

FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 35 | AUG 28

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



God has lovingly formed us physically with a higher purpose and an eternal plan for our bodies.

scriptures



Leviticus 18:22; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7; Psalm 119:73; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 3:4; Colossians 1:16-17; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 1:20; Ecclesiastes 7:25; Jeremiah 17:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:22-23; 1 Corinthians 15:42; Proverbs 3:33; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6; Romans 1:27

devotional questions



- We often give God thanks for our spiritual lives. Do you thank God for the gift of your physical life as well?
- How does a belief in a loving God give you hope and peace about the future that others around you don't have?
- Does this help you to have compassion for those who feel as if they live in a universe without purpose?
- For years, non-Christians have tried to poke fun at Christians for relying on emotions instead of science. Do you see any irony in that today?
- A popular phrase today is "if it feels good, do it!" How does an understanding of God's eternal purpose for the physical change your view on this phrase?
- God's Word has many guidelines for us, and it can sometimes feel like a lot. Do these studies help you see God's purpose in these guidelines?

essential doctrine



Created by God | Our Holy God not only gives us spiritual life and understanding but formed us physically with His hands (Psalm 119:73). God is the loving Creator of both our spiritual and physical selves (Hebrews 3:4). We were not created by random chance and an uncaring universe. Instead, we were created by a caring God who has plans to prosper us and give us hope (Jeremiah 29:11). Part of this plan is how He designed us physically as male and female (Genesis 1:27). We are not to use our bodies however we'd like for our momentary pleasure, but to conform to our Creator's guidance (1 Corinthians 6:18). After all, our bodies are not something we leave behind after death. God's plan is for us to live in a glorified physical version of them for all eternity (1 Corinthians 15:42). If we choose not to follow God's plan with our bodies, we will reap the consequences (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6).

Christ
Connection



Paul goes out of his way to emphasize the role of Christ's body in our reconciliation. "But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation" (Colossians 1:22). "His purpose was ... in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross" (Ephesians 2:15-16). The writer of Hebrews talks of Christ's body as the means for making us holy (Hebrews 10:10) and opening "a new and living way" for us (Hebrews 10:20). Peter speaks of Christ's bearing "our sins in this body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24) and suffering once for sins in his body (3:18).

Theologian Shawn Copeland, in an article for *America* magazine, beautifully summarizes: "The incarnation crowns God's affirmation of the physical body (Matthew 1:20-25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14; Romans 1:3). The body of Jesus, as Tertullian suggests, is the hinge of salvation; without the enfleshing of the Word, divine redemptive activity in the world would be precluded."

discussion
questions



- Is it an acceptable view at your school to publicly state that you think homosexuality is wrong? Why or why not?
 - If you believed that your body was formed by random chance, does it matter how you use it?
 - If you believe that your body was formed by a loving Creator who had an eternal purpose for it, does that cause you to treat it differently?
 - How does a belief in a loving God give you hope and peace about the future that others around you don't have?
 - Have you ever been made fun of for being a Christian by people who say they put their trust in science? Do you see any irony in that today?
 - God's Word has many guidelines for us, and it can sometimes feel like a lot. Do the studies we looked at today help you see God's purpose in these guidelines?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 36 | SEP 4

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



The Church should be the best place to voice our doubts. Deconstructing Christianity does not always end in disbelief; it can lead to a stronger, reconstructed faith.

devotional questions



- List and identify fruit in your life that points to your relationship with Christ. Thank Him for this!
- How can we, as believers, combat doubt?
- Are there people in your life to whom you can ask questions? If so, who are they?
- If not, what steps do you need to take to find counsel?
- Are you seeking the Lord, or are you completing a task?
- “What if I don’t have all the answers?”
- “What if I end up causing them to stumble more?”
- Give an example of someone showing another person “just grace” and “just truth.” How can we, as believers, tangibly show grace and truth together?

essential doctrine



Eternal Security | John 10:28 – “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

We believe that once a person genuinely chooses to trust in the Lord, he or she is marked by the Holy Spirit forever. Because we haven’t done anything to earn our salvation (Ephesians 2:8), we cannot do anything to lose our salvation. Therefore, we can conclude that if someone makes an authentic profession of faith, he or she is “once (truly) saved, always saved.”

