

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

1 Corinthians 15:14-20

LEADER'S STUDY

The Reality of the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:14-20

What is happening?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian faith. But from the beginning, many have questioned it—people who don't believe in Jesus, but also those who count themselves as Christ-followers. The apostle Paul addressed the subject at great length in the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to church in Corinth. Some in the congregation accepted Christ's resurrection in theory, at least, but they disbelieved the ramifications of it. Paul starts out in verses 1-4 by reminding them of just what is the gospel they're counting on for their salvation: Jesus died; he was buried; and he was raised on the third day, just as the scriptures foretold. And then Paul gets rather blunt in verses 14-20: If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, then God is a liar and you're putting your faith in an empty falsehood.

Where is the gospel?

Everybody dies; Jesus' death, in itself, is no big deal. But Paul points out in v. 3 that Jesus' death was no ordinary event, for **he died for our sins**. Jesus was the perfect, spotless "lamb" that God provided (see Genesis 22, especially v. 8) to be the sacrifice for all the sin of the world (John 1:29). He could do this because he was holy; in his manhood, he never sinned, and God will only accept a perfect lamb for a sacrifice. The Old Testament scriptures spoke of this centuries before it happened. He was buried, because that's what happens with real human bodies that have died—and Jesus *had* a real human body. But he rose from the dead and vacated the tomb so that all who believe on him can have eternal life with him. This, too, was foretold both in the Old Testament scriptures and by Jesus himself while speaking to his disciples.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 puts the gospel in a nutshell. All this really did happen, just as God always said it would—and for the purpose He said it would happen: to pay the penalty of our sin, and to give us eternal life with Him. There's no gospel without the death. There's no gospel without the burial. And there's no gospel without the resurrection.

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: Why would people in Paul's day have a hard time believing in the resurrection? Have I ever had doubts that the resurrection aspect of the gospel is true? Have I ever felt it's over-emphasized? Why does it matter that I believe it? How is God calling me to depend on Him more? How does this change my perspective today? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on these truths as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-49; John 20:1-31; Acts 2:22-24; Romans 4:25; 2 Timothy 2:7-8. What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ 1 Corinthians 15:14-20
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation. Read it again in the NLT or other thought-for-thought version to get a different perspective.

Try to summarize this passage in your own words.

Consider the historical context:

- 1- At the time Paul wrote this letter, Corinth was a modern Roman city in Greece. Because of its location, it was a crossroads for sea traffic, where many cultures and religions mixed.
- 2- Paul brought the gospel there and spent 18 months teaching and helping the church to grow.
- 3- Because of the many influences, the church struggled to hold to the pure gospel.
- 4- Cultures change. Does God's truth change with them?
- 5- To what influences are we exposed today that might cause us to question some elements of the gospel? How can we sort out what's true and what's merely popular thinking?

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

What seems to be the main point of this passage?

In what ways do the gospel accounts (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20-21) portray Jesus' resurrection as a literal, physical rising from the dead, rather than merely a spiritual thing, or an allegory?

Why might people question that Jesus' resurrection is real?

Why does Paul see this as this such a key point?

What are some things Paul says must logically follow if the resurrection isn't real?

Do we see any examples in the Old Testament of God requiring people to believe something that didn't seem possible?

What do you learn about God from this passage?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

If God deemed Abraham righteous because he believed what He said (Genesis 15:6), what does that say about people today who believe His word? (See Romans 4:13-25.)

Do I believe in Jesus' literal, physical resurrection from the dead?

When I'm faced with something I can't accept, how do I deal with it?

If Jesus can redeem me from sin, can he also redeem me from disbelief? (See Mark 9:24.)

Is it sin to disbelieve what God says? How about when I choose my own interpretation of what He says rather than taking His word at face value? (See Gen. 3:1-6.)

What is your "I will" statement? (Encourage everyone to steer clear of "we" or "us" or "Christians" statements)

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?

Based on this passage, how should we pray?