



## Small Group Guide – Week of February 8

*Upside Down: The Gospel According to Luke*

**Date:** Week of February 8, 2025

**Focus Passage(s):** Luke 4:14-30 | Knowing vs Following Jesus

**Theme:** Knowing about Jesus isn't the same thing as following Jesus.

### **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 expecting one thing, but experiencing something different.

What is something you know a lot about that hasn't actually changed your life in a meaningful way?

Have you ever had your expectations of a person or situation turn out very different than you imagined? What happened?

Growing up, was there a place, activity, or routine that felt very familiar to you? How did that familiarity shape your expectations?

## Key Message Recap + Scripture Reading (5 min)

**Time:** 5 minutes

Knowing about Jesus isn't the same as following Jesus. The people of Nazareth knew His name. They knew His parents. They knew His background. But they couldn't see who He really was. They wanted a Savior who fit their expectations, not one who would change their hearts.

**Read aloud:** Luke 4:18–21

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.”

Then He said, “The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day.”

Jesus reads a familiar passage and claims it is about Himself. This moment sets the stage for everything that follows.

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## Dig Deeper – Discussion Questions (25 min)

### *Understanding the Tension*

Why do you think it was so difficult for the people in Nazareth to accept Jesus as the Savior?

How can familiarity with Jesus actually make it harder to truly follow Him?

Where do you see the difference between knowing information about Jesus and trusting Him with your life?

### *Expectations and Resistance*

What expectations do people often place on Jesus today?

Which of these feels most relatable to you?

- Wanting Jesus to bless your plans
- Wanting Jesus to fix problems quickly
- Wanting Jesus to make life easier

How do unmet expectations affect your trust in God?

### *Following When It's Upside Down*

What stands out to you about Jesus extending God's grace beyond Israel to outsiders?

How does that challenge our assumptions about who God's grace is for?

When Jesus doesn't meet expectations, what does it practically look like to follow Him anyway?

### *Reflect quietly, and share if you feel comfortable doing so.*

Where might I be knowing Jesus, but not fully following Him?

What expectation do I need to surrender to Jesus this week?

What is one step of trust or obedience God may be inviting me to take?

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## Deeper Dive (Optional)

Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath – 1 Kings 17

A picture of trusting God beyond cultural and personal expectations.

Elisha and Naaman – 2 Kings 5

Healing that required humility, obedience, and surrender.

Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler – Luke 18:18–27

Knowing the commandments versus following Jesus fully.

The Disciples Leaving Everything – Luke 5:1–11

A model of immediate obedience when Jesus calls.

### A Profile in Learning to Follow Jesus: Francis Chan

Francis Chan, pastor and author of *Crazy Love*, has spoken openly about a season in his life when he realized that he knew a lot about Jesus, taught about Jesus, and worked for Jesus, but was not fully following Jesus in the way the Gospels describe. Chan describes how his faith had slowly drifted into something comfortable and controlled. He was successful in ministry, respected as a teacher, and biblically informed, but he began to notice a disconnect between what he preached and how radically Jesus actually calls people to live.

One moment he frequently references is reading the words of Jesus in the Gospels with fresh eyes, especially passages about surrender, sacrifice, and obedience. He realized that much of his life had been built around safety, reputation, and stability rather than trust and dependence on God.

He has summarized this realization in different ways, but the heart of it sounds very similar to Luke 4:

- Knowing Scripture is not the same as obeying it.
- Admiring Jesus is not the same as submitting to Him.
- Serving Jesus is not the same as surrendering to Him.

Chan has said that he became deeply uncomfortable with how easily he could explain Jesus without actually **reshaping his life around Jesus' words**. That discomfort led him to pursue discipleship in a more relational and obedient way.

What makes his story resonate with Luke 4 is that:

- He was familiar with Jesus.
- He spoke well of Jesus.
- Others praised his teaching.
- Yet he realized familiarity had dulled his obedience.

His story reinforces the same tension Jesus exposed in Nazareth: **proximity to Jesus does not equal submission to Jesus**.

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## Prayer Time (10 min)

- Thank Jesus for revealing who He truly is. Ask God to help us surrender false expectations. Pray for courage to follow Jesus even when life feels upside down.

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