Christ Connection



By coming down to earth, living the perfect example, and overcoming death, Jesus has already proven himself. However, in deconstruction, we often fear that our doubts will not be satisfied, and our faith is not as solid as we once thought. However, if we truly believe that He is “the way, the truth, and the life,” we are promised a solid foundation that can never be broken. If, however, there was never a point of true decision, then we are more likely to find holes and doubts; the foundation has never been laid! Because salvation and our point of justification was never earned, we are not powerful enough to break His grip from our lives.

in defense



While it would be nice to know all the answers to all of life's deepest questions, we, as human beings, are limited in knowledge. However, Scripture makes it clear that God is limitless! Therefore, relying on the Holy Spirit and praying for wisdom is the best way to guide others during deconstruction. Rather than shouting truth without grace or grace without truth, we should look to Jesus' example and love others by giving a balance of both.

discussion
questions



- Have you ever seen someone fall from the faith?
 - How did this make you feel?
 - What is the difference between deconstruction and deconversion?
 - Are we as Christians able to voice our doubts and concerns?
 - If so, where should we voice them?
 - Where should we go to find answers to our questions?
 - Will God always answer our questions?
 - How do we remain confident despite not knowing all the answers?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 37 | SEP 11

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point



Worldliness leads to brokenness.

devotional questions



- When have you seen yourself frustrated or angry recently?
 - What has been the cause of it?
 - Do you trust God?
 - Do you submit to God's care for your life?
 - In what ways have you ever doubted, denied, disobeyed, or disregarded God?
 - How can you combat the Enemy's lies?
 - When is the last time that you have felt "filled up" by your time with God?
 - When is the last time you have talked with God honestly about your heart?
-

essential doctrine



Temptations | For the follower of Christ, your desires are at war within you. Desires between the flesh, and the Holy Spirit. If we have friendship with the world and its desires, we become enemies of God. If we become friends with God, we become enemies of the world. Feeding the desires within our broken nature leave us with no peace. Only drawing near to God and resisting the Devil will allow you to re-find your internal and external peace.

Christ Connection



Since Christ died for us, we get to live for Him. The apostle Paul said, "It is not I who live but Christ in me." Was Paul as perfect as Jesus after he became a Christian? Of course not! When God looked at Paul, He saw Jesus because Christ lived in Paul, but Paul wasn't perfect after entering into a relationship with Christ. Paul even said that "Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am the most" (1 Timothy 1:15). So, Paul was covered in the blood of Christ, but still a sinner. This is the battle that wages on within us that James in his chapter 4 talks about. The battle between your flesh and Christ in you gives you the strength not to give in to sin.

Without Christ, we would be stuck, "dead in our trespasses," left with no hope for

reconciliation with God, but because of Jesus we can overcome our sin on earth as we wait for Jesus to come back. Without Christ's death, burial and Resurrection, there would be no hope in overcoming the sin that wrecks our lives. Since Christ did come, we are able to draw near to God and find the strength to resist the Devil and pursue holiness. If not, it leaves us frustrated and anxious.

discussion
questions



- What is the one thing for which you would sacrifice something - to have right now?
 - What is something you find yourself thinking about a lot?
 - Is the thing you think most about, something you would be comfortable with everyone's knowing about?
 - How do you think you submit yourself to God?
 - How do you think you can draw near to God?
 - In what ways does the Enemy trip you up most?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 38 | SEP 18



main point >> Jesus has power and authority over evil spirits.

scriptures >> Luke 8:26-39

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devo.

essential doctrine >> **Demons** | Demons are angelic beings who sinned against God and now continually work evil in the world today (Job 1:6; Zechariah 3:1; Luke 10:18). Demons oppose God and seek to destroy His work, as seen in the Bible's description of Satan, the head of demons, who seeks to "steal, kill, and destroy." Though demons have power, they are limited by God's control and can only act within the constraints of what God permits. In the end, all the demons will be cast into the lake of fire, for which it was originally created.

Christ Connection >> When Jesus approached the man who was possessed by demons, even the demons recognized His authority. Jesus drove the demons out of the man, but when the people saw His authority, they were afraid and drove Him off. Jesus would later demonstrate His authority over sin and evil in a greater way through His Crucifixion and Resurrection. While many continue to reject Him, one day every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11).

in defense >> The demons identifying themselves as "Legion" indicated the strength of the demons. A Roman military legion consisted of about 6,000 soldiers (the number of pigs in Mark 5:13). The name Legion thus serves to indicate a large number (because we are many), explains the supernatural strength of the man, and magnifies the fact that Jesus was the more powerful One (Mark 1:7; 3:27). Furthermore, pigs were unclean to Jews, and herding them was forbidden (Leviticus 11:7; Deuteronomy 14:8). The large

herd reminds us that this event took place in a Gentile area (Mark 5:11). The unclean spirits begged Jesus not to send them out of the region (Mark 5:10), and then, they begged to be sent into unclean animals (Mark 5:12).

