YOU ASKED FOR IT

Life Group Leaders Guide

Directions

This packet contains all the background information, series information, and weekly curriculum you will need to lead a life group. As a leader, everything on this page is to help you stay connected to the series as a whole. Behind this page is the individual curriculum to help you point people to Jesus. The *Purpose* and *Move* sections of the curriculum are for the leader to read or paraphrase to the group. The *Notes and Commentary* section is for the leader to get some more background and go deeper into the passages before leading the life group.

Series Overview

You asked, we listened, and now we have answered! Over the next 4 weeks The Point Church will be studying what you wanted to study regarding our faith and difficult topics that arise in the life of a believer. We hope this *You Asked For It* series will give you information you seek, confidence in your faith, and comfort when interacting with the tough questions that are commonly asked on this side of eternity.

Life Group Overview

During the *You Asked For It* series our life group curriculum will cover different topics than what is mentioned from stage. The top four topics have been given stage time, and in an effort to cover as many topics as possible, the life group curriculum will cover other “hot” issues. We believe this format will allow for our people to cover more topics in a shorter amount of time. With your comfort in mind, the staff chose topics for life group that the bible speaks clearly on so you can boldly lean on God’s wisdom regarding the tough topics you will cover. With that said, this curriculum has purposefully come out earlier than normal so you can acclimate yourself with the topics. Please take special interest in the *Notes and Commentary* sections (specifically the links to blog posts, sermons, and articles) of the curriculum for great places to spend time preparing for each life group.

You Asked For It Series Schedule

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| **Week** | **Sermon Date** | **Topic of sermon** | **Topic of life group** |
| Week 1 | 6/18 | **SCIENCE** --> The questions pertaining to science and its intersection with our faith. | What is a Christian? |
| Week 2 | 6/25 | **SEXUALITY** --> The questions pertaining to sex and what the bible says about it. | What is God’s Will? |
| Week 3 | 7/2 | **EVIL** --> The questions pertaining to the theology of evil, the demonic, and hell. | Can I Question God? |
| Week 4 | 7/9 | **CULTURE** --> The questions pertaining to how our faith intersects with current culture. | Can I Drink Alcohol? |

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum
**You Asked For It - Week 3 - Can I Question God?**

Purpose of Study

The life of the Christian this side of eternity is marred with a lot of uncomfortable situations and experiences. The bible is full of truths that are confusing and troubling for the Christian to wrap their head around. Mix these two together and you have a perfect situation for questioning the God that is in control of all things. But is it OK to question the almighty? If a Christian has questions are they lacking in the field of faith? If it is OK to question God how does a Christian go about doing that? In this curriculum we will attempt to tackle the idea of questioning God. The short answer is a resounding YES. As believers, it is perfectly normal and acceptable to question God...however...this questioning should be done within some healthy parameters. To uncover this truth we will begin with an opening section on questioning in general and then see what the bible says about questioning God.

Flow of Study

**Optional Icebreaker:** Can you remember a time where you stumped one of your parents with a question? Can you remember a time when your kids asked a question that was VERY difficult to answer? Please describe it.

**Move #1:** To begin our study let’s get an idea of questioning God in general.

1. Think about an area in your life where you have the tendency to be asked questions by someone (ex: work or parenting). What kind of questions are enjoyable to answer? What kind of questions really get under your skin?
2. Have you ever had a season in your life where you questioned God due to some unforeseen circumstances? Describe that situation.
3. Have you ever uncovered a truth in the bible that led you to question God?
4. What do you think is the basis for the questioning you have experienced in your own life?
	1. **Possible answers:** pain, pride, knowing things would be different if you were God.
5. Why do you think the situation of questioning God is a hazy one for some believers?

**Move #2:** Now that we have opened up about questioning in general, let’s see what the bible has to say about questioning. There are many places we could go in the bible to deal with questioning but we wanted to find one story that showed healthy and unhealthy questioning paired together. To do this we are going to go through the passages in Luke that precede the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. Here we will see two characters both experiencing the same situation (the miraculous births of their future children). Their questioning in this situation gives us a framework for healthy and unhealthy questioning of God for us in our lives.

