

Small Group Study Guide



For the World

Nov 24, 2019

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and the words they wrote and we pray that you might place on our hearts a deep desire to open those words and read them and to be shaped by them as they bear witness to your Son. We thank you for the words of the apostle Paul as he teaches us what it means to be a follower of Jesus. O God, help us to be people shaped by this book so that we might be your followers now and forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

1 Corinthians 15:1-7

15 Brothers and sisters, I want to call your attention to the good news that I preached to you, which you also received and in which you stand. 2 You are being saved through it if you hold on to the message I preached to you, unless somehow you believed it for nothing. 3 I passed on to you as most important what I also received: Christ died for our sins in line with the scriptures, 4 he was buried, and he rose on the third day in line with the scriptures. 5 He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve, 6 and then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at once—most of them are still alive to this day, though some have died. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

INTRODUCTION

The Bible did not create Christianity. Christianity is the result of an event (the resurrection) that created a movement (the church) that produced sacred and reliable texts that were collected and bound into a book (the Bible). But how do we approach not being at peace with everything we read in the Bible? Paul - the apostle, Pharisee, author, preacher and church planter – offers us clarity and confidence to move forward.

The story of the Bible is extraordinary. It's a story with personal implications for all of us. We can have clarity regarding our relationship with the Hebrew Bible and we have confidence regarding the event of the resurrection.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the following descriptions of Paul. What about him do you identify with? What's hard to relate to?
 - a. **Scholar** – Paul studied under the most esteemed Jewish teachers. He was an expert in the law.
 - b. **Skeptic** – Paul initially spent all of his energy attempting to discredit, undermine, and hurt the followers of Jesus.
 - c. **Convert** – Paul went from being a law abiding Pharisee to a Jesus follower in a day.
 - d. **Leader** – Paul taught, wrote to, prayed for, chastised, and financially and emotionally invested in the people he led.
 - e. **Writer** – The letter to the churches Paul planted help explain in practical terms what it looks like to follow Jesus. His writing has shaped the thought of western civilization.
 - f. **Thinker** – Paul thought deeply about life and its most difficult questions. He cared deeply about leading people to think the new way Jesus came to introduce.
 - g. **Sufferer** – Paul experienced extraordinary loss and pain. At times he struggled financially, physically, and emotionally.
- 2) In his writing, Paul explains the relationship we should have with the parts of the Bible. And if he could have been there the day we got our first Bibles, he would have given us two pieces of advice: 1) Read the Old testament for inspiration and motivation but not application. 2) Take your application cues from Jesus' new covenant command. What Old Testament applications are you stuck on? What old expectations and standards can you let go of because of Jesus' new covenant command?
- 3) Read I Corinthians 15:1-7 on page 1. Paul authenticates the most important event recorded in the Bible – the resurrection. What important details are recorded here about the events immediately following the resurrection? What is the most encouraging and comforting image in this passage for you?
- 4) Because of Jesus' New Covenant command "Love others as I have loved you," what should be your primary focus as you live your life? How are you doing this currently?
- 5) The story of the Bible reminds us that the question of utmost importance is not, *Are you at peace with everything in the Bible?* The most important question is, *Have you found peace with God whose Son died for your sin and was seen?* So have you found peace with God?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, think about the old ways of thinking you can let go of in order to make room for a better way – the way established before the Bible existed; the way that relies on Jesus rising from the dead and being seen by men and women who believed and followed.