



Small Group Guide – Week of February 1

Upside Down: The Gospel According to Luke

Date: Week of February 1, 2025

Focus Passage(s): Luke 1–3 | Origin Stories

Theme: When things don't seem to be working, remember God's not finished yet.

Suggested Schedule (60 minutes total)

Segment	Time	Description
Icebreaker	10 min	Get comfortable, begin connecting
Intro/Recap	5 min	Read the key passages for the week
Group Discussion	25 min	Dive into Scripture and discuss real-life application
Deeper Dive Option	5–10 min	Deeper Bible study or individual challenge
Prayer & Requests	10–15 min	Close in prayer for growth + personal needs

Welcome + Icebreaker (10 min)

Time: 10 minutes

Prompt: These questions help us begin thinking about the theme of waiting, unexpected plans, and trust.

What is something in your life that rarely works the way it is supposed to?

Have you ever waited a long time for something that was really important to you? What made the waiting difficult?

Key Message Recap + Scripture Reading (5 min)

Time: 5 minutes

When things don't seem to be working, remember God's not finished yet. The story of Luke is one long reminder that when things don't make sense, God is still at work, often in ways we don't expect and can't see yet.

Read aloud: Luke 1:4

Why do you think certainty and trust were so important for Luke to emphasize at the beginning of his Gospel?

Dig Deeper – Discussion Questions (25 min)

1. ORIGIN STORY ONE – WAITING AND GOD’S TIMING

Read Luke 1:6, 13

Zechariah and Elizabeth were faithful and obedient, yet they waited years for something they deeply desired. God’s silence was not absence. What looked like delay was actually divine timing.

- Have you ever felt like you were doing the right things, yet God still seemed silent?
- What emotions tend to surface when waiting stretches longer than expected?
- Why is it hard to believe God is working when we cannot see progress?
- How does this story challenge the idea that obedience always leads to immediate results?
- Where in your life do you feel like you are in a season of waiting right now?

2. ORIGIN STORY TWO – OBEDIENCE WHEN THE PLAN CHANGES

Read Luke 1:30–31, 38

Mary’s life was interrupted by God’s plan in a way she never expected. Her response was surrender, even though the future was unclear and likely difficult.

- What stands out most about Mary’s response to God?
- Why does surrender feel riskier than control?
- Have you ever sensed God leading you in a direction that felt uncomfortable or unexpected?
- How can obedience actually deepen trust, even when it costs us something?
- What is one area of your life where God may be inviting you to trust Him more fully?

3. ORIGIN STORY THREE – SURRENDER AND IDENTITY

Read Matthew 3:16–17

Jesus’ baptism marked surrender, obedience, and affirmation of identity. Before Jesus began His public ministry, the Father declared who He was and expressed delight in Him.

- Why do you think God affirmed Jesus’ identity before His public ministry began?
- How does knowing who you are in God shape how you walk through uncertainty?
- What does baptism symbolize about trust and surrender?

When things don't seem to be working, remember God's not finished yet.

- Why is it tempting to assume God is done or absent when life feels broken?
- How does the upside-down nature of God's kingdom challenge our expectations of success and control?
- What would it look like to live this week believing God is still at work in your story?

Quietly identify one area of life that feels unfinished, broken, or confusing.

Write or say: "God's not finished yet."

- How does naming that area change the way you view it?
 - What might it look like to trade control for trust in that specific situation this week?
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Deeper Dive (Optional)

- Genesis 21 – God fulfills His promise to Abraham and Sarah
- 1 Samuel 1 – Hannah's season of waiting and surrender
- Isaiah 55:8–9 – God's ways are higher than ours
- Philippians 1:6 – God finishes what He starts

Character Study: The Story of Joseph

Joseph's life is a story of promises given early and fulfilled much later. As a young man, God gave Joseph dreams that clearly pointed to leadership and influence. But instead of immediate fulfillment, Joseph entered a season of waiting that would last more than a decade - the long, quiet, often painful kind of waiting. The waiting began with betrayal, sold into slavery by his own brothers, and continued through years of faithful, but unnoticed, service in Potiphar's house. Even there, Joseph waited, choosing integrity when no one was watching, only to be falsely accused and imprisoned for doing what was right.

Prison became another waiting room. Joseph used his gifts, helped others, and trusted God, yet he was forgotten by the very person who could have helped him escape. Scripture simply says, "The Lord was with Joseph," but that presence didn't remove the delay. God was shaping Joseph's character, teaching him humility, dependence, wisdom, and perseverance. What looked like detours was actually preparation.

When God's timing finally arrived, it came suddenly. In one day, Joseph moved from prison to palace. The years of waiting had prepared him not just to receive authority, but to steward it well. Because Joseph had learned to trust God in delay, he could recognize God's hand in fulfillment. He later told his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." Joseph's waiting was not wasted. It positioned him to save many lives and to see God's promises fulfilled in a way far greater than he imagined.

Joseph's story reminds us that waiting is often where God does His deepest work. God may give the dream quickly, but He usually fulfills it slowly. The silence does not mean God is absent; it often means He is preparing both the promise and the person.

God is still writing your story. Waiting is not wasted, and surrender is never meaningless.

Prayer Time (10 min)

- Thank God that He is always working, even when we cannot see it.
- Ask God for patience and trust in seasons of waiting.
- Pray for courage to surrender control and follow God's leading.

Invite group members to share personal prayer needs that are spiritual, relational, or practical. Encourage confidentiality and care.