discussion
questions



- What do you think causes us to be afraid of things we don't understand? Why do you think we fear evil despite God's command not to?
 - What does a faith response to the authority of Jesus look like, as opposed to the forced submission displayed by the demons?
 - How might the authority and power of Jesus cause fear in people today?
 - What are some radical changes you've seen in the lives of people who trust in Jesus?
 - What is your level of desire to walk daily with the Savior, Jesus Christ?
 - What does this account teach about the difference between fear and faith?
 - How does faith lead us into a deeper and richer relationship with Jesus?
 - What are some examples of demonic activity today?
 - What have you found helpful in your own spiritual journey to resist the schemes of the Devil?
 - How does Jesus' instructions to the man to go and spread the good news apply to us?
 - How does this account challenge us to be bold and not shy away from people who may be labeled as "difficult" or on the fringes of society?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 39 | SEP 25



main point



Jesus teaches us to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others.

scriptures



John 6:4-14, 26-27,32-35

devotional questions



Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine



Social Concern | All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in their own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the Spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends, Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth (Micah 6:8; Ephesians 6:5-9; 1 Thessalonians 3:12).

Christ Connection



When the Israelites were hungry in the wilderness, God provided manna from heaven. Jesus is the greater Moses, the One who not only provides bread from heaven but who also speaks of Himself as the bread who gives life to the world.

discussion
questions



- What are some reasons we fail to notice the needs of others?
 - What are some reasons we might refuse to show compassion to others? Are any of these justified? Why or why not?
 - What are some additional ways you and your group can serve others to meet their needs?
 - What are some areas in your life that Jesus could use to be a blessing to both you and others?
 - What are some ways we might come to Christ for the bread He can provide instead of the bread that He is?
 - What is the danger of coming to God for what He can give and not for who He is?
 - How does this account teach us that the ultimate longing of our hearts is found in Christ alone?
 - What does it look like in the life of a person who finds Jesus more satisfying than the things of this world?
 - Have you experienced a deep soul-satisfaction in Jesus? If not, pray and ask Jesus to help you experience Him in that way.
 - What does this account teach us about compassion?
 - What are some recent situations where you have felt compassion? How can you act on those feelings?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 40 | OCT 2



main point >> Jesus is in control over all of life's storms.

scriptures >> Matthew 14:22-36

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **Omnipotence** | God is all-powerful: there is nothing God cannot do as long as it does not contradict His own nature or law. God has power and authority over the universe He created, from the largest solar system to the smallest particle. Affirming that God is all-powerful does not mean that God can sin - since that would go against His perfect moral nature. As Christians, we rest in the belief that the God who has all power is good, and we gain great comfort by knowing that an all-powerful God is working for our good and joy.

Christ Connection >> Jesus demonstrated that He has sovereign power over nature by walking on water and calming the storm. Through His miracles, teaching and most clearly His death and Resurrection, Jesus proved Himself to be worthy of our faith and worship. He alone is able to save.

discussion questions >>

- What benefits have you experienced from spending time alone praying to God?
- When have you had to endure a struggle in your life that God did not immediately resolve? How were you challenged to grow in your faith through that struggle?
- How is the sovereignty of God a comfort to you as a Christian?
- In moments of trial or tragedy, to what or whom are you tempted to turn for help or security instead of Jesus?
- Why does the recognition of our own spiritual sickness and our need for Jesus compel us to tell others about Him?

- What are some storms we face in life today?
 - What can we learn from this narrative when facing our own storm in life?
 - How does Peter's request while sinking serve as a model for us when we become overwhelmed with life's storms?
 - What are some current storms where Jesus is calling you to step out in faith?
 - How does this session challenge us when it comes to sharing Jesus with others?
 - How does this account challenge our own prayer life?
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 41 | OCT 9



main point >> One day Jesus' full glory will be displayed for all to see.

scriptures >> Matthew 17:1-13

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **Christ's Exaltation** | Whereas the death of Christ was the ultimate example of His humiliation, the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is the first and glorious example of Christ's exaltation. Christ was exalted when God raised Him from the dead, and Christ was exalted when He ascended to the Father's right hand. He will be exalted by all creation when He returns. All these aspects work together to magnify the glory and worth of Christ, resulting in the praise of the glory of His grace in rescuing sinners.

