

BODY *of* PROOF

LEADER GUIDE

Group Session 1: Replacing My “If Onlys” with “If Jesus”

KEY SCRIPTURE

John 11:1-44

KEY POINT

I will live by “if Jesus,” not “if only.”

Outline

The Resurrection is not an abstract belief or just another fact of history but a person—Jesus Christ. After the death of Martha’s brother Lazarus, Jesus urged her to make the leap of faith and place her hope in Him. He challenged her to trust in His resurrection power and exchange her “if only” for an “if Jesus.”

1. Even the closest friends of Jesus experience pain and adversity (vv. 1-5).
2. Jesus is resourceful because He is the source (v. 3).
3. Instead of being stuck in the past, Jesus wants us to look to the future (vv. 9-10).
4. The Christian lives and dies in hope; death is now no more than sleep, and there is nothing to fear (v. 11).
5. Faith trusts God through uncertainty (v. 16).
6. Faith is not what I feel; faith is what I believe (v. 25).

Faith is taking God at His Word and acting accordingly. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is not based on feelings but on faith, which is based on the facts of Scripture.

Before the Session:

1. Review the group content, as well as the video teaching session.
2. Read and review the central passage of Scripture to prepare yourself for the group discussion.
3. Decide if you’re going to watch the video teaching together as a group or individually before you come to the group session, and communicate accordingly with the group. Each book includes codes to access the video teaching. Each video is 10-15 minutes long.
4. Consider whether you’re going to watch the Two-Minute Truths that provide background on the resurrection sites in the study together as part of the group experience or send them to group members throughout the week.
5. Pray for all group members by name. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw people to the group who need to hear and receive the truth of the resurrection.
6. Review the group study questions, and think through how you would answer. Adapt the questions in a way that will best help your group understand the content and participate.

BODY *of* PROOF

During the Session

1. Welcome the group to the study, and explain that for the next four weeks, we are going to be considering the resurrection of Jesus together and looking at how that event provides us with hope and confidence today.
2. Highlight that the resurrection is a historical event—it is a fact. Because it is a fact, we approach it as true, and because it is true, it changes everything about the way we live.
3. Read the Scripture, and talk about relevant details about Bethany, either by watching the videos provided through the QR code on page 17 in the *Book of Proof Bible Study* or by sharing what you've learned.
4. Point out that the resurrection of Jesus gives us hope through uncertainty. Just as Jesus raised Lazarus, He will also raise us.
5. Press the closing point that *Faith is taking God at His Word and acting accordingly*.
6. Explain the remaining sections of each session. Each week includes five days of personal study that help participants understand and apply what the Bible teaches about the resurrection. These weekly devotions are complementary to the group Bible study.
7. Close in prayer.
8. Remind the group to complete the five days of personal study that examine Jesus's teaching that He would die and rise on the third day.

After the Session

Consider meeting in groups of two or three to discuss and review the personal study. Here are a few questions to ask during that time. (Alternatively, you might consider sending these questions to the group in a text or email for group members to consider on their own.)

Why should the fact that Jesus rose from the grave provide us with hope?

How is the story of Lazarus compelling you to place your hope in Jesus?

What "if onlys" are you exchanging for "if Jesus"?

Prayer

Pray for your group members to grasp the truth of the resurrection.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill them with the hope the resurrection provides.

Ask God to use your group to tell other people about the hope they have in Jesus.

BODY *of* PROOF

Group Session 2: Jesus Rebuilds and Restores the Wrecks of My Life

KEY SCRIPTURE

John 2:13-22

KEY POINT

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus rebuilds and restores all the wrecks in my life.

Outline

The temple was the center of Jewish life because it was the place where heaven and earth met. When Jesus overturned the money changing tables in the temple, He rejected the hypocrisy and legalism and promised to provide a new future through His resurrection. In His death and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled all the temple was designed to provide. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus rebuilds and restores all the wrecks in my life.

1. Jesus extends grace to all of us.
2. The resurrection verified that everything Jesus said was true.
3. Jesus has the power to rebuild the wrecks in our lives.

Jesus wants us to have peace. The resurrection secures that peace for us. When we place our trust in God, He can give us peace even when we feel pressure.

Before the Session:

1. Review the group content, as well as the video teaching session.
2. Prayerfully consider if there is someone you need to invite to the group.
3. Read and review the central passage of Scripture to prepare yourself for the group discussion.
4. Pray for all group members by name. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw people to the group who need to hear and receive the truth of the resurrection.
5. Review the group study questions, and think through how you would answer. Adapt the questions in a way that will best help your group understand the content and participate.
6. Consider a few takeaways from your personal study to share in the Start section.

BODY *of* PROOF

During the Session

1. This passage is less straightforward than the one we read last week but so valuable for our understanding of the hope the resurrection provides. Take your time reading, and invite conversation and questions.
2. Highlight that the resurrection is a historical event—it is a fact. Because it is a fact, we approach it as true, and because it is true, it changes everything about the way we live.
3. Read the Scripture, and talk about any relevant details about the Mount of Olives and Jewish ossuaries, either by watching the videos provided through the QR code on page 37 in the *Book of Proof Bible Study* or by sharing what you've learned.
4. Underscore that the resurrection provides us with tangible hope and comfort. Jesus is in the business of rebuilding, and no one is beyond His ability to repair.
5. Help the group understand that the resurrection is verification that everything Jesus said is true (point number 2).
6. Close in prayer.
7. Remind the group to complete the five days of personal study examining Jesus's resurrection power.

After the Session

Consider meeting in groups of two or three to discuss and review the personal study. Here are a few questions to ask during that time. (Alternatively, you might consider sending these questions to the group in a text or email to consider on their own.)

