

Week Five: *Recycling Bins and Return Lines: Holding On To What's Lasting*
Luke 2:22-35

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

Merry Christmas from your friends at Pathfinder Church! Please read Luke 2:1-20 with fresh eyes. Then spend some time in prayer, thanking God for giving us the most incredible gift ever, his son Jesus.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

1. Now that Christmas is past and all the gifts have been unwrapped and food has been eaten, has anything happened that you will never forget? Write it down here or in a private journal if you keep one.
2. Read Luke 2:21-35. What was Simeon promised he would see before he died?
3. Talk about a Christmas you would never forget! Simeon had waited his whole life for a promise and now it had been fulfilled. Simeon's life was a lot of waiting, but he certainly had something to live for. Do you have something to live for or are you simply waiting?
4. The Christmas story is the most powerful story ever told. God did do something brand new that affects even how we live today. Brainstorm some ways we can keep the joy of Christmas with us all year long.
5. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Give thanks for the blessings and joy of Christmas.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

6. What was your favorite gift that you received for Christmas? How were you able to express gratitude for your gift?
7. Read Luke 2:22-35. For what purpose was Jesus brought to the temple?
8. Read Leviticus 12:6-8 to see the law regarding the purification offering. What does it say about Mary that she did not have a lamb to offer?
9. How does that make you feel to know that Jesus' earthly family was of modest means?
10. Jesus' birth was certainly not auspicious; neither was his family. Yet they were faithful to express their gratitude to God by fulfilling the requirements of the law to the best of their ability. If you were in their shoes, would you have felt self-conscious about your gift? Would you have been tempted not to do it to avoid looking shabby? Explain your answer.

11. As you end your FIFTEEN, give thanks to God for the gifts he gives us, even when our gifts to him can sometimes be shabby.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

12. Every year at Christmas, you probably get lots of gifts that you were somewhat expecting. But then there are those great moments where a gift completely surprises you. What is a delightful, surprising gift that you've received?
13. What if someone promised you an amazing gift, but didn't tell you *when* you would get it? What would your actions and attitude be while you waited?
14. What if a year went by and you still hadn't received the gift? How would that affect your attitude?
15. Look again at Luke 2:25-32. What gift had the Holy Spirit promised Simeon? How long had he waited for it?
16. What was his attitude while he waited for the promise? What action did he take as part of his expectation?
17. As you conclude your FIFTEEN, pray and ask that God would give you an attitude like Simeon's. Ask him to help you stave off apathy and hopelessness. Ask him to keep you focused on the promises he has made and to wait for them with eager expectation.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

18. What's the longest you have ever waited for something you wanted very much: months, years, still waiting?
19. Read Luke 2:22-35. How long has Simeon been waiting to receive what God had promised? How might Simeon have kept hoping as the years went by? Do you think it takes intentionality to keep hoping?
20. If you received what you had hoped for, how long did the feeling of gratitude last after receiving it? Do you still feel as grateful now as you did when you received it?
21. Think about the favorite gift that you identified earlier this week; do you still feel the same about it? Why or why not?
22. If it takes intentionality to keep hope alive prior to receiving a gift, it will require the same intentionality to keep gratitude alive after receiving it. What are some practical steps you can take to continue to focus on gratitude?

23. As you end your final FIFTEEN this Christmas week, ask God to help you stay as filled with hope in the promises he's given you this week all year long.