

YOU ASKED FOR IT

Life Group Leaders Guide

Directions

This packet contains all the background information, series information, and weekly curriculum you will need to lead a life group. As a leader, everything on this page is to help you stay connected to the series as a whole. Behind this page is the individual curriculum to help you point people to Jesus. The *Purpose and Move* sections of the curriculum are for the leader to read or paraphrase to the group. The *Notes and Commentary* section is for the leader to get some more background and go deeper into the passages before leading the life group.

Series Overview

You asked, we listened, and now we have answered! Over the next 4 weeks The Point Church will be studying what you wanted to study regarding our faith and difficult topics that arise in the life of a believer. We hope this *You Asked For It* series will give you information you seek, confidence in your faith, and comfort when interacting with the tough questions that are commonly asked on this side of eternity.

Life Group Overview

During the *You Asked For It* series our life group curriculum will cover different topics than what is mentioned from stage. The top four topics have been given stage time, and in an effort to cover as many topics as possible, the life group curriculum will cover other “hot” issues. We believe this format will allow for our people to cover more topics in a shorter amount of time. With your comfort in mind, the staff chose topics for life group that the bible speaks clearly on so you can boldly lean on God’s wisdom regarding the tough topics you will cover. With that said, this curriculum has purposefully come out earlier than normal so you can acclimate yourself with the topics. Please take special interest in the *Notes and Commentary* sections (specifically the links to blog posts, sermons, and articles) of the curriculum for great places to spend time preparing for each life group.

You Asked For It Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon	Topic of life group
Week 1	6/18	SCIENCE --> The questions pertaining to science and its intersection with our faith.	What is a Christian?
Week 2	6/25	SEXUALITY --> The questions pertaining to sex and what the bible says about it.	What is God’s Will?
Week 3	7/2	EVIL --> The questions pertaining to the theology of evil, the demonic, and hell.	Can I Question God?
Week 4	7/9	CULTURE --> The questions pertaining to how our faith intersects with current culture.	Can I Drink Alcohol?

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

You Asked For It - Week 1 - What is a Christian?

Purpose of Study

What exactly is a Christian? This question seems easy enough to understand but distilling our faith down to core beliefs is harder to do than you would think. Why does this matter? Understanding if an issue deals with those core beliefs is necessary to decipher when determining how to handle it. The history of our faith shows that whole groups of believers can become divided over issues where unity, in the face of differences, would have been a more Christ-like option. In this study we will determine what exactly is a Christian and then discuss what that means for us as a group of people who might have differences of opinion and theology. The curriculum was designed with your freedom in mind. Read through the curriculum and decide what will work best for your group. SOAP the passages with the group, use only certain questions, write your own questions, or use the curriculum verbatim. As the leader, you know what will point your people to Jesus.

Flow of Study

Optional Icebreaker: It is a hot summer day, what is the best type of drink to quench your thirst and why?

Move #1: We will begin our study with the Apostle Paul and a verse in Romans where he simply lays out what it means to be a Christian.

Read Romans 10:9 (NIV)

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. Let's walk through this passage bit by bit. What does it mean to "declare with one's mouth?"
3. What does it mean to you that Jesus is Lord? Is that a one time declaration a person makes or a lifestyle change?
4. Jesus being Lord has implications outside of a one time declaration. How would a person who believes "Jesus is Lord" live their life?
5. What does it mean to "believe in your heart" compared to just believing?
6. Paul here makes clear that being a Christian involves a belief in the resurrection of Jesus. What importance does this give to that event? Why do you think believing in the resurrection is so necessary?

Move #2: In Romans 10:9 Paul clearly lays out what a Christian is and puts an importance on the resurrection. Let's look at one of Paul's other writings where he zooms in on the resurrection and why it is of salvific importance.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (NIV)

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. What does the phrase “of first importance” add to what Paul is trying to say?
3. Paul gives his readers two places to confirm this resurrection. The first he says at the end of verse 4 with the phrase “according to the scriptures.” Why do you think it is such a big deal to see Jesus’ coming, death, and resurrection correctly predicted in scripture? How does that truth encourage us as we consider other parts of the bible?
 - a. **Note to the leader:** The following quote could be helpful to read regarding Old Testament prophecy. Below the quote is a list of some OT prophecies regarding Jesus to use if you would like.
 - i. “From Genesis to Malachi, there are over 300 specific prophecies detailing the coming of this Anointed One. In addition to prophecies detailing His virgin birth, His birth in Bethlehem, His birth from the tribe of Judah, His lineage from King David, His sinless life, and His atoning work for the sins of His people, the death and resurrection of the Jewish Messiah was, likewise, well documented in the Hebrew prophetic Scriptures long before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred in history.”
 - ii. Possible OT prophecies for study: Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Psalm 16:8-11
 1. Very cool and short article about the resurrection in the OT --> <https://goo.gl/EoY5PJ>
4. The second place Paul goes to confirm the resurrection is found in verses 5-6. Remember, Paul is writing this letter somewhere around AD 53-57. What significance does that add to his statement regarding the resurrection?
 - a. **Hint:** The people Paul mentions are still alive when he writes this statement. In other words, he is telling people “if you don’t believe me, go ask these people who saw the resurrection first hand.”

