



# MEN on a MISSION

Lessons  
for Christian Men  
from Men of the Bible



A 4-SESSION **BIBLE STUDY**

AMLDD

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# Introduction

This men's Bible study focuses on the lives of four men mentioned by name in the story of Jesus' birth. While at first glance these men may seem to have nothing in common with the 21st-century men of today, upon closer inspection of the Scripture texts, the thoughts, words and actions of these men actually sound quite universal in nature and can be readily applied to the roles of men in contemporary society.

Each session highlights the mission of a specific male figure who played a part in the story of Jesus and his birth and then delves into what Christian men can learn about themselves from these stories of men on a mission for Jesus. First, participants will read the Scriptural accounts that refer to each male figure to set the stage for the session. Then Sharing Time provides a way for participants to interact with one another in a more personal way about something revealed in the reading. Questions about the specific verses in the reading provide background information and give participants a more in-depth sense of these men's missions and their place in history. A Mission Moment is included with suggestions for practical action ideas in which to engage during between sessions. Each session ends with a Closing Hymn and Prayer that provide insights into what was learned in each session.

# How to Use

## **AS A BIBLE STUDY**

One way to use this resource is as a four-session Bible study for men at church on Sundays or a weekday or at home in a men's small group. Make copies of each week's session for each participant to use and fill in answers on their own. Call on various participants to read aloud the Scripture texts printed herein. Encourage participants, as they feel comfortable, to share their personal stories related to the questions, discussion topics or the role of Christian men in modern society, and invite them to take part in the action prompts at the ends of every session. This study can be done any time of the year.

## **AS A RETREAT**

Another way to offer this resource is as the framework for a weekend or midweek men's retreat. Invite participants to gather for an all-day or multiday event at a retreat center, convention hall or church camp for relaxation and refreshment in God's Word. The four sessions could be spread out and used throughout the day or days of the retreat along with other community-building activities.

## **AS A PERSONAL DEVOTION**

This resource can also be used as a guide for personal devotion for a week or several weeks over the summer, in December or any time of year. The format of this study allows space for personal journaling and the recording of faith moments related to being a brother in Christ. This is a helpful tool to instill a routine for regular spiritual reflection on God's mission.

# Zechariah

## The Silent Type

### OPENING PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, you gave us the example of Zechariah the priest to show us how to live as the silent type when you call us to be faithful to you even if we don't always understand why things are happening the way they are. Thank you for showing us through Zechariah what it means to be devoted to you in our prayer life, reverent in our service to you, dedicated in our relationships with our spouses and respected by the community. Amen.

### HYMN

*(Tune: Nicaea 11 12 12 10)*

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,  
Though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,  
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,  
Perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

### SHARING TIME

Talk with each other about an uplifting, moving or special moment you experienced in worship, a time when you felt especially close to God.

## **PART 1: NOT YOUR NORMAL DAY AT THE OFFICE**

- Read Luke 1:5-25:

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”



4. Why is it understandable that Zechariah would have questions about Gabriel's message and would want some proof?

5. Traditionally, how are men expected to react to surprising or disturbing news?

6. Why is being silent in an unusual situation sometimes a good thing?



7. When is it bad to keep quiet about something shocking?

8. What type of husband do you think Zechariah was to Elizabeth?

9. How would you cope with not being able to speak to your wife for nine months?

10. How do you think he and Elizabeth communicated during this time?

11. What do you think Zechariah learned about the relationship he would have with his son from Gabriel's description of John?

12. Why do you think God chose Zechariah to have the mission of being the father of John the Baptist?

13. To what mission has God called you in your work?

14. To what mission has God called you in your family?

15. Zechariah's encounter with Gabriel happened by the altar in the Holy of Holies. What does this say about their encounter?

16. How are we as men called to live holy lives?



3. What does it say about Zechariah that his friends and relatives gathered around him to celebrate the birth of his son?

4. What does it say about the attitude friends and relatives felt toward Zechariah that they came to him to ask him his thoughts on what his son's name should be?

5. If you are a father, how did you choose a name for your child or children?

6. What is important in a name?

7. What does the Bible tell us about our names, no matter what they are?

8. What do you think it felt like for Zechariah to speak again?

9. What would have been your first words after nine months of silence?

10. At what times must you speak out?

11. Do you think that there are certain expectations about what is appropriate for a man to say about his faith?

12. Do you feel you are not allowed to be as expressive of your faith because you are a man?

13. What does it mean to you to “live out loud” at work and within your family?

14. How did Zechariah “live out loud” the day his son was born?

15. How does being a parent change what you say and when you say it?



16. How does being a parent affect the way you communicate with friends, co-workers or your spouse?

17. In your opinion, what affects your reputation the most in our culture today—what you say or what you do?

18. Which do you value most in others—words or actions?

19. Which has the most impact on your children—your words or your actions?

20. What words of your father or other male figure in your life do you remember most?

21. What actions of a male figure in your life have affected the way you are as a man today?







## **A CLOSING HYMN**

*(Tune: Ach Gott Und Herr 447 447)*

Draw us to you, and we will do what you have taught forever  
And hasten on where you have gone to be with you, dear Savior.

Draw us to you, each day anew. Let us depart with gladness  
That we may be forever free from sorrow, grief and sadness.

Draw us to you, that we stay true and walk the road to heaven.  
Direct our way lest we should stray and from your paths be driven.

## **A CLOSING PRAYER**

Help us, Lord, to trust in you no matter how surprising the twists and turns of life may be. Give us strength to be better husbands, better fathers and better friends to the people around us. Teach us, as you taught Zechariah, to hold fast to the promises of God and walk in the ways that you have designed for us. Amen.

## **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT SESSION**

Read Luke 3:1-18 to prepare for Session 2: John the Baptist, the Outspoken Type.