

THE BOOK OF
LUKE

STUDY GUIDE | CHAPTERS 10-12



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Introduction

In Luke 9, a significant shift has happened in the narrative. Jesus sends out his disciples without him for the first time. As they do so, more people become curious about who this Jesus guy is.

As the disciples return, Jesus asks them who the crowds say that he is. The responses are amazing: you're the reincarnation of Elijah or one of the great prophets of old. Peter even stands up and declares that he believes Jesus is the messiah, the specially chosen and anointed One from God who was going to prepare the establishment of God's Kingdom. But despite this reaction, Jesus does something strange. Instead of tooting his own horn, he describes how he's going to suffer and die. But this death, he says, brings real life. As the disciples frown and don't seem to get the point, Jesus "resolutely sets out for Jerusalem" (9:51), the place where he knows suffering and death await him.

At this stage, the tone of the narrative changes. Jesus pulls no punches. He begins to call out sin and those who don't understand. He rebukes those who believe they are *in* with God but who, because of their attitudes and actions, are actually in danger of being *out*. He tells stories and preaches sermons about what life in the kingdom really looks like and he warns us to be ready. The journey to the cross is a difficult one...but are we really ready to follow?

This study will simply follow along the journey with Jesus toward the cross. It's grounded in exploring the text itself and asking not only what the text says, but how these words ought to transform us. As we listen to Jesus' words we are meant to ask not how this applies for others, but how it changes us.

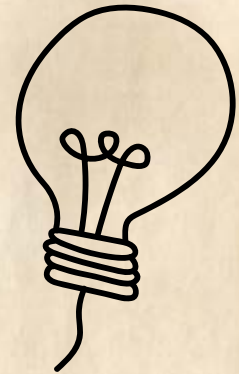
WEEK 1 | Doing and being

READ LUKE 10:25-28

What is an “expert in the law” and why is this highly educated man asking Jesus a question like that this he should know the answer to?

Life in the age

The two words that get translated into *eternal life* in English are the Greek words *zoe* (life) and *aeon* (age; period of time). A more direct translation of these words would be *life in the age*. It was a phrase that meant the period of time when God was going to appear and establish His Kingdom on earth. This man’s question was more about “How can I guarantee that I’m on the side of God now in preparation for His return?” and not so much about “How can I get into heaven after I die?” The phrase *life in the age* was about life now which translates into the rest of eternity, not merely about life that truly begins after death. It’s a subtle but very important difference.



How does the man respond to Jesus? How do these reflect Jesus’ own words?

Jesus tells the man he’s answered correctly. Jesus then tells him “Do this and you will live.” The word *live* is that same Greek word *zoe*, that began the whole conversation. Jesus says “Do those things you mentioned and you will experience life in the age.”

READ LUKE 10:28-37

Why did the man feel the need to justify himself? What’s the point of doing this?

Going down from Jerusalem

A subtle clue in the text is given to us about the man who was beaten and robbed that adds a lot more drama to the story. Jesus begins by saying that “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. . .” Now it’s possible that this is just an extra detail in the story to make it sound more interesting. It’s also possible that this man (who we don’t know if he’s fictional or real) happened to be simply traveling on business. But given who Jesus is talking to and who the people in the story are, it’s highly probable that this man was returning home to Jericho after he had been worshipping God at the Temple in Jerusalem.

If this is the case, how much more drama is added to the characters and their responses in the story?

What is the significance of a priest, a Levite and a Samaritan? Who do these people represent in that culture?

What stands out about how the Samaritan responds?

Why can’t the expert in the law simply say “the Samaritan man”? Why would this have been a hard thing?

Who are your “neighbours” (according to Jesus’ definition)? Why is it hard to love them?

READ LUKE 10:38-42

Don’t you think Martha has a point?!?

Didn’t Jesus just say “DO” twice in the previous section? (v28 & 37) Why is he giving Martha grief for “doing”?

Why is ‘being with Jesus’ better than ‘doing things for Jesus’? Is it possible to have one without the other?

This section of Scripture is all about knowing and responding. In the first story, the expert in the law knows a whole lot, but he’s disinclined to actually respond in loving his neighbour. In the second story, Martha is responding to Jesus’ arrival by busying herself to the point of exhaustion, but doesn’t seem to know that it’s better to simply be with Jesus.