Read 1 Corinthians 15:13-22 (NIV)

¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. What significance is there to verse 17? If Jesus did not rise from the dead why would we still be in our sins?
 - a. **Hint:** Even though sin has been paid for on the cross, without the resurrection of Jesus, death has yet to be defeated.
3. What is the significance to verse 19? Why would Christ followers be “most pitied” if Christ did not raise from the dead?
4. To make it personal, what would it mean for your life if the resurrection was not true?

Move #3: Paul made it clear to us that a Christian is one who calls Jesus the Lord of their life (which has major implications on how they live) and believes that He rose from the dead. In our last bit of time tonight let’s try our best to decipher how this should change our lives.

1. What are some things that you have believed are essential to being a Christian that go beyond Christ’s lordship in your life and the resurrection?
 - a. **Possible answers:** alcohol, gender issues in the church, evolution, predestination, the end of times, charismatic gifts, worship styles, baptism by immersion, baptizing infants, etc.
2. Since those issues are not essential to what it means to be a Christian, how should we approach those issues?
3. The issues from question 1 are non-essential but that does not equal unimportant. How should brothers and sisters in Christ deal with differences regarding beliefs in these issues?
4. What do you think it would be like if all Christians approached the non-essential answers from question 1 with unity, acceptance, and respect in mind? How would this kind of unity be attractive to the world around us?

Prayer: End your study with a time of prayer where people can share prayer requests and be prayed for before they leave. If possible, please steer some prayer towards what your group talked about during this study.

1. It could be a good idea to have someone pray **Romans 15:5-7** (seen below) over the group before leaving.

⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

Romans 10:9

- *What Someone Must Believe In Order to Be Saved* by John Piper (<https://goo.gl/RLHN8a>)
- With the mouth one confesses “Jesus is Lord.” The confession that Jesus is Lord is one of the most basic distinguishing marks of being a Christian (see esp. [Phil. 2:11](#); cf. [1 Cor. 12:3](#)). With the heart one believes that God raised Jesus from the dead. The fulfillment of these two conditions brings salvation. (Moo)
- Paul articulates his own case for righteousness in [10:6–10](#). Instead of the righteousness based on works of the law, Paul advocates righteousness by depending on God’s righteousness ([9:30–32](#); [10:3](#)). Paul adapts the wording of his chief passage (“lest you say”) to “Do not say in your heart,” a small change but one that manages to incorporate [Deut 9:4](#), which explicitly reminds Israel that God is not giving them the land because of their righteousness (for, as the context in [Deut 9:5–6](#) reiterates, they were not righteous). The heart of Paul’s argument here, however, derives from [Deut 30:12–14](#). In a closely argued midrash, Paul offers an analogy with God’s way of salvation in Deuteronomy, expecting structural continuity on the level of principle and how God deals with humanity. Both cases involve an obedient response to God’s gracious acts in salvation history, rather than authoring such salvation ourselves. (Keener)

Deut 30:12–14	Paul’s application in Rom 10:6–10
Do not say, “Who will ascend to heaven?” ^g (to bring down Torah, God’s gift, 30:12)	Do not say, “Who will ascend to heaven?” (to bring down Christ, God’s gift, 10:6)
Do not say, “Who will descend into the deep?” (to experience redemption again, crossing the “sea,” 30:13)	Do not say, “Who will descend into the abyss?” ^g (to experience salvation again, raising Christ from the dead, 10:7)
The Word is near you (the Torah, 30:14)	The word is near you (the message of faith we now preach, 10:8)
It is in your mouth and in your heart (30:14 ; as Torah was to be recited continually [Deut 6:6–7])	It is in your mouth and in your heart: confess with the mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe with the heart that God raised him (10:9–10)

- The point in Deuteronomy was that the law was not too difficult for Israel ([Deut 30:11](#)), provided it was written in the heart ([Deut 5:29](#); [10:16](#); [30:6](#)). Paul would agree ([Rom 8:2–4](#)), while expecting it to be fulfilled only on a widespread scale in the new covenant ([Jer 31:33](#)). The law was not far from them, nor did they have to work to bring it near ([Deut 30:12–13](#)); it was a gift. By analogy with God’s earlier salvific activity, Paul insists that righteousness is also a gift now. The word was near Israel, and that was why they could carry it out ([Deut 30:14](#))—provided they welcomed its nearness, written in the heart (cf. [Pss 37:31](#); [40:8](#); [119:80](#), [112](#); [Isa 51:7](#)). Just as God prefaced the Ten Commandments with a

reminder of redemption ([Exod 20:2](#)), so now salvation from sin was by grace through faith, expressed by right-doing. God's way of saving through the newer historical salvation event in Christ is analogous to the way he saved through the law:⁷ the divine word (the gospel) also involves heart and mouth, though not just by reciting for memory. The heart trusts what God has done for salvation, and the mouth acknowledges Christ as Lord (embracing all the behavioral consequences of this new master).⁸ The way of righteousness in [10:5–10](#) (climaxing in righteousness and salvation) is thus why Jews had no salvific advantage over Gentiles if both heard the message ([9:30–31](#)). (Keener)