Christ Connection >> At the Transfiguration, the Son of God's glory was revealed more fully to Peter, James and John. The Transfiguration foreshadowed Jesus' death, Resurrection, and Ascension (Luke 9:31) when He would depart and return to His place of glory. We live with the hope that one day Jesus will return in full glory to make all things new.

in defense >> "When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.' Had the story been made up by the disciples in order to convince the early Christians that Jesus was really God, it is unlikely that they would have portrayed themselves in such a negative light! The importance of this incident should not be underrated, because years later, Peter referred to it as a key moment in Jesus' self-revelation [in 2 Peter 1:16-18]."—David Platt, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Matthew* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013), 228-29.

discussion
questions



- What do you imagine the three disciples were thinking and feeling as they witnessed this event before their eyes?
 - How does the fact that Moses died before reaching the Promised Land demonstrate that Jesus is greater than Moses?
 - In what ways is it good news that God is different than us?
 - Do you look forward to Jesus' return? Why or why not?
 - How does hearing Jesus' connection between Elijah and John the Baptist help you to see that Jesus is the central character of the Bible's storyline?
 - How would you summarize some of the biblical insights from this account?
 - How could you use this account when explaining to a friend how the Old Testament points to Jesus?
 - Why should Matthew 17:7 be a comfort for us today?
 - What are some fears you are struggling with today? How do they contribute to your knowing that Jesus is near?
 - Why should this account motivate us toward missions?
 - Whom are you actively sharing the Gospel with in your life now? If you aren't, why not?
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 42 | OCT 16



main point >> Jesus' parables teach us what the kingdom of heaven is like.

scriptures >> Matthew 12:1-9, 31-33, 44-46

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **Church and Kingdom** | The Church and the kingdom of God are closely related, though not identical. When the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it is referring to the reign of God in the world. The Church is the people of God who live under His loving rule now, anticipating the full manifestation of God's kingdom in the future. The Church's mission is to witness to God's kingdom, proclaiming God's message of salvation through Christ and demonstrating the power of the Gospel through good works so that others may be brought to live under God's reign.

Christ Connection >> Jesus used parables to describe the nature of God's kingdom on earth. Word of the kingdom is sown broadly and will be received differently based on the condition of one's heart. For those with hearts of fertile soil, the Word yields extraordinary fruitfulness causing the kingdom to grow and extend into all the world. When Jesus returns, we will experience the full manifestation of God's kingdom.

discussion questions >>

- What are some characteristics of a heart receptive to the good news of the Gospel? How would you characterize the other types of soil Jesus describes in the parable?
- Which of the three soils described in this parable have you experienced when sharing the Gospel? Explain.
- What are some other biblical stories you can think of where God took something

(or someone) little and turned it (or the person) into a testimony of His own greatness?

- What are some temporary joys we try to find lasting satisfaction in today? Why is Jesus better than these?
 - What rivals Christ for the number-one place in your heart? How can you place Him first in every area of your life?
 - Which of the three parables discussed stands out to you most? Why?
 - How does the parable of the hidden treasure and pearl of great price challenge us to think differently about where true and ultimate satisfaction and joy are found?
 - How does the parable of the four soils challenge us on a personal level?
 - What are some ways we can cultivate our hearts in hopes that God's Word would fall on good soil when we hear it?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 43 | OCT 23



main point >> God's love and forgiveness extend to any who repents of his or her sin and self-righteousness.

scriptures >> Luke 15:11-13,17-32

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **God Is Gracious** | God's nature is to delight in giving unmerited favor to those who are undeserving (Ephesians 2:8-9). His grace toward sinners is found most clearly in the salvation He has provided through Christ. Because of sin, humanity is undeserving of salvation – all of us have turned our backs on God, and as a result, we deserve death (Romans 6:23). However, instead of leaving people in their sins, God has demonstrated His graciousness by providing atonement and forgiveness for our sins through the death and Resurrection of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Christ Connection >> The Pharisees and scribes criticized Jesus for welcoming sinners and dining with them. In response, Jesus told a story of a father longing for and celebrating his wayward son's return. This story illustrates God's joy over sinners coming to repentance and trusting in Jesus, the Savior, who came to seek and save the lost.

discussion questions >>

- Think of when you received something you'd wanted for a long time only to find it didn't satisfy. Why didn't it deliver on the promise?
- Like the prodigal son, have you come to the realization that the things of this world are unable to give us lasting fulfillment, and that lasting fulfillment can only be found in Jesus? If so, what were the circumstances surrounding that realization?
- Make a list of several characteristics communicated by the father's actions in this parable. How are these characteristics also true of God?