Out of these characters, which one seems more like you? Are you doing a lot for Jesus but have forgotten to just be with him? Or do you know a lot about Jesus but aren't actively responding in any way? What needs to change in you to get this balance right?

What is something you can either DO this week or some way you can BE with Jesus? How will you accomplish this?

WEEK 2 | Following

READ LUKE 9:18-27

The story immediately preceding this one involves a large crowd of people (of 5,000 men, not counting women and children) who are hanging off of Jesus' every word, who will not let him rest because they are so intent on being near him. They are described in 9:11 as "following" Jesus. When Jesus and the disciples finally do get away, Jesus is curious to know about how he is perceived (v. 18 – "Who do the crowds say I am?").

Who do the crowds say Jesus is? What is the significance of these figures?

Who does Peter say Jesus is?

Christ is not a last name

The word that is often translated as *Christ* in the New Testament is itself a rendering of the Hebrew word *messiah*. The word *messiah* means *anointed one* and was used in several places in the Hebrew scriptures to describe someone who was specially chosen by God and given His Spirit to do some significant task. Saul, David, Solomon and even the Persian king Cyrus are all called *messiahs* in the Old Testament. Yet during the exile (when the Jews lost their land and were taken away as slaves to foreign nations), the term *messiah* came to be understood as something more. Faithful Jews re-read ancient scriptures and realized that God had promised, from the very beginning of His Word, that He Himself was going to return and set everything right again. The prophets pick up on this idea to talk about how the Messiah, God Himself, was going to come to earth soon. There were many people who came and went who called themselves the Messiah/Christ, whose main claim on the role was the elimination of the *enemies* – who could be anyone from foreigners to sinners. The understanding of *the Messiah* then, was God in human form come to set up His kingdom on earth, loved by and rewarding all faithful Jews and making "everyone else" suffer.

What is the difference between the popular perception of the role and person of the Christ/Messiah and Jesus' understanding?

Why do you think the crowds and the disciples "followed" Jesus?

What does "taking up your cross daily" mean? What did the cross mean to that audience back then?

What do you think Jesus means when he says "whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it?" What does that look like daily?

READ LUKE 9:46-56

Immediately after Jesus instructs the disciples in what it means to follow him (see the previous week's study), what do we find them doing that demonstrates they really don't get what he means?

What logical sense is there that in God's kingdom the least will be the greatest? What does that look like in the Christian life?

READ LUKE 9:57-62

Once more, we are confronted with another crowd of people who are interested in 'following' Jesus. Why do you think Jesus is so harsh on these potential followers? Why can't he lower the bar a bit?

Let the dead bury their own

This response from Jesus (verse 60) on first glance seems like an insensitive insult. Here is a guy who seems to want to follow Jesus, who simply wants to bury his dad – why is Jesus so rough on the dude? But that's not the right context. In the Jewish world, when someone died, their bodies would be laid in a tomb for around a year (we see this in Jesus' and Lazarus' deaths). After a year (when their bodies had decomposed), the family would then gather the bones and put them in a box (called an ossuary) and bury it in the ground. So when this man said he wanted to "bury his father" he was talking about burying the ossuary way after the event – so this excuse, though still an important thing to do in that culture, doesn't have the significance we often assign to it. The man could have buried the box whenever and unlike the burial tomb, was not as important to attend to.

Given all these passages, what distinguishes a ‘crowd-type’ follower from a follower Jesus actually desires? What kind of follower of Jesus are YOU?

If following Jesus means denying oneself, dying to our own desires or expectations or future; if it involves becoming nobodies and losing our lives (both in a spiritual sense and physical sense) – does your life reflect this at all?

And if the cost is so high (we are supposed to give up everything we want to hold on to), why follow Jesus? Or do you think we can sort of follow Jesus a little bit and still do what we want to do and look like everyone else?

In what ways do we try to gain the world? Where does this leave us?

What may you need to give up to follow Jesus? What do you think will happen if you surrender your hopes/dreams/future/plans/treasures for him?

WEEK 3 | Prayer

How would you describe your prayer life? (Frequent/Infrequent/Meaningful/Basic/Joyful/Monotonous)

How effective would you say your prayer life is? Why do you think God answers your prayers or doesn’t answer your prayers?

READ LUKE 11:1-4

How would you describe the seven sections of this prayer? (see below) What do they mean? Why are they important?