1 Corinthians 15:3-6

- In an interview with Lee Strobel for the book *The Case for Christ*, scholar Gary Habermas showed that Saint Paul is, in fact, quoting a very early creed of the Church. First, Paul uses the terms translated “received” and “handed on”, technical rabbinical language for the passing on of sacred tradition. The text is also in stylized format, using parallelism, presumably to aid memorization. The use of the Aramaic version of Peter’s name, “Cephas” is likely a sign of its primitive date. The creed also uses phrases that are uncommon in Paul’s writings: “the Twelve”; “he was raised”; “the third day”. Habermas noted that scholar “Ulrich Wilkens says that it ‘indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity’” (Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, p. 230) (Clarke)
- Habermas, among others, would contend that this creed could have been composed within mere months after the resurrection of Jesus. He notes that no credible scholar disputes Pauline authorship of 1 Corinthians, which was likely written between 55-57 AD. But Paul says in 15:3 that he passed the creed on to the Corinthian Church at some point in the past, predating his visit there in 51 AD. That places the composition of the creed no later than within 20 years of the original Easter event. (Clarke)
- But Habermas – and others – think the creed goes back even further: between 32-38 AD, when Paul received it, in all likelihood in Jerusalem. Three years after Paul’s conversion, he travelled to Jerusalem to interview the Apostles Peter and James (whose feast day we celebrate today). Habermas draws our attention to the fact that, when Paul described this trip in Galatians 1:18-19, he uses the Greek word *historeo*, which indicates a thorough investigation of the facts surrounding Jesus’ resurrection was being made. So, in all likelihood, this creed was delivered to Paul by the eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus, Peter and James. (Clarke)
- Of course, the creed goes on to enumerate other Easter eyewitnesses, including an appearance of the Risen Christ to over 500 people at once – “most of whom are still living” at the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Paul is virtually daring any skeptics to interview these people. (Clarke)

1 Corinthians 15:13-22

- Verses [12–34](#) form an ABA pattern. Verses [12–19](#) and [29–34](#) both argue for the absurdity of Christian belief and practice if the bodily resurrection is not true. In between, verses [20–28](#) gloriously reaffirm that it is true and point to some of the consequences of this grand doctrine. The main point of verses [12–19](#) is that if there is no coming bodily resurrection of all Christians, then Jesus himself was not bodily raised, and that makes Christianity futile. Paul continuously repeats this thought from several different angles in these verses. The upshot is that all of the following result if there is no bodily resurrection: both the apostolic preaching and the Corinthians’ faith are useless (v. [14](#)); Paul and his companions are liars (v. [15](#)); all humanity stands condemned because of their sins (v. [17](#)); and those who have already died, including believers, are eternally lost (v. [18](#)). As a result, Christians are most deserving of others’

pity or compassion, since they have given up creaturely comforts and endured persecution (vv. [30–32](#)) for the sake of an empty promise (v. [19](#)) (Blomberg)

- But wonderfully none of this is true, Paul retorts. Christ has been raised bodily and has thus set into motion an inexorable chain of events that will culminate in the universal demonstration of the absolute sovereignty of God (vv. [20–28](#)). Verses [20–22](#) describe how Christ's bodily resurrection guarantees the future bodily resurrection of all believers, just as the "firstfruits" of a harvest (v. [20](#)) heralded a much larger crop to follow (cf. [Lev. 23:9–14](#)). Paul points out the parallel between Adam's sin leading to the sinfulness of all humanity (cf. [Rom. 5:12–21](#)) and Christ's resurrection leading to the resurrection of all his followers (vv. [21–22](#)). Because Adam represented the entire human race that would descend from him, sin spread throughout the whole world. Because Christ, as fully human, represented the entire human race in bearing its sins, he is able to apply the benefits of his death and resurrection to all who will accept them (cf. [Heb. 2:5–9](#), appealing to [Psalm 8](#), just as Paul will do in v. [26](#) here). "All" in the statement "all die" (v. [22a](#)) means "all who are related to Adam." "All" in the declaration "all will be made alive" (v. [22b](#)) refers to "all who are related to Christ," as verse [23](#) makes clear ("those who belong to him"). (Blomberg)