

SIT TOGETHER:

Groups are intended to both deepen our love for one another and our love for God's Word. Give your group the time to catch up, chat, and naturally communicate. Organic conversations are best. Ice breakers are discouraged. If you see someone sitting alone, it is the leader's responsibility to sit with them.

STUDY TOGETHER:

Gather everyone together to begin the evening study. Explain the purpose of the four week study on "The Gospel for Everyday Life". As you spend your time together, a few reminders:

- Listen to how people define the gospel. If anything is added or taken away, lead them to define it correctly. Remember Colossians 4:6 and Ephesians 4:15.
- Don't be afraid to sit in the silence while you wait for others to speak. Give them time to think through their answers. Speaking too much will discourage others from speaking.
- Avoid telling personal stories that are off script. Continue to point people to the words of Scripture, not your words.
- Not everyone will speak into the conversation. That's okay. They will speak when they are ready.
- Give yourself plenty of time at the end to confess and pray. Don't rush this section but also be aware of how late it is. It's better to have time for people to have conversations afterward than to end and have to rush out the door.

PURPOSE: This study is intended to deepen our love for Christ by seeing our need for Him on a daily basis. The gospel not only saves us from our sins but saves us to a life of holiness. As we look to see our need for Jesus everyday, let's also encourage one another to remember the gospel.

Tonight, we will see from Scripture how the Gospel calls for us to be ministers of reconciliation in a world that needs to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

PRAYER: Before watching the video, reading the text of Scripture, or asking the questions, take time and pray with one another. If able, have the ladies pray with one another and have the men pray with one another. Have each group ask how they can pray for one another. Leader, after a few minutes, close out the time of prayer.

Introductory Questions:

QUESTION: What was your biggest take away from last week's session on "A Gospel Family"?

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: What is the gospel?

ANSWER: This is the message of the gospel. The Gospel is the good news that a holy God sent us His sinless Son Jesus Christ who, through His death and resurrection, has graciously saved us from our sin, delivered us from eternal hell, and has called us to live holy.

The Gospel message is the past, present, and future work of Jesus Christ in our lives. Remembering the gospel is necessary not only in remembering what Christ has done for us, but what He continues to do in us.

QUESTION: Why is the gospel message a past, present and future work of Jesus?

ANSWER: Jesus' finished work on the cross accomplished the Father's plan of redemption and it continues to change our lives today. This will segue into the video.

VIDEO: Watch the video, "A Gospel Mission". (13:57)

The Finished Work of Jesus:

John 19:28–30 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." [29] A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. [30] When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (ESV)

The very last words of Jesus on the cross before he died signified that what He came to this earth to do had now been accomplished.

DEFINITION: Tetelestai ("It is finished") is an accounting term meaning "paid in full".

When Jesus uttered these words on the cross, He was declaring the sin debt we owed to God the Father was wiped away completely, free and clear, and forever. Jesus paid the debt that we could not get out from under!

QUESTION: Why is it so important that what Jesus accomplished on the cross is indeed finished?

ANSWER: It means the payment for our sins has been paid for! We are not waiting for it to be dealt with, we are not waiting for it to be brought back up, and we can be confident that only Christ could accomplish what was required.

Romans 8:1–4 [1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (ESV)

Here's the best part. When you make a payment for something, what do you normally receive? A receipt. When Jesus rose from the grave, it was proof that the God the Father approved of the payment. That's why Philippians 1:6 is such a helpful verse in this conversation.

Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (ESV)

QUESTION: How would you like to become more like Jesus Christ in the next few years?

ANSWER: Answers may vary.

QUESTION: Why is the future bright for the Christ follower?

ANSWER: The future is very bright for the Christ follower. The future is bright because Jesus is the radiance of God's glory.

The Future Work of Jesus:

2 Corinthians 5 [1] For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, [3] if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. [4] For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. [5] He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

[6] So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, [7] for we walk by faith, not by sight. [8] Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. [9] So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. [10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

[11] Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. [12] We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. [13] For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. [14] For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; [15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[16] From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (ESV)

QUESTION: According to 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, what does the gospel promise us in the future?

ANSWER: The finished message of the gospel promises we will have a new, glorified body waiting for us in heaven.

This “building of God” is not the believer’s heavenly home, promised in John 14:1–6. It is his glorified body. Paul was a tentmaker (Acts 18:1–3) and here he used a tent as a picture of our present earthly bodies. A tent is a weak, temporary structure, without much beauty; but the glorified body we shall receive will be eternal, beautiful, and never show signs of weakness or decay (see Phil. 3:20–21). Paul saw the human body as an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7) and a temporary tent; but he knew that believers would one day receive a wonderful glorified body, suited to the glorious environment of heaven.

If our tent is “taken down” (“dissolved”), we need not fear. The body is only the house we live in. When a believer dies, the body goes to the grave, but the spirit goes to be with Christ (Phil. 1:20–25). When Jesus Christ returns for His own, He will raise the dead bodies in

glory, and body and spirit shall be joined together for a glorious eternity in heaven (1 Cor. 15:35–58; 1 Thes. 4:13–18).

QUESTION: According to 2 Corinthians 5:9-13, what does the gospel prepare us for in the future?

ANSWER: The finished message of the gospel prepares us to stand before the Lord.

Romans 2:16 On that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

What we believe and how we behave must always go together. Paul usually connected *duty* and *doctrine*, because what God has done for us must motivate us to do something for God.