**Read Luke 1:5-22 (NIV)**

5 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. 6 Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. 7 But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. 8 Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. 11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.13 But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” 18 Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.” 19 The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20 And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.” 21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. 22 When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. Reread verse 18. Why is Zechariah questioning God? What is the purpose of his questioning?
3. Obviously, Zechariah’s question and purpose behind his question offend God (more specifically the angel speaking for God). Why do you think that is the case?
4. Look at the angel's answer in verse 19. What insight does the angels answer give us into the attitude or motive behind Zechariah’s question?
5. Now let’s zoom out to our own lives, looking at the story we just read, how would you define an unhealthy questioning of God?

**Read Luke 1:26-38 (NIV)**

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” 34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” 35The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail.” 38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. Reread verse 34. Why is Mary questioning God? What is the purpose of her questioning?
3. Look at the angel's answer in verses 35-37. What insight does the angel’s answer give us into the attitude or motive behind Mary’s question?
4. Now let’s zoom out to our own lives, looking at the story we just read, how would you define a healthy questioning of God?

**Move #3:** Now that we have uncovered a framework for a healthy questioning God, let’s see it again in practice. It is hard for many people to relate to an angel coming to them and telling them they are going to have a child so to put more flesh on the idea of questioning we are going to go to a Psalm of David where he was in the process of questioning God. Before we begin the psalm we need to understand the genre of writing and the background of the specific psalm itself.

**Background on Psalms:** In the simplest terms, the book of Psalms is a book of worship songs/hymns/poems for the church. The writers of the psalms were human and therefore experienced many of the uncomfortable situations mentioned in the *Purpose of Study* section. Thanks to that, these scriptures have a unique way of speaking to us in certain situations and speaking for us (as if someone was reading our mail). With that said, knowing the backstory to many psalms (although 100% confirmation of the backstory can be difficult) helps bring them alive.

**Background on Psalm 13:** As far as we know, Psalm 13 cannot be tied to any specific event in David’s history. Many commentators make guesses on what was happening in the background but in all truth we cannot be sure. In some ways, this helps the Psalm come alive because it speaks to all situations, to all peoples, at all times. Most Christians will resonate with the words of Psalm 13 and remember a time where it seems like David was reading their journals. We will begin by reading the Psalm, talking about those Psalm 13 moments in our own lives, and then transition into the layout and truth that the psalm presents.

**Read Psalm 13 (NIV)**

1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

 How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts

 and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

 How long will my enemy triumph over me?

3 Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

 Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

4 and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”

 and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

5 But I trust in your unfailing love;

 my heart rejoices in your salvation.

6 I will sing the Lord’s praise,

 for he has been good to me.

1. What lines from Psalm 13 resonate with you?
2. Charles Spurgeon broken up Psalm 13 into 3 distinct sections. We will use his formatting to try to uncover a healthy example of questioning God.
	1. Reread verses 1-2. This is what Spurgeon called *The Question of Anxiety*
		1. Have you ever experienced a situation where verses 1-2 were your prayer to God?
		2. These verses seem to be describing a dry season that David was having with God however not all questioning comes out of dry seasons. Many of our questions come through God’s truth being difficult to comprehend or agree with. Do these verses speak to that kind of issue?
	2. Reread verses 3-4. This is what Spurgeon called *The Cry of Prayer*
		1. What stands out to you from verses 3-4.
		2. What do you think the phrase “give light to my eyes” means?
		3. How have David’s questions from verses 1-2 evolved in verses 3-4?
		4. We are not sure what “enemies” David is referring to but what are the enemies in our questions?
	3. Reread verses 5-6. This is what Spurgeon called *The Song of Faith*
		1. What stands out to you from verses 5-6?
		2. How has David’s words changed over the course of this psalm?
		3. Imagine Psalm 13 without verses 5-6. Do you think that would be a healthy example of questioning God?
		4. How would you describe what happens to David from verse 1 to verse 6? Have you experienced this in your own life?
3. Do you think Psalm 13 is a healthy example of questioning God?
4. What does the fact that we can question God like this reveal about our relationship with him?
5. Does your questioning of God take this format? In regards to questioning God in difficult times or with difficult truths, where are areas that you need to grow?
6. As a group, how can we spur one another onto a Psalm 13 like questioning of God?

