

The Heart of Christmas

Discussion Guide

Week of December 31 – **Reflecting** – “To flourish, we must reflect on all God has done in our lives.”

Scripture verses: Luke 2:19, 51

LOOKING BACK

Last time, we were challenged to love on another, or to look for someone who may need prayer or may have a need to be met, or to share the gospel with someone near to you but far from the Lord. Were you able to do any of these? What were the results? How did you see God work in that situation?

OPENING QUESTION

Memories are treasures that cannot be taken away from us. Even when our minds may fail us, those memories can still come creeping back through. It’s good to look back and see how God has worked in our lives – through the highs and lows, through the peaceful times and tumultuous times, even when we’ve felt close to Him or times we’ve felt far from Him. Share a memory you have of a favorite Christmas (or two!). What made it so special?

LOOKING UP

1. Do you currently have a spiritual practice of reflecting? Do you use a journal, write in your Bible, have a blessings jar, or use some other method? If you do, share with the group how this practice enhances your relationship with the Lord. If you don't use this practice, what have been the hindrances to implementing one?
2. Reflecting on God's character and His faithfulness as He works in our lives gives us a better view of who He is and how He is working in our lives. What is one character trait of the Lord you've seen most in 2023?
3. Has there been any disconnect this year between what you believe and how you live out your faith? How will you improve on that for 2024?
4. Now turn your attention to the passage of scripture below and then answer the 1st and 2nd questions.
5. After spending time answering questions 1 & 2 select a group member to re-read the passage using another Bible translation. Then answer the last 2 questions.

<p>READ THE PASSAGE Luke 2:19, 51</p> <p>Answer the first 2 questions after reading the passage</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What stood out to you most?2. What was challenging or hard to understand?3. What does this teach us about God?4. What does this teach us about people?	<p>RE-READ THE PASSAGE</p> <p>Read the passage again using another Bible translation... then answer the last 2 questions</p>
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LOOKING FORWARD

1. From these two passages, it seems Mary had a good practice of treasuring how the Lord was working in her life. And, she'd think over those things (ponder them).
2. For 2024, what reflecting practice will you use to make sure you remember how the Lord is working in and around you? (Journal, blessings jar, etc)
3. Take some time this week to look back at 2023, ponder those things, thank the Lord for all He did. Look over Psalm 107 either as a group or individually through the week. Notice all the circumstances in which the Psalm writer gave thanks to the Lord.
4. Take some extended time for prayer to give each group member time to thank God for 2023 and to seek the Holy Spirit's help in implementing a reflection practice in 2024.