What is the purpose of Jesus demonstrating His power to raise the dead?

Where do you need to apply Jesus's resurrection power to your life?

How does the resurrection of Jesus build your hope and trust in Him?

Prayer

Pray for your group members to grasp the truth of the resurrection.

Pray for those who are hurting and need help. Ask Jesus to rebuild them.

Ask God to make His Word that has been shared during your group time powerful and effective in the lives of your group members.

BODY *of* PROOF

Group Session 3: The Greatest Comeback of All Time

KEY SCRIPTURE

John 20:1-8

KEY POINT

The day you see Jesus will be the best day of your life.

Outline

Jesus Christ shattered the gates of death for us and now reigns as our living Lord. He is alive. We are, right now, alive with Him (Colossians 3:1-4).

1. We have a living hope.
2. Our hope never disappoints.
3. Without Christ, we have no hope.

If you knew with certainty you would live forever, what would you do differently? What risks would you take? Are you a believer who brings hope to those around you? As a believer, do you base your hope on your feelings or the objective facts of God's unchanging Word?

Before the Session:

1. Review the group content, as well as the video teaching session.
2. Prayerfully consider if there is someone you need to invite to the group.
3. Read and review the central passage of Scripture to prepare yourself for the group discussion.
4. Pray for all group members by name. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw people to the group who need to hear and receive the truth of the resurrection.
5. If this group is continuing beyond this study, consider what you will study next.
6. Review the group study questions, and think through how you would answer. Adapt the questions in a way that will best help your group understand the content and participate.
7. Consider a few takeaways from your personal study to share in the Start section.

BODY *of* PROOF

During the Session

1. Highlight that all of us have a resurrection testimony that is meant to be shared, just like the first disciples. For people to place their hope in the resurrection, the truth of the resurrection must be shared.
2. Read the Scripture and talk about any relevant details about the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, either by watching the videos provided through the QR code on page 57 in the *Book of Proof Bible Study* or by sharing what you've learned.
3. Talk together about the difference between hope and living hope. What makes the resurrection a living hope?
4. Near the end of your time, remind the group that we will live forever. Therefore, we can live differently. We have the hope that all the world wants. People will grab ahold of that.
5. Close in prayer.
6. Remind the group to complete the five days of personal study examining how the resurrection makes sense of our suffering.

After the Session

Consider meeting in groups of two or three to discuss and review the personal study. Ask the questions we ended the group session with (below). (Alternatively, you might consider sending these questions to the group in a text or email to consider on their own.)

If you knew with certainty you would live forever, what would you do differently? What risks would you take?

Are you a believer who brings hope to those around you?

As a believer, do you base your hope on your feelings or the objective facts of God's unchanging Word?

Prayer

Pray for your group members to feel the resurrection of Jesus as an ever-present, life-altering reality

Pray for the people your group members are encountering each day that need the hope of the resurrection.

Praise God for making our time together in this group beneficial.

BODY *of* PROOF

Group Session 4: We're All Traveling the Road to Emmaus

KEY SCRIPTURE

Luke 24:13-35

KEY POINT

The power that united the apostles, launched the first church, and invaded the Roman Empire was the certain knowledge and belief that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

Outline

The early Christian movement should have died out, but instead, it thrived. Why? The resurrection of Jesus.

1. We hope in times of “seeming” hopelessness.
2. We hope in fellowship.
3. We hope in the promises of Scripture.
4. We hope forevermore in Jesus.

End the study knowing this: Because Jesus is raised, we will be raised with Him. Jesus has the power not only to lay down His life but also to take it up again (John 10:18). More than two dozen times in the New Testament, followers of Jesus are promised they will be raised with Him. No other promise occurs with more frequency than the assurances of the believer's resurrection because it's linked with Jesus's personal resurrection.

Before the Session:

1. Review the group content, as well as the video teaching session.
2. Prayerfully consider if there is someone you need to invite to the group.
3. Read and review the central passage of Scripture to prepare yourself for the group discussion.
4. Pray for all group members by name. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw people to the group who need to hear and receive the truth of the resurrection.
5. Review the group study questions, and think through how you would answer. Adapt the questions in a way that will best help your group understand the content and participate.
6. Consider a few takeaways from your personal study to share in the Start section.

BODY *of* PROOF

During the Session

1. Thank the group for participating in the study, and invite them to share the most impactful truth they've learned so far.
2. Read the Scripture, and talk about any relevant details about the Road to Emmaus, either by watching the videos provided through the QR code on page 77 in the *Book of Proof Bible Study* or by sharing what you've learned.
3. Talk about the different and varied kinds of hope that we have in Jesus.
4. Ask why the words "hope" and "resurrection" always go together.
5. Remind the group that the hope we have in Jesus is different from every other kind of hope the world offers. Explain that the hope of Jesus is the only hope that will never disappoint.
6. Close in prayer.
7. Remind the group to complete the five days of personal study examining how the resurrection is the foundation of our hope.

After the Session

Consider meeting in groups of two or three to discuss and review the personal study. Here are a few questions to ask during that time. (Alternatively, you might consider sending these questions to the group in a text or email to consider on their own.)

What is your most significant takeaway from the study?

What is one concrete way the resurrection is giving you hope?

Who needs to hear about this hope?

Prayer

Pray for your group members to live in the hope of the resurrection today and every day.

Ask God to help all those with a resurrection testimony to share it effectively with their friends who do not.

Ask God to lead group members to people who need the hope they have.

Published by Lifeway Press® • © 2024 Jeremiah J. Johnston

Item 005847234