1. Father
2. Hallowed by Your Name
3. Your Kingdom come
4. Give us each day our daily bread
5. Forgive us our sins
6. [So that] we forgive everyone indebted to us (*indebted* is a more accurate word than *sins* here and implies not only those who do sinful things to us, but people who are actually financially in debt and owe us recompense – it’s a much broader term implying total forgiveness on every level, spiritual and otherwise)
7. Lead us not into temptation

How does this prayer cover every aspect of our lives?

How does this prayer reflect a deep loving relationship with God, rather than a prayer we thoughtlessly throw up so our desires are met? How often do you pray this prayer?

You (in Greek)

One of the problems with translating from one language to another is that there is a loss of some level of meaning and context; this passage is an obvious example. The word **you** in English is normally directed at one other person who you are directly addressing (this is technically called *second person singular*). There are many instances in the Bible where we see the word **you** and commonly we read it as talking directly to me, personally. However, many of the **you** passages we see, in Greek, are actually PLURAL, meaning it is better translated as **you all** (or **you**s if you're country Australian). In the Lord's Prayer here, verse 2 should be translated as Jesus saying, "When you ALL pray" and indicates this prayer should be prayed corporately. It therefore highlights the importance of community, especially in our prayer lives, that we are not only to pray for our own needs as individuals, but we are encouraged over and over again in Scripture to recognize we are dependent on one another and that it is vitally important to share our lives and needs and struggles with one another before the throne of God.



READ LUKE 11:5-13

Immediately after teaching his disciples what to pray, he then tells them a strange parable about HOW to pray. What we often miss in this parable is the importance of ancient hospitality. In that culture there were no late-night convenience stores and food was often prepared daily (rather than sitting in boxes or cans on shelves with long expiration dates). So whenever someone (a friend or a traveller or whoever really) was in need of food/water/shelter, it was considered not only rude, but sinful to not offer whatever hospitality you had, no matter what it cost you (see the parable of the Good Samaritan in the chapter immediately before this to see this at work).

That being said, what is the meaning of the parable in verses 5-8?

Why does the neighbour respond to his friend's request? (v8)

How does this parable flow into verses 9-13? How does this persistence relate to our prayer life with God?

Do we often view God like the guy who gets grumpily woken at midnight (v7) or who gives us things that harm us? (v11-12) How does this section tell us God is NOT like this?

In light of this parable, how ought we change our attitude about God in prayer?

What is the craziest prayer you can think of praying right now? How can you pray that prayer persistently and faithfully?

WEEK 4 | The enemy

READ LUKE 11:14-20

What does driving demons from people have to do with Jesus' ultimate mission to announce the kingdom of God?

What three different responses to Jesus' power are recorded here?

Who is this Beelzebul character?

READ 2 KINGS 1:2-17

What in the world is going on in this passage?

Beelzebub had the devil put aside for me

Baal-zebul or Beelzebul? Which is it? There is an interesting word play going on between these two terms. The term *baal/beel* simply means *lord*. Baal was the chief god of the Philistine people. In ancient writings that have been uncovered from Ekron (the Philistine city mentioned in 2 Kings 1), this god's name was written as *zebul-baal*, which translates as *lord of the heavenly realms*. However we find Azariah and the other Hebrew people refer to this god as Baal-Zebub...very similar wording. But Baal-Zebub translates as *lord of the flies* or *lord of dung*. In other words, the Philistines believed this god to be the chief god in charge of the universe, but the Jewish people (even kings who were in desperate need of his *healing* powers) mockingly referred to this god as the lord of dung.

How does Elijah view those who seek out Baal-Zebub?

How do you think the crowds (and Jesus) come to associate this ancient Philistine god with the “prince of demons”?

The many names of the enemy

Satan. The devil. Lucifer. Beelzebul. Prince of demons. Whatever you want to call this being, we find many different names given to him/it in the Bible. Belial. Prince of the air. The dragon/serpent. The Accuser. Basically whenever the people of God recognize anything reeking of evil, they named it. Evil in the Bible is not just a formless adjective but an embodied, personified character who is pulling the strings behind people, situations, governments. In this passage, the Enemy is associated with this old false god which led a king and his army to turn away from Yahweh, the living and true **Lord of the heavens**. In the biblical mind, where there is evil, there is a presence behind it. That presence has many names and many forms, but it is indeed real and present.

Why do you think some in the crowd associate Jesus with this “lord of the flies/prince of demons” character?

What is Jesus’ response to this?