- How does it make you feel knowing that God graciously forgives when you repent from your sin?
 - How can our “good deeds” be a way of walling ourselves off from a relationship with God?
 - If you were to summarize the essence of the story in your own words, what would you say?
 - Why is it important to emphasize the Father’s desire to restore the relationship with both of his sons?
 - Why do you think the story of the prodigal son is so relevant for today?
 - What does the prodigal’s story teach us about pursuing a pleasure-seeking lifestyle?
 - Like the prodigal son, what are some ways we might waste God’s good gifts in our own lives?
 - What are some ways we can better utilize His gifts beginning this week?
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 44 | OCT 30



main point >> Jesus offers words of eternal life.

scriptures >> John 6:52-69

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **God Is Truthful** | The Scriptures are clear that in God there is no falsehood (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). God represents things as they really are. Everything He says can be trusted because God guarantees the truth of everything He tells us. The call for humans to be honest and not to bear false witness is rooted in the utter truthfulness of our Creator. Telling the truth is one way we bear the image of God, whose Son is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

Christ Connection >> Jesus' teachings about eating His flesh and drinking His blood were difficult to understand. Many turned away from Jesus because of these words, but it is in them that we find eternal life made known to us in Jesus' death and Resurrection.

in defense >> "Even Jesus' disciples were offended by such talk. But Jesus explained that He was talking spiritually. Unaided by the Spirit, human reason cannot discern spiritual truth. The Jews wrongly believed study of Scripture (see 5:39) and doing 'works of God' (see 6:27-29) were sufficient for spiritual understanding.... Many of Jesus' disciples turned from Him at this point, which is a watershed in John's Gospel. But Jesus was not surprised by the defection."—Andreas Köstenberger, "John," CSB Study Bible (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1679.

discussion
questions



- In what ways are you sometimes tempted to trust in your good efforts for assurance of salvation?
 - Why do we find it so offensive to hear that we don't have what it takes to save ourselves?
 - If salvation is purely a gift of grace, how should this affect our treatment of those who don't know Jesus?
 - What in your life tempts you as a rival of Christ for your affections and attention?
 - How would you reply if someone asked you why following Jesus is worth it, even if you lose everything else in this life as a result?
 - How does this account challenge the world's perspective that one can get to God in different ways?
 - What are some verses we can use to lovingly communicate to others the fact that Jesus is the only way to God?
 - How does this account teach us to think about salvation as a gift from God and not something given because of good works?
 - Why is salvation by grace through faith better news than salvation by works?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 45 | NOV 6



main point >> Jesus grieves over death and foreshadows His own Resurrection.

scriptures >> John 11:20-27,32-37,41-44

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **Resurrection** | Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isaiah 26:19; Ezekiel 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it will take place at the future return of Christ. Because Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be similar in nature, meaning it will be both bodily and glorious (Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in the death and Resurrection of Christ.

Christ Connection >> When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Because Jesus died on the Cross and rose from the dead, we have full assurance that Jesus will one day defeat death forever and resurrect us from the dead.

in defense >> "Jesus identifies with us in our pain and loss. He comes to us in our weakness and brokenness. Though he knew he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, Jesus wept when he saw the tears of Mary and her companions. This is Jesus being truly human. As God incarnate, Jesus shows us what He, as God, created man to be - a wholehearted lover of God and a compassionate lover of fellow image-bearers - summarized in the two great commandments (Matthew 22:34-40). But as the incarnate God, Jesus' tears in front of Lazarus's tomb are of a different order. This is Jesus feeling the weight of the Fall - the violation and disintegration of the way

things were meant to be. His holy tears are those of the Creator grieving over the forfeiture of beauty through the intrusion of sin and death. Once again, in the incarnate Lord, we see the heart of the Lamb who would offer his life to overcome our sin and death.”—Scotty Smith, “John,” Gospel Transformation Bible (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1429.

discussion
questions



- What’s so surprising about Jesus’ delay?
 - Why should we be mindful of God’s perfect timing when it comes to difficult circumstances?
 - What does the fact that Jesus wept communicate about His character?
 - In what ways does it comfort you to know that Jesus grieves death?
 - How will the truth of Jesus’ love for you and His gift of salvation affect the way you respond to difficulties in your life today?
 - How does the story of Lazarus’ resurrection challenge us to think about God’s timing in our lives?
 - How does our trust in God’s timing and goodness during tragic moments bring Him glory?
 - In what ways does “resurrection” language apply to us spiritually when we are saved?
 - How can we see the promise of both spiritual and physical resurrection in this passage?
 - How does this account serve as an example of how we should respond to those around us who are hurting?
 - What are some practical ways we can serve people in our lives today who are grieving?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 46 | NOV 13



main point



Worship is not simply something we do, but who we are.

