to a certain number of times. If I'm being honest with myself, I know that God is calling me to forgive my roommate more than once, but I have a hard time doing this.

Read Out Loud: This next section of Scripture focuses on the Kingdom of God, which has already been discussed in previous chapters. Rather than discussing that topic again, this section will focus on verse 33 and the idea of losing your life. Try to think about how that applies to the previous themes of sin, faith, and duty from above as you read.

Read Out Loud: Luke 17:20-37 (NIV)

²⁰ Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

²² Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. ²³ People will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. ²⁴ For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

²⁶ "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

²⁸ "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹ But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

³⁰ "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go

back for anything. ³² Remember Lot's wife! ³³ Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵ Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left."

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³⁷ "Where, Lord?" they asked.

He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

Leader's Note: If you get questions about the "missing" verse 36, note that this was an editorial choice for this translation due to an inconsistency amongst manuscripts. Some manuscripts add verse 36: "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left."

?

In Luke 17:33, Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God and says, "Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it." How does this concept interact with the ideas of sin, faith, and duty as we've been discussing in the earlier verses?

Possible Answers: Sin: Sin is exchanging worship of the Creator for worship of created things. We try to keep our lives by filling them with created things when the only way to keep our lives is to live them for the Creator. Faith: Trusting in something bigger than ourselves rather than self-sufficiency takes faith in a culture that tells us to cling to independence. Recognizing our dependence on God allows us to start living life to His glory. Duty: Living for Christ also means losing our lives to others - laying down our preferences, forgiving and loving each other.

Leader's Note: A lot can be discussed in this section, but since the direction of this study is mostly focused on vv. 1-19, we just added the previous question on vs. 33 to tie it into the themes of sin, faith, and duty. If you have extra time or think your group would like discussing this section in more detail, you could consider using these additional readings to guide your talk:

- *Read the following passages for other references to the Kingdom of God: Matthew 6:25-34; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:42-44; Matthew 25:34-36. What can we learn about the Kingdom of God from these passages?*
- *Take a look at Genesis 19 to read about the reference to Lot's wife (in vs. 26).*

For Discussion and Accountability

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Is there unforgiveness or rebuke in your life that you should address this week?

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What are you trying to "keep" (vs. 33) in your life instead of holding it with open hands?