READ LUKE 11:21-28

In this little parable, who is the strong man? Who is the stronger man? Again, what does this have to do with the kingdom of God?

What do you think Jesus is talking about in verses 24-26?

We need to put verses 24-26 together with verses 21-23. Basically, Jesus is the stronger man who can remove the Enemy (the fully armed strong man) from the space he was occupying (a person). But if that person does not invite the stronger man to take up residence, then his **house** remains undefended and the first strong man can simply return. In other words, when Jesus removes evil from your life/work/family/community, it’s wise to put your trust in him. If you don’t, if you simply want to marvel at the miracle that’s been done without believing in the miracle-worker himself, chances are that evil will just return stronger than before.

What is with this strange interaction between this woman in the crowd and Jesus? What does hearing/obeying the word of God have to do with what Jesus was talking about before?

The meaning of this passage is this: we all have an enemy. This enemy is incredibly strong and seeks to keep us in prison. He destroys. He's a liar. He's crafty and persuasive. But in reality he's the lord of dung. Worthless. Disgusting. But Jesus is at work driving out this enemy. In our lives. In our families. In this world. He's the real lord of the heavenly realms; he's the stronger man who can take out the enemy. But we need to know this enemy is real. Not just a concept. We are actively being opposed at all times and need the help of the stronger man (Jesus) to set us free and overcome.

Do you think Satan/Beelzebul/Prince of Demons is at work in this world? Why or why not?

How can we take Jesus' words seriously? What do we need to do to respond to this threat?

WEEK 5 | Focus

READ LUKE 11:29-32

Verse 29 tells us that after Jesus drove out a demon (Luke 11:14), the crowds started to grow. In Luke 11:16, some in this crowds demanded a "sign from heaven". Obviously, driving out demons did not count for this crew. They wanted more.

What sort of signs did Jesus then provide for them?

*I saw the sign & it opened up my eyes.
I saw the sign...*

The Greek word for *sign* is *semeion*; a word that means *token* or *proof of authenticity*. It was used in lots of different settings. For example, you might promise to sell me the cricket bat that Don Bradman used during the 1948 undefeated Aussie tour matches in England (The Invincibles). That's amazing, I might think. But I need a *semeion*; I need some proof that this bat you're trying to get me to purchase is the very same bat that hit those 11 centuries that tour. In the context of this passage, the crowd wants Jesus to demonstrate a sign or give them authenticated proof that he is who he says he is (and therefore not Beelzebul). According to them, this *sign* will convince them to believe.

Who is the Queen of the South? Who are the Ninevites? In what ways are these folks contrasted with that crowd that is questioning Jesus?

What two actions does Jesus want this crowd to do?

Do you ever feel like you relate to the crowd – that you just want God to prove He's real or present? Do you ever think that you might respond appropriately to God if He just gave you some sort of token He's there?

What does it mean to listen and repent? In what ways do YOU need to listen and repent?

READ LUKE 11:33-36

Jesus uses a lot of mixed metaphors in this section: light/dark, eyes/lamps, healthy/unhealthy.

What point is Jesus trying to make here?

What part do our eyes play in this whole section? Why are they so important?

When your heart's on fire you must realize smoke gets in your eyes

In verse 34, the NIV translation states "When your eyes are healthy, your whole body is also full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body is also full of darkness." Translators had a difficult time translating the words healthy and unhealthy. The word unhealthy is the Greek word *poneros*, which usually gets translated as *evil* but has the connotation of being rotten or corrupt. The word translated as healthy is the Greek word *haplous*, which directly means *undivided*. Although healthy and unhealthy are perfectly good ways to use these words, the context is really this: "When your eyes are undivided, undistracted, focused, your whole body is full of light. But when they are corrupt, rotten, unfocused, your body will be filled with darkness."

Jesus' point is this: he wants our undivided attention. Anything else is like putting on blinders, which disables us from seeing and therefore responding to God properly. Being unfocused means light fades from within us and darkness begins to reign.

Are your eyes focused on Jesus? Or do you have divided, unfocused eyes?
How can we know?

How can you focus on Jesus...today, this week, this year? What does a
focused, undivided life look like?

WEEK 6 | Woe

READ LUKE 11:37-41

Why do you think this Pharisee was *surprised* at Jesus? Wouldn't you be
surprised, too? Why is this a big deal?