devotional questions



- What have you worshipped the most this week?
 - How does understanding more about God inspire further worship of Him?
 - What steps do you have in place to fight the temptation to worship things other than God?
 - How have the Hebrew words for worship changed your view of worship?
 - How can you be bold in worship today?
-

essential doctrine



Worship | Worship is the act of giving honor and praise to someone or something. We are designed to give praise and honor to God, but the temptation of the world – the plan of Satan – is to distract us with the things of this world and lure us into worshipping creation rather than the Creator. We worship God for two reasons – what He has made and what He has done. He is worthy of our praise, which includes our time, talent and treasures.

Christ Connection



The death, burial and Resurrection of Christ provides us the means and the reason to worship God. Worship is a direct response to salvation. Therefore, Christ is our means and motivation to give God praise.

in defense



While worship can be an emotional experience for many of us, it is not driven by our emotions or our circumstances. It is driven by the truth of who God is. God is immutable – never changing, therefore wherever the setting of worship is, we should give God the same honor and praise.

discussion
questions



- What is worship?
 - Why do we worship?
 - How has your view of worship been affected by our lesson today?
 - Have you ever been tempted to view worship as only music or song?
 - Looking at how you use your time, talent and treasure, what are you tempted to worship the most instead of God?
 - What is the best way you personally worship?
 - What steps will you take to realign your worship back to God this week?
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 47 | NOV 20



main point



Jesus came to restore true worship.

scriptures



Luke 19:35-46

devotional questions



Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine



Worship | While many reduce worship to an event or the singing of worship songs, worship is first and foremost something of the heart and extends to all areas of life. The aim and focus of worship is God, giving Him the exact due of praise and adoration that He deserves. Worship should be carried out not only at a personal level within a Christian's life but also in joining with other Christians in the corporate act of worship and stewarding our gifts for the glory of God. Corporate worship serves to edify and strengthen other Christians, but it also serves as a witness to non-believers of the greatness of God.

Christ Connection



When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, He fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah and proclaimed He was the One who fulfilled them. The people praised Jesus, but they praised Him for the wrong reasons. In cleansing the temple, Jesus demonstrated how He would bring about true worship through offering His own body as a temple to be destroyed and then raised again.

in defense



Our culture views Jesus as a caricature; He is often pictured kneeling beside a group of children, carrying a sheep, or hugging a stranger. He is always happy and smiling. The idea of Jesus' getting mad or sad is completely foreign to the version of the happy, hippy Jesus our culture often portrays.

Unlike these cultural caricatures, Scripture presents a Jesus of passion and humanity. However, unlike our frustration with school or responsibilities, Christ's frustration

toward the businessmen dishonoring the temple came from a place of holy discontentment. Jesus was not offering a critique of fair trade or making a statement on economic policy, but was instead declaring that this was neither the time nor the place to be selling. He turned the temple upside down as a sign of cleansing, much as a person might take all the clothes out of a drawer in order to rearrange a dresser.

Jesus not only turned the tables on the moneychangers, but also on the hopes and expectations of the people. For as quickly as Jesus entered the temple, He departed as a sign that the prophecy was not yet fulfilled. Something else would have to happen before God and man could dwell together.

discussion
questions



- Why is Jesus deserving of your affection and praise?
- What are some things we are tempted to worship in place of Jesus?
- How should Jesus' weeping for Jerusalem affect our perspective of sinners who do not know Jesus by faith?
- What are some ways we may hinder others in their worship of God?
- Does Jesus' reaction surprise you? Why or why not? How would you have responded if you were with Jesus or in the temple when this occurred?
- Why do you think it is important that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah?
- Why should fulfilled prophecy strengthen our faith in who Jesus is?
- What does the Bible say in regard to the new temple where God's Spirit dwells (see 1 Corinthians 3:16)?
- Are there any "tables" in your life that need to be "thrown over" by Jesus? Why or why not? If so, how do you plan on doing so in the days ahead?
- How does this account challenge us to live out our faith before others?
- How will you demonstrate that King Jesus is worthy of your worship this week?

FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 48 | NOV 27

P R E S T O N W O O D S T U D E N T S



main point >> Jesus models what it means to live under the authority of God's Word.

scriptures >> Mark 12:19-37

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **Authority of Scripture** | Since the Bible is the inspired Word of God, God's special revelation to humanity, the Bible is the ultimate standard of authority for the Christian. Because it is truthful in everything that it teaches, Scripture is humanity's source for wisdom, instructing us on how to live life well to the glory of God. Submitting to the authority of Scripture means that we are to believe and obey God by believing and obeying His Word.

