

# Week 11

## Bible Passage

Luke 9:28–45



### Sneak Peek

When Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured, God encouraged them to listen to Jesus. Jesus went on to heal a boy with a demon and also foretell his own betrayal.

## *The Inspiration of Hope*

### Desired Outcomes

1. To study the account of the transfiguration, Jesus' healing of a boy with a demon, and Jesus' foretelling of his betrayal.
2. To consider times of intense spiritual experience and the practicalities of the ministry of healing.
3. To think about how we might live a holistic life of faith as Jesus did.

### Session Key Verse

From the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" —Luke 9:35

### Optional Materials

- Internet access and the capability to watch a video together
- *For free digital resources to enhance this lesson, go to <https://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources>*



## Get Acquainted



Is anyone new to your group? If so, take a few moments to introduce yourselves. If there were prayer requests or other concerns expressed last week, share with the group any changes or updates.

Most people, regardless of whether or not they would consider themselves “religious,” have experienced a “spiritually powerful” moment. Some examples include a wedding, a death, or a birth. Other examples might be a waterfall, a sunset, or a thunderstorm. Another example would be an “a-ha” moment, when the light comes on and you realize something for the first time.

Share with the group about a spiritually powerful moment in your life. **What were the circumstances? Where were you? What was happening? What led up to the moment? Who was with you?** Describe what you saw, heard, and felt. **Is it easy for you to communicate exactly what happened and the power of the moment? No matter how hard we try, why do we often end up saying, “You just had to be there to understand”?**



## Discover



Read and discuss Luke 9:28–45. The commentary sections can be used to generate dialogue, or for study prior to your meeting.

### Luke 9:28–36

#### Commentary

In the verses prior to today’s passage, Jesus questioned the disciples about their take on his identity. After discussing speculations that Jesus was John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the ancient prophets, the exchange culminated in Peter confessing that Jesus was “The Messiah of God” (9:20). The transfiguration demonstrated visually that Jesus was not Elijah, nor was he Moses, who was regarded as the greatest of the ancient prophets.

Deuteronomy 18:15 promised a prophet like Moses to whom the people were to listen, just as the disciples were told by the voice in Luke 9:35 that Jesus was God's "Son," his "Chosen," and they were to "listen to him."

Jesus would suffer and die, but there would be future vindication when the Son of Man returned in glory (9:26–27). The transfiguration gave a glimpse of that glory and a heavenly affirmation that Jesus was indeed God's Son, the Chosen One. Even in this glorious moment, however, there were rumblings of the future that awaited Jesus as Moses and Elijah spoke with him about his "departure" in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>



### Questions

- Jesus frequently went to solitary places to pray; this time he went up on a mountain. **Why do you think he chose such remote locations?**
- Peter, James, and John were "weighed down with sleep" (v 32). **Why can it be difficult to stay awake or focused when praying?**
- **Without any pictures, how do you think Peter and his companions knew whom Jesus was talking to?**
- **How might this experience have been helpful for Jesus? How might it have been helpful for Peter, James, and John? How do you think the rest of the disciples felt when they found out what had happened?**
- Peter, James, and John had already decided to follow Christ. **Why did God have to command them to "listen to him" (v 35)?**

1. Adapted from "Commentary on Luke 9:28–45," accessed on June 3, 2016, [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1608](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1608).

## Luke 9:37–45

### Commentary

In Jesus' day, many people and even Jesus' own disciples struggled to figure out who he was. In the transfiguration scene, Peter didn't know what he was talking about when he proposed the three dwellings, and the three disciples said nothing about the experience at the time. The father who brought his son to Jesus had the right idea of Jesus' capability, but Jesus responded with a rebuke to that "faithless and perverse generation" (v 41). We know from Luke 9:1 that the disciples had been given "power and authority" by Jesus to both cast out demons and heal the sick. Jesus' comment was not necessarily intended to be a stinging chastisement of the disciples but can also be seen in the more general context of people's unbelief. When Jesus talked about his betrayal (v 44), the disciples failed to understand and were afraid to ask him for clarification. We should not become discouraged when we have questions about our faith; the disciples struggled to understand who Jesus was and comprehend his purpose until after he returned to the Father and the Holy Spirit showed up (Acts 2). Luke was recounting history, providing context for why Jesus' disciples did not fully understand him, and laying a foundation for his readers to perceive and believe.