Set apart ones

Have you ever asked yourself "Who are the Pharisees?" or "Where did these people come from?" The Pharisees have a long and interesting history which scholars are still uncovering more about. The general scholarly consensus is that after the Israelites returned from exile in Babylon they began to ask themselves

"How do we prevent this from happening again to our people?" The basic answer the people came up with was that they had forgotten and therefore not held up their end the covenant with Yahweh (God). Many people repented (see Ezra 10 for more background) and some of them decided to fastidiously follow the Jewish Law (the 10 Commandments are just a few of the 613 laws located in the Torah – the first 5 books of the Old Testament). When Israel was invaded again by the Greeks, some Jews abandoned the covenant again, but others fought bravely against the invaders drove them out, thus becoming heroes of the faith. Over time the common people gave a title to these faithful followers of Yahweh: *Pharisees*. . . . a word that literally translates to the *set apart ones*.



How do you think the Pharisees, who bravely fought off invaders and fought for the people to cling to Yahweh, missed the forest for the trees?

READ LUKE 11:42-52

What is the significance of giving a tenth in the Bible? How do you even give a tenth of these small garden plants?

How meticulous do you have to be to calculate that sacrifice out?

What does Jesus mean that the Pharisee “neglect justice” (see Isaiah 1:17)? Why is pursuing justice an important part of the Christian life?

What’s wrong with seeking out recognition and favour (v. 43)?

Unmarked graves?

What does it mean when Jesus accused these religious elite of loading down people with burdens they can hardly carry but not being willing to help them?

What is the “key to knowledge” Jesus refers to in verse 52?

This is one of Jesus’ harshest indictments on any group of people. And it’s directed at those who are associated with closeness to God and following His commands. In fact, throughout the Bible, this is the most common criticism that occurs: people who claim to be “in” the family of God but have lost perspective on how/why they got in in the first place (because of the grace and love of God). The Pharisees are just one group of people amongst many in the Bible who started as those who loved God for God alone and out of that love desired to live for Him before eventually becoming consumed with other things (strict observance to the rules, comfort, security, power, influence).

In what ways does the fall of the Pharisees compare to your life?

How have you forgotten your first love?

What can we do to cling to Jesus again as our first love?

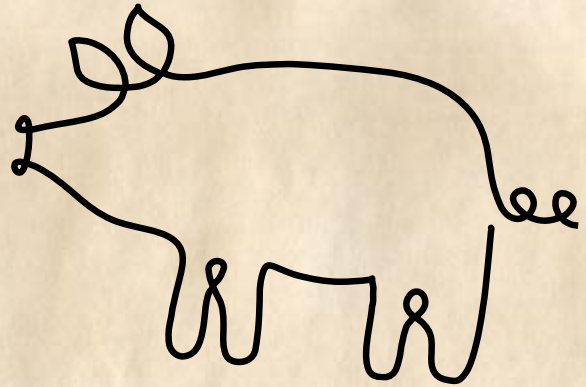
Is Jesus interested us in following the rules and looking like good Christians? Or is he interested in something else in us?

WEEK 7 | And in the end

READ LUKE 12:1

Trampled

There is an interesting word play happening in this verse that can easily go undetected. We are told there is a crowd “trampling on one another” in order to see Jesus (so we presume). This word “trampling” only occurs in a few other places in the New Testament, each time it’s in reference to taking something given by God and treating it like it is meaningless. You see this in the parable of the sower and the seed (the good news) that falls on the path and is trampled underfoot (completely disregarded). Similar sentiments are shared in throwing pearls to pigs (Matthew 7:6) and insulting Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross (Hebrews 10:29).



Given this usage of the word “trampling”, what may be Luke hinting at in regard to what this crowd is really after? How does this explain why Jesus instead chose to address his disciples?

READ LUKE 12:2-5

What is Jesus talking about in these verses?

How can Jesus words about secret things being revealed be a warning? How might it be an encouragement?

Why should we not fear those that kill the body? Who are these people and what does this have to do with being a disciple of Jesus?

READ LUKE 12:6-7

What does “fearing” God actually look like?

Burning trash heaps

The word translated as *hell* in verse 5 is the Greek word *Gehenna*. This word is actually a combination of two Hebrew words that means *valley of wailing*. We see King Ahaz, amongst others, going there to sacrifice his children to the Canaanite god Molech (see Jeremiah 7, 2 Chronicles 28). King Josiah later reduces the area to rubble in order to prevent more child sacrifice (2 Kings 23), thus cementing its status as a place of unspeakable evil, pain, weeping and desolation. In Jesus' time, due to this valley's proximity to Jerusalem, Gehenna became the rubbish dump of the city. Because of this, it was constantly burning with, what was described, a fire that does not go out and dogs would fight over scraps of trash (gnashing of teeth). In other words, it was both a physical and spiritual picture of the extreme that happens when people turn away from God.