Christ Connection >> The religious leaders questioned Jesus to trap Him in His words, but each time, Jesus answered them from the authority of God's Word, and they could not respond. Jesus is the Word of God who came to reveal God perfectly to us. He has all authority in heaven and on earth.

in defense >> Jesus' words in verse 25 do not teach that deceased loved ones become guardian angels, as people often say to comfort those who are grieving. Rather, Jesus referenced the angels to emphasize that marriage won't apply in the afterlife, just as it doesn't for the angels now.

discussion
questions



- Have you ever seen someone ask a deceitful or unfair question? What did that look like?
 - Why is it always a good thing to begin our answer to something by starting first with Scripture?
 - What are some Old Testament commands you would identify as most important?
 - Why was this a perfect response on the part of Jesus? How are the two commandments connected?
 - What does it look like for you to declare Jesus as Lord in your everyday life?
 - How does this session challenge our thinking about Scripture?
 - What are some ways you can give more priority to God's Word in your life?
 - Why is it important to emphasize that our love for God and others first begins with God's love for us?
 - Why should our love for others flow out of our love for God?
 - What are some practical ways this session challenges us to live?
 - What are some ways we can love others around us?
-

FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 49 | DEC 4



main point



The Lord's Supper points to Jesus' sacrifice for sins.

scriptures



Luke 22:14-23

devotional questions



Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine



Lord's Supper | The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His Second Coming (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Christ Connection



Thousands of years before Jesus came, God made a covenant with Israel and sealed it with sacrifice. When the people of God broke the covenant and worshipped false gods, God promised to enact a new covenant in which He would forgive sins and write His law on His people's hearts. At the Last Supper, Jesus explained that His sacrificial death would establish this new covenant and bring forgiveness of sins.

discussion questions



- Do you look forward to the full arrival of God's future kingdom? Why or why not?
- When have you felt the deep desire, or need, for God's kingdom? For Jesus?
- What are some holidays that have special meaning for you?
- Why is it important that we remember what Jesus has done for us?
- How does the Lord's Supper provide a picture of salvation in Christ?
- What are some ways you can make sure the Lord's Supper doesn't become a mere church ritual you do but a meaningful remembrance of Jesus and what He has done?

- How would you describe to an unchurched friend the meaning of the Lord's Supper?
 - How can the Lord's Supper encourage believers in their faith?
 - How does this session give you a renewed understanding of the Lord's Supper?
 - How does the Lord's Supper challenge us to serve others?
 - Whom will you share the Gospel with in hopes that others will hear and believe and join in the celebration of Jesus?
-

FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 50 | DEC 11



main point



Jesus was sent by the Father to face judgment for our sins.

scriptures



Mark 14:32-36, 43-49, 53, 60-64

devotional
questions

Take from each day's devos.

essential
doctrine

God Is Unchanging | God's being and attributes, along with the ethical commitments He has given, cannot change. This means, among other things, that God is committed to being God and that He is the same yesterday, today and forever. God's unchanging nature is good news for Christians, for it guarantees that God does not change His mind or go back on His promises. Christians can find assurance and peace of mind in knowing that the God who brought them out of darkness into His marvelous light is the God who will carry them through into eternity.

Christ
Connection

In the Garden of Eden, Adam failed to resist the serpent and chose instead to follow His way over God's. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, the second Adam, submitted fully to His Father's purpose and plan and willingly submitted to death upon the Cross. Jesus demonstrated His identity as the Son of God through both His words and actions when He was betrayed, arrested, and put on trial.

discussion
questions

- What does this scene teach us about the humanity of Jesus? Why is it important to affirm Jesus' humanity?
- What does Jesus' commitment to the Father's plan teach us about Him?
- What are some ways you have witnessed betrayal? How do people usually respond to betrayal?

