

## **Christianity: Is It Your Claim, Or Character?**

### **SETTING THE TIME AND SCENE**

Luke 3:1-2

### **JOHN'S CRAZY MESSAGE**

Luke 3:3-9, Micah 6:8, Galatians 5:22, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

- ▶ Everyone needs to **get right** with God and be **cleansed**.
- ▶ Drastic **improvements** will need to take place.
- ▶ A **title alone** won't save you.

### **AN EVEN CRAZIER RESPONSE**

Luke 3:10-18

- ▶ Be **generous** and share your **wealth**.
- ▶ Be **ethical** and work with **integrity**.
- ▶ Use your **position** or **influence** to help others.

### **IS IT A CLAIM, OR A COMMITMENT?**

Luke 3:19-22, Romans 1:18-20, 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-11, 12:1-2

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of October 17, 2010

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**QUICK REVIEW:** Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there a particular point, verse or comment that caught your attention, challenged you or raised a question?

## MY STORY

1. This week we heard about the importance of being able to hear strong and challenging words from others. How do you think our culture supports this kind of communication?

Do you think people need to generally toughen up to better hear this kind of communication?

2. Character growth and change is often best seen when looking at our lives in the rearview mirror. Can you think of a time in your life when God grew your character in ways you didn't expect? If so, explain.

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend, we heard how we all need to hear the "bad news" before we hear the "Good News." Titus 3:3-7 puts into perspective who we are without Jesus and who we are with Jesus. As you read this passage, what parts of it do you relate to in your spiritual journey and understanding? Are there any that seem difficult to identify with?

### Titus 3:3-7

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. [4] But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, [5] he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, [6] whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our

Savior, [7] so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. [NIV]

2. John the Baptist made it very clear we that need to take some steps to grow our character. What insights do you see about strong character and how it's developed in the following passages?

### **2 Peter 1:3-9**

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. [4] Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

[5] For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; [6] and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; [7] and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. [8] For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. [NIV]

### **Philippians 2:12-13**

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. [NIV]

3. One of the key questions we need to ask ourselves in order to grow our character is, are we open to difficult or challenging feedback from others. What do the following verses tell us about developing our willingness to receive this kind of feedback?

#### **Proverbs 10:17**

He who heeds discipline shows the way to life,  
but whoever ignores correction leads others astray. [NIV]

#### **Proverbs 12:1**

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,  
but he who hates correction is stupid. [NIV]

#### **Proverbs 15:31**

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke  
will be at home among the wise. [NIV]

#### **Proverbs 28:23**

He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor  
than he who has a flattering tongue. [NIV]  
What has been your experience in hearing challenging words from others?

What might we do when someone is being too harsh?

### **TAKING IT HOME**

Looking back at this week's teaching, what's most important for you to remember, and why?

Prayer Requests:

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