

The Discipler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discipler

Luke 13

13:1-9 – Jesus is asked a question about the nature of sin;

He responds that His listeners need to repent

- *The disciple will need to be informed that, from an historical point of view, nothing is known about the two events mentioned in these verses, so there is nothing to refer them to.*
- *The disciple will also need to know that, according to Jewish theology, God punishes sinners on earth for their sins, and the greater the sin, the greater the punishment or misfortune they received. The key words for understanding this concept is “worse culprits” in verse 4.*
- *In reality, there is much discussion that can be had over these verses. Many Christians ask about—or assume—the same belief; some sins are worse than others, and therefore garner heavier punishments. For example, is homosexuality worse than adultery, or greed worse than pornography? (cf. Col. 3:5.) The Bible teaches that “...all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).*
- *Ensure that the disciple understands that sin of any kind separates one from God, and therefore repentance is the first step in restoration, no matter whether someone considers it a “small sin” or “great sin.”*
- *A good discipler can build a case for repentance by helping the disciple see the theme of repentance throughout the gospel.*
- *Make sure that the disciple understands that knowing the concept of repentance is not the same as actually repenting. Ask the disciple if he or she has repented of any sins lately. In reality, repentance should be a part of daily prayers.*

13:10-17 – Jesus heals a woman bent double for 18 years;

she is set free on the Sabbath

- *The disciple may have difficulty understanding why the synagogue official had such a difficult time with Jesus healing the woman on the Sabbath. (Refer to the commentary for the laws about healing on the Sabbath.) Make sure the disciple understands that there are no restrictions to healing on the Sabbath in the Torah itself. Those laws were established later under the body of work called “the traditions of the elders.”*
- *The discipler will want to avoid any distracting discussion on what caused this woman to be “bent double.”*
- *Make sure that the disciple understands the point Jesus is making about the hypocrisy of the Jewish leadership concerning what one could or could not do on the Sabbath (e.g., disabled woman vs. ox).*
- *To bring application to this incident, ask the disciple if he or she feels guilty about not attending church on Sunday when they choose instead to help someone or perform a good deed. Ask if they have ever heard a preacher make people feel guilty about not attending church on Sunday. (This is not to say that Christians shouldn't make every effort to attend worship services, especially in America where we still have the freedom to worship openly. Missing Sunday worship to do a good deed is one thing...laziness is another.)*
- *Ensure that the disciple sees the relationship between the concept of Sabbath “rest” and the woman being “freed” from her sickness.*

13:18-21 – Two similes regarding the *nature* of the kingdom of God;

the mustard seed and the leaven

- *See if the disciple can verbalize the two illustrations about what the kingdom of God is like. In terms of application, these illustrations can refer to the kingdom of God on earth, and they can refer to the kingdom of God in one's life.*
- *See if the disciple can find the relationship between these illustrations and the incident in the synagogue when Jesus healed the woman bent double.*

13:22-30 – Jesus teaches about the way to the kingdom of God;
it is narrow and difficult

- *This teaching by Jesus may be difficult for some disciples to understand. They may take the position that the “head of the house”—God—is being “insensitive” and uncaring toward those who “seek to enter.” Remind the disciple that the theme here is twofold: first, it is the context of the kingdom of God (v. 28); second, it is in response to one of the disciples asking, “...are there just a few who are being saved?” The key to understanding this teaching is verse 24: “Strive to enter through the narrow door.” The teaching is that many Jews will want to enter the kingdom of God, but few are willing to accept God’s condition that there is now but one way, and that is repenting of sins and accepting Jesus as their Messiah.*
- *See if the disciple can understand the meaning of verse 29. (It refers to the Gentiles entering the kingdom of God by receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior.)*
- *See if the disciple can understand the meaning of verse 30. The Jews have always considered themselves as “first” in God’s eyes, and the Gentiles as “last.” In the future, the tree of the mustard seed will be filled mostly with Gentiles. Thus, the last will be first to receive Christ, and the first, last to receive Him.*
- *In terms of application, ask the disciple if he or she has ever heard anyone say, “I believe there are many ways to God. Christianity is just one of them.” Or, “All religions lead to God.” Or, “Christians are too narrow minded. They believe that there is only one way to God.” Or, “How could a loving God possibly send anyone to hell?” How would the disciple answer each of these assertions?*
- *Ask the disciple if he or she thinks being a Christian is going to be an easy journey. The discipler may want to refer the disciple to Christians who are being persecuted, imprisoned and put to death all over the world, simply because they follow Jesus Christ.*

13:31-35 – The Pharisees try to convince Jesus not to continue His journey;
Jesus mourns for Jerusalem

- *The disciple may need some background information concerning the Old Testament prophets who were killed for teaching and preaching the truth (e.g., Isaiah & Jeremiah).*
- *See if the disciple can determine what Jesus means when He says in verse 32, “...and the third day I reach My goal.” (This statement obviously refers to His resurrection.)*
- *Ask the disciple why Jesus mourned over Jerusalem. What does this have to do with the concept of love?*
- *See if the disciple can understand verse 35. This verse is both a near and far prophecy. It refers first to Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (chapter 19) and second, to Jesus’ second coming when the Jewish nation “will look on Me whom they have pierced” and repent.*