- Why do the promises of God in Scripture have the ability to ground us during times of emotional crisis?
 - What are some occasions in our own lives in which we can follow Jesus' example and show restraint even when we are persecuted or treated unfairly for our faith?
 - What does this account teach us about the wrath of God against sin?
 - What does this account teach us about the love of God for sinners?
 - How does Jesus' response in the face of suffering show us how to respond to our suffering?
 - What should our response be to Jesus' obedience to the Father's plan?
 - What are some Christian topics that the larger culture would prefer Christians not speak about?
 - How does this lesson challenge our mindset when dealing with opposition from the culture?
 - How would you describe to an unchurched friend the meaning of the Lord's Supper?
 - How can the Lord's Supper encourage believers in their faith?
 - How does this session give you a renewed understanding of the Lord's Supper?
 - How does the Lord's Supper challenge us to serve others?
 - Whom will you share the Gospel with in hopes that others will hear and believe and join in the celebration of Jesus?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 51 | DEC 18



main point >> Jesus willingly took upon Himself the punishment for sin.

scriptures >> Mark 15:6, 11-20, 33-39

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **Aspects of the Atonement** | Christ's substitutionary death on our behalf stands at the center of His atoning work. Without this work, there is no Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3). While this substitutionary aspect is central to the atonement, His death also supremely demonstrates God's love for sinners (John 15:13; 1 John 4:10). It shows us how seriously God takes sin. It satisfies every requirement for God to be able to forgive the failures of humanity. And it puts Christ's cosmic victory over sin, Satan and death on display through His Resurrection (Colossians 2:15). Every aspect of the atonement should inspire gratitude, praise and a desire for obedience, because it is only through Christ that we are reconciled.

Christ Connection >> Unjustly condemned to death, Jesus willingly took up His Cross and suffered the judgment our sins deserve. At the moment He died, the curtain in the temple sanctuary was torn in two, signifying that sinners have access to God through the blood of Christ. The Crucifixion of Jesus is the center of history, revealing God's holiness and justice, our sinfulness and unrighteousness, and Christ's humility and love.

in defense >> Early historians like Thallus and Julius Africanus documented this mysterious phenomenon that left the world scratching their heads in confusion.

discussion
questions



- How do you think Barabbas responded to this turn of events in his favor? How should we respond to Jesus' taking our place?
 - How do the details surrounding Jesus' physical torture and Crucifixion affect you?
 - What are some ways Christians might be guilty of mocking Jesus in their lives today?
 - How does it affect you to know Jesus was forsaken and rejected so that you could have forgiveness for your sins?
 - What does the brutality of the Cross tell you about the gravity of our sin? What does it say about the glory of God's grace?
 - How is the Crucifixion good news in light of how horrific it was?
 - How does Jesus' sacrifice shed light on the nature of our sin?
 - How does knowing the extent of Jesus' sacrifice increase your love for Him?
 - How does it affect you to know Jesus bore the punishment our sins deserved?
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FALL 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK 52 | DEC 25



main point >> Jesus willingly took upon Himself the punishment for sin.

scriptures >> John 1:10-18

devotional questions >> Take from each day's devos.

essential doctrine >> **Adoption** | Adoption into God's family is one of the positive benefits of justification. Not only are we pardoned from the judgment against us through justification, but we also experience a change of identity - we become children of God (John 1:12; Galatians 4:5). Through adoption, our relationship with God, which was once lost through the Fall, is now restored, resulting in the benefits of being an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ (Romans 8:16-17).

Christ Connection >> The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the One who came to reveal God perfectly to us and give eternal life to all who believe in Him.

in defense >> Jesus wasn't born just anywhere - He was born in "the city of David, which is called Bethlehem." This fact was foretold by the prophet Micah 800 years earlier (Micah 5:2). When the Roman Empire required that all people travel to the towns of their ancestors, Joseph traveled with Mary approximately 90 miles from their hometown of Nazareth south to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-3). Once Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, they found that "there was no guest room available for them." Most people in Bethlehem lived in one-room homes, and the animals' feeding troughs

were typically in the family's living area. Although the animals likely stayed outside, accommodations were made in the wall for an animal to stick his head in to eat from the trough. Larger homes had an adjoining room where guests could sleep. So, the young couple likely slept in the living area and when Jesus was born; His first crib was an inglorious feeding trough.

discussion
questions



- When have you wanted to help someone (or even an animal), but couldn't help that person to understand why or how?
 - Why was it necessary that God became one of us?
 - How is the character and nature of God visible in the life of Jesus?
 - When has your own joy increased as you have lived for God and not yourself?
 - Considering our salvation is completely of grace and entirely because of Christ, how does this move you to worship?
 - What does it mean that grace and truth came through Jesus, as compared with the Law?
 - How did Jesus serve as the perfect picture of God?
 - How are you tempted to only know the truth instead of serving God from the heart?
 - How is God calling to you show His grace to others in your life?
 - What is something specific in God's Word that you need to live out?
 - How are you daily walking in obedience to God's Word?
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