This passage does not ask us to explore the complexities of faith or wonder about the true nature of Jesus. Anyone with any sense should be able to figure out that Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son, and "Listen to him!" (v 35). We should not think, however, that Luke's clarity means everything is simple. What Luke also makes plain is that in the midst of a "faithless and perverse generation," following Jesus is a path to life—but a path that goes through the way of suffering and death.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Ibid.



### Questions

- What were some things the disciples must have felt when they were unable to heal the man's son? Whom do you think Jesus was talking about when he rebuked their lack of faith?
- The passage says people were "amazed" at what Jesus was doing, but he told his disciples to "let these words sink in" (vv 43–44). **Why was it important for him to emphasize his betrayal at that moment?**
- **Why would the disciples be afraid to ask Jesus what he meant?**

## 3 Experience



### Option 1

Divide into two groups, one representing the disciples who were not invited to the mountaintop and the other representing members of the family of the boy who needed the healing that the disciples were unable to provide. The family members should begin the debate by relating how they feel about the disciples' inability to provide healing. The disciples should respond to the feelings and accusations of the family members.

### Option 2

Watch together the YouTube video for Amy Grant's "Mountain Top (Live)" or Steven Curtis Chapman's "The Mountain" (see <https://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources> for links). If you have time, listen to one and discuss, then move to the other one.

First, play the song straight through. Don't write anything down; set all distractions aside and simply listen. Then play it a second time, this time listening for phrases or word pictures that are particularly meaningful. Write them down, and take turns discussing what impacted you the most. **What does the song say about the purpose of a mountaintop experience? What other insights come to light? What different kinds of impact does the song have on the various members of the group?**

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## 4 *Apply*



Spend some time in self-examination by considering your answers to the following questions. Responses can then be discussed with the rest of the group or kept private.

**When was the last time you found a quiet place and spent a significant amount of time praying?**

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**Do you regularly set aside time for prayer? What sorts of things prevent you from doing this? What are two or three things you could do to get over these “prayer hurdles”?**

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**When you pray, do you do most of the talking, or do you listen as well? Which takes more time, listening or talking? Have you ever felt that God was talking directly to you? What are some ways God might communicate with you?**





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**When was the last time you ignored God? What was the result?**

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**Have you ever been afraid to talk about your prayer life with others? Why or why not?**

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**Have you ever felt that you didn't have the power to do the things God wanted you to do, or the things people expected you to do? Explain.**

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The prayer life of a disciple of Christ is not one-dimensional. We pour out our joys and concerns, but we also should be listening as well. We will have “mountaintop” experiences that are hard to explain, even to other believers. But there are also times when we are warned of trials to come, or we experience loss or grief. The Bible says that angels once came to minister to Jesus while he was praying, because he was so weighed down with emotion.

The disciples seemed to understand that one of the keys to Jesus’ spiritual strength was his prayer life. When they had a chance to ask him to teach them one thing, they asked him to teach them to pray. Times of prayer should be a priority for believers who want to mature in their faith. Intentionally avoiding distractions or learning how to deal with them can determine how successful of a prayer life we have.

Close with an extended time of prayer. Take time to talk to God, but allow plenty of time to listen as well. And don’t be afraid of silence.

Daily Bible Readings Week 13	<i>Sunday</i> Luke 9:28–45 <i>The Inspiration of Hope</i>	<i>Monday</i> Luke 9:46–48 <i>The Greatest</i>	<i>Tuesday</i> Luke 9:49–50 <i>For or Against?</i>
	<i>Wednesday</i> Luke 9:51–62 <i>Toward Jerusalem</i>	<i>Thursday</i> Luke 10:1–12 <i>Mission of the Seventy</i>	<i>Friday</i> Luke 10:13–16 <i>Woes to Unrepentant Cities</i>
	<i>Saturday</i> Luke 10:17–24 <i>Returning and Rejoicing</i>		