**Prayer:** End your study with a time of prayer where people can share prayer requests and be prayed for before they leave. If possible, please steer some prayer towards what your group talked about during this study.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

**Luke 1:5-22 and 26-38**

* *Who Are You to Question God?* By John Piper <https://goo.gl/ExiHg9>
* The story would remind any Bible reader of much older stories: Abraham and Sarah having a child in their old age ([Genesis 21](https://biblia.com/reference/Ge21)), Rachel bearing Jacob two sons after years of childlessness ([Genesis 30](https://biblia.com/reference/Ge30); [35](https://biblia.com/reference/Ge35)), and particularly the births of Samson ([Judges 13](https://biblia.com/reference/Jdg13)) and Samuel ([1 Samuel 1](https://biblia.com/reference/1Sa1)). This story, Luke hints, is not a strange new thing, but takes its place within a long-standing sequence of God’s purposes. The child to be born, who will be called John, will play a key role in God’s fulfilment of his promises. The story thus prepares us, like tourists getting into the mood for the central exhibit, for the still more remarkable events that will follow swiftly. (Wright)
* Zechariah and Elisabeth weren’t expecting any of this. They were simply devout people going about their regular business. They were ‘righteous in God’s sight’, observant Jews, keeping the law as a sign of grateful devotion to God. They lived outside Jerusalem, in the Judaean hill-country. Like all priests except the chief priests, who lived in Jerusalem itself, Zechariah would come in to the city when it was the turn of his division to perform the regular Temple-liturgy; he would stay in lodgings within the Temple precincts, and then return home to continue his normal work as a teacher and leader in the local community. On this occasion Zechariah was appointed by lot to go into the inner court, out of sight of the lay people, to offer incense. Sometimes regular duty provides the context for extraordinary visions. (Wright)
* Luke is careful not to dress up the story by making Zechariah a great hero of faith. Like some of the Old Testament leaders, his first reaction to the news is to clutch at straws: he needs a sign, something that will help him to believe. He is given one, but it comes as a punishment; we can almost see the angel putting his hands on his hips and telling Zechariah off for presuming to doubt his word. (Wright)
* Zechariah raises doubts about the angel’s message, for the prospective parents are now beyond normal childbearing age (v. [18](https://biblia.com/reference/Lk1.18)). Sometimes even good people have doubts about God’s promise. The angel tells Zechariah in effect, “Just be quiet for awhile and watch God work.” So a sign of silence is given until God performs his word. Zechariah becomes temporarily mute until these things come to pass.[7](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph2.11) This sign is a pointer to the major lesson of this passage: God will bring his promise to pass. He will perform his word. Zechariah must listen to God and trust that he will do what he has promised. When Zechariah departs and is unable to give the customary blessing ([m. Tamid 7:2](https://biblia.com/reference/Mishnah.Tamid_7%243A2?resourceName=nivac63lu); cf. [Num. 6:24–26](https://biblia.com/reference/Nu6.24-26)), the crowd knows something unusual has taken place. Verse [22](https://biblia.com/reference/Lk1.22) adds a note of drama to the account. (Bock)
* Zechariah teaches us that God occasionally instructs saints through difficult times.[10](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph2.11) Sometimes underestimating God is as dangerous as rebelling against him. Our sin may not be a matter of doing overt wrong but of being hesitant to pursue righteousness and to trust fully in the Lord. Once God speaks, we should respond. (Bock)
* The fact that Zechariah doubted the angel’s word meant he was already at risk. What God promises, he will perform—only he will do it in his time and sometimes in surprising ways. When the time of fulfillment comes, we realize that his timing was better than ours. Perhaps we sometimes wish we could be in the boardroom of heaven, telling God how to make his plans. This passage calls us to see that his plan has its own design and timing. The Creator of the universe knows what he is doing. (Bock)
* Mary’s response reveals her character. “Let it be to me as you have said” (v. [38](https://biblia.com/reference/Lk1.38)). This was no simple matter. She is being asked to bear a child as a virgin without being married. In standing up for God and his power, she will probably become the object of much doubt and ridicule. But Mary knows she is God’s servant, so she will allow God to work through her as he wills. He can place her in whatever difficult circumstances he desires, for she knows that God is with her. (Bock)
* We shouldn’t miss the contrast between muddled, puzzled Zechariah in the previous story and the obedient humility of Mary in this one. She too questions Gabriel, but this seems to be a request for information, not proof. Rather, faced with the chance to be the mother of the Messiah, though not yet aware of what this will involve, she says the words which have rung down the years as a model of the human response to God’s unexpected vocation: ‘Here I am, the Lord’s servant-girl; let it be as you have said.’ (Wright)

**Psalm 13**

* *The Treasury of David* by Charles H. Spurgeon <https://goo.gl/9muT0W>