According to Jesus, what fate is worse than death?

How does Jesus juxtapose the wrath of God with the tender affection of God?

How is it that we are supposed to be afraid (verses 4-5) while at the same time NOT afraid (verse 7)?

READ LUKE 12:8-12

What do these verses have to do with the ones that immediately precede them?

Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit speaking through you?

This section is about trusting in God until the end. Jesus says there will be a day when everything will come to light, when people are judged based on their response (or lack thereof) to God. He encourages us to not fear what will come in the future, but to trust that God is caring and that He will be with us, no matter what may come.

Do you ever worry about the future?

What do you think it looks like to be faithful to the end?

How can you live NOW in such a way that should the world go to hell (Gehenna), you are standing firm in Christ?

WEEK 8 | What you build your life upon

READ LUKE 12:13-21

If you read immediately what comes before this section, this man's question to Jesus in verse 13 becomes even more incredibly absurd. In the previous section (which is in the same context/event as this one), Jesus tells people to fear God because one day God is going to bring everything...the secrets of people's hearts and unspoken motives...to light. This man was clearly not paying attention.

Why does Jesus (and the Bible as a whole) warn us away from greed so often? Why is it so bad for us?

Does your life, here on the Northern Beaches, "consist in an abundance of possessions"? In a culture of comfort and wealth, how can we know if we've devoted too much of our attention to getting more stuff?

In the parable Jesus tells here, is the rich man really doing anything wrong? Wouldn't any smart person do the same thing he's doing? Isn't he just setting himself up for retirement?

Why is this man foolish?

What's the difference between storing things up for yourself versus being rich toward God?

If those two things were a scale, where would you fall on that scale?

READ LUKE 12:22-34

Again, Jesus turns his attention away from the crowd (who clearly don't get it) toward his disciples. He gives them instructions about what we ought to build our life on. The message is simple: are you paying attention to the stuff of this life or the eternity that is awaiting you?

How often do you actually worry about your life?

Why is it that Christians often worry (like everyone else/the pagans) but then don't think this worrying is all that wrong or abnormal when Jesus clearly says "Don't do it!"?

Have you ever added a single hour to your life by worrying? If worrying is this futile, why do we keep doing it?

When was the last time you considered the birds or the flowers (this is a real question)?

Are you, by your actions and thoughts, running after the things of this world (like the everyone else) or are you seeking God's kingdom?

Do we really believe that if we seek God's kingdom first "all these things will be given to you as well"?

How can we put into practice the things Jesus tells us in verses 32-34?

How can you this week put your treasure in Christ instead of everything else?

WEEK 9 | Good & faithful servants

READ LUKE 12:35-38

This section uses the word *servant* a lot. *Servant* is a bit of a nicer translation than perhaps the closer definition of *slave* (which is certainly a term none of us like very much). Either way you translate that word (servant or slave), neither term gives off good vibes in our culture today. We think ourselves very highly and the thought of serving someone else is probably beneath us.

So why does Jesus refer to those people who live for God as servants/slaves? Is this how God really views us?

What is strange or abnormal about the behaviour of the master in this parable? How does this inform us of God's actions/attitudes toward us?

READ LUKE 12:39-44

What do these sections (being a servant ready for his master's unknown return and the thief coming at an unknown hour) have to do with one another?

Why doesn't Jesus answer Peter's question (at least, not directly)?

What makes a manager (a leader who oversees other servants) faithful and wise?

What do you think it means when Jesus says this manager will be "put in charge of all [the master's] possessions"?

READ LUKE 12:45-48

What is the primary characteristic of a poor manager?

What do you think it means that the master will cut this manager "to pieces" and "assign him a place with the unbelievers"?

What kind of people would classify as the servants who know their master's will and aren't ready and/or doing what he wants?

What kind of people would classify as those who don't know the master's will yet are doing the things he wants them to do?

Why are there different responses to these two groups? Does this mean it's better to be ignorant of God?

Have you been given much? What have you done with it?

What kind of servant are you? How might you need to change?