Not every believer is ambitious for the Lord, but every believer is going to appear before the Lord; and now is the time to prepare. The Judgment Seat of Christ is that future event when God's people will stand before the Savior as their works are judged and rewarded (see Rom. 14:8–10). Paul was ambitious for the Lord because he wanted to meet Him with confidence and not shame (1 John 2:28).

The term “judgment seat” comes from the Greek word *bema*, which was the platform in Greek towns where orations were made or decisions handed down by rulers (see Matt. 27:19; Acts 12:21; 18:12). It was also the place where the awards were given out to the winners in the annual Olympic Games. This “judgment seat” must not be confused with the Great White Throne from which Christ will judge the wicked (Rev. 20:11–15). Because of the gracious work of Christ on the cross, believers will not face their sins (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1); but we will have to give an account of our works and service for the Lord.

QUESTION: What feelings/emotions do you have concerning the day you stand before the Lord?

ANSWER: Answers will vary. There may be a mix of hesitation and joy. Point them to the text that says the gospel prepares us to stand before the Lord with a clear conscience and we should not be concerned with the praise or criticism of men.

The Present Work of Every Believer:

While Jesus' work is finished, the work He has called us to on earth continues. Jesus has given us a command to go and share the message of the gospel with all people.

QUOTE: “Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.” - Spurgeon

QUESTION: According to 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, what does the gospel call us to persuade us with?

ANSWER: We are called to persuade others of the fear of the Lord and how he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

If God judges his own, what about those who are lost in their sin? “And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:18) The word *terror* does not mean fright, dread, or horror. After all, we are going to see our Savior—and He loves us. But Paul did not minimize the awesomeness of the occasion. We shall stand before Christ, “and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:23–25). Christ has commanded us to spread the Gospel to all nations, and we must be obedient.

DEFINITION: The word persuade means to seek someone's favor as in getting the other person to see you in a certain favorable or desirable way (Gal 1:10).

QUESTION: According to 2 Corinthians 5:14, what controls us? How does understanding Jesus' love for us impact our evangelism?

ANSWER: The love of Christ controls us. If we have seen the love of Christ towards sinful us, then we should seek to make sure everyone hears of His love.

The phrase “the love of Christ” means His love for us as seen in His sacrificial death. “We love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). He loved us when we were unlovely; in fact, He loved us when we were ungodly, sinners, and enemies (see Rom. 5:6–10). When He died on the cross, Christ proved His love for the world (John 3:16), the church (Eph. 5:25), and individual sinners (Gal. 2:20). When you consider the reasons why Christ died, you cannot help but love Him.

QUESTION: According to 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, what ministry has Jesus given us? Why do sinners need to be reconciled to God?

ANSWER: We have been given the ministry of reconciliation. Sinners need to be reconciled because God is Holy and no sinner can stand in the presence of a Holy God.

The key idea in this paragraph is *reconciliation*. Because of his rebellion, man was the enemy of God and out of fellowship with Him. Through the work of the Cross, Jesus Christ has brought man and God together again. God has been reconciled and has turned His face in love toward the lost world.

DEFINITION: The basic meaning of the word *reconcile* is “to make right.” It refers to a changed relationship between God and the lost world.

God does not have to be reconciled to man, because that was accomplished by Christ on the cross. It is sinful man who must be reconciled to God. "Religion" is man's feeble effort to be reconciled to God, efforts that are bound to fail. The Person who reconciles us to God is Jesus Christ, and the place where He reconciles us is His cross.

Since Christians in this world are the ambassadors of Christ, this means that the world is in rebellion against God. This world is an "imperial province" as far as God is concerned. He has sent His ambassadors into the world to declare peace, not war. "Be ye reconciled to God!" We represent Jesus Christ (John 20:21; 2 Cor. 4:5). If sinners reject us and our message, it is Jesus Christ who is actually rejected. What a great privilege it is to be heaven's ambassadors to the rebellious sinners of this world!

QUOTE: "Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you're not saved yourself, be sure of that!" - Spurgeon

Matthew 28:18–20 [18] And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

QUESTION: Read Matthew 28:18-20. What is Jesus commanding us to do? What implications are there to knowing Jesus is with us?

ANSWER: He is commanding us to make disciples which includes both evangelism and discipleship of the new believer. Knowing Jesus is with us, we can be bold with the Gospel.

QUESTION: Why are we hesitant to share the gospel with lost sinners?

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: How might you be persecuted when you share the gospel? (Consider your geographical location and context and give specific answers.)

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

SHARE TOGETHER:

As you close out the group for the evening, take the time to have people share what is on their hearts. This is the time to take prayer requests, confess sins, and pray for one another. Encourage other people in the group to pray.

QUESTION: What sins do you need to confess?

James 5:15–16 [15] And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (ESV)

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: Who can you share the gospel with right now? Name three people?

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: How can you be more intentional in sharing the gospel with others?

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: What has been your biggest takeaway from our four week study?

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

GROUP PRAYER - Pray as a group that God will open your eyes further and further to the greatness and sufficiency of the Gospel.

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The Finished Work of Jesus:

READ John 19:28–30

QUESTION: Why is it so important that what Jesus accomplished on the cross is indeed finished?

READ Romans 8:1–4 and Philippians 1:6

QUESTION: How would you like to become more like Jesus Christ in the next few years?

QUESTION: Why is the future bright for the Christ follower?

The Future Work of Jesus:

READ 2 Corinthians 5

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