



OK, Jesus died for me. But why should I live for him?

Leaders version

For a one hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

What does the Bible say and mean?

60 minutes

*1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. What does it mean when the Bible says that we are new creations in Christ?

Those who believe and trust in Christ have been made new, spiritually speaking. Christ is our creator, and when we put our faith in him, he re-creates us, back into his image. A mental picture of the time-line of your life might help. There is a point in time (even if we can't pin it down exactly) when we trusted and believed Christ. Before that point, we were the old creation, after it we are the new creation. Something significant has changed.

*2. Read Romans 6:9-11. What has Jesus' resurrection achieved and how long does this last for?

He has conquered death – it 'no longer has mastery over him'. This was 'once for all' – it doesn't need to ever be repeated.

*3. As Christian believers, what promise do we have in Christ Jesus (v11), and what does this mean?

We are dead to sin but alive to God. This means that sin no longer has the upper hand, Christ does. We are spiritually alive – death can no longer separate us from God, because Jesus has overcome it's power.

Questions 4-6 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. You need to write them on flip-chart sheets for the group to work on in pairs.

***4. SDL** What should our response to all this be? (v12)

To stop obeying the evil desires of sin. 'Once we grasp this, that our old life has ended, with the score settled, the debt paid and the law satisfied, we shall want to have nothing more to do with it.' (Stott 2007, p179).

***5. SDL** What should we not be doing with our bodies, and why? (v13)

We should not use them as 'instruments of wickedness' – i.e. continue to sin, because we have been brought from death to life by Christ. (NB being a Christian doesn't prevent us from sinning, but it does make us more aware of our sin and give us the strength to fight temptation).

NB 1. there may be an unspoken assumption by the group that it's just talking about sexual sin, it's not, it's talking about all forms of sin, 2. although it doesn't specifically say so here, the Bible does make clear that our thoughts and attitudes can also be sinful and need just as much attention as our actions.

***6. SDL** So what should we be doing with our bodies (v13), and what does this mean?

Offer the parts of your body to God as instruments of righteousness. This means living for God and trying to live in obedience to him. This affects our whole life.

7. Read Romans 6:14. 'The law' refers to the 10 commandments. Why is sin no longer our master, if we trust and believe in Jesus?

Because we are no longer living 'under law'. i.e. we are no longer trying to get right with God by keeping the 10 commandments, since we know that keeping them will never be enough to deal with our sin, and no-one can keep them all, all the time, anyway. When we trust and believe in Jesus, we live 'under grace' – the gift from God, of his Son dying in our place and rising to life. Grace is our new 'master' (Paul is using the imagery of master and slave, since this was common place in Roman culture and everyone understood it).

8. Does the law (10 commandments) stop you from sinning?

No! The 10 C's just show us that we are not good enough for God (because we can't keep them). The law (10 C's or the UK law) has no intrinsic power to stop us sinning.

9. Does living under grace (as a believer in Christ) help you to resist sin?

Yes, Christ enables us to resist sin – when we follow Jesus and live in obedience to him, he will give us the power to resist. We still have the free-will to sin, but Christ enables us to resist.

***10. Read John 14:23-24.** What is the connection between loving Jesus and obeying his teaching and why do you think this is the case?

If someone loves Jesus, he will obey him, because he wants to live in a way that honours and pleases him. If we don't obey him, it reflects our lack of love for him.

11. **STICKERS** How much does your obedience to Jesus tell you about how much you love him?

Remember, no-one ever said being a Christian was easy! Do this exercise anonymously – turn the board around so people can't see who's sticker belongs to who.

12. **STICKERS** On the basis of your answer to the last question, how do you think things might change in your life?

Make sure no-one is criticizing anyone else – planks and sawdust... Again, turn the board round so it's anonymous.

***Explain:** being a Christian doesn't stop with knowing that you're forgiven and have eternal life. It's a life-long journey of growing to know Jesus Christ better, and as we get to know God better and surrender everything to him, our lives start to change under his influence. As we know God more, we grow to love him more, and as we love him more, we let him have access to more areas of our lives, and this means that he works in us to change us (for the better!) Thus, 'if anyone loves me,' says Jesus, 'he will obey my teaching.'

13. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 again. What does 'the old has gone' mean? What, specifically, does it mean for your life?

The unforgiven man, who was separated from God, has gone, because he has been made right with God by the death and resurrection of Jesus on his behalf. Our physical situation may not have changed (e.g. we may still be in prison) but we have changed inside. This will work itself out in how we think, behave, react etc – so 'the old has gone' can also apply to these things.

Encourage the group to think of specific things in their lives that have gone now that they are believers (if they are believers).

14. What does 'the new has come' mean? And what, specifically, does this mean in your life?

As believers, we have a new life in Christ, which has the promise of eternal life, as well as the gift of forgiveness now. Again, this spills over into our thoughts, behaviour, attitudes etc. as we allow Jesus to become Lord of our whole lives and begin to change.

*15. Read Matthew 7:24-27. What is the difference between the two houses? (v25 & 27)

One is built on rock and stands up against the storm, the other is built on sand and falls down in the storm. NB 'the storm' is not the trials of this life. If you look at the words used in the preceding passages, Jesus is

talking about judgment, so he is in this parable too. v13 – destruction, v19 – fire, v23 – 'I never knew you', v27 – fell with a great crash.

*16. What's the difference between the two men and what they represent in this parable (v24 & 26) and which do you want to be? Why?

The wise man represents someone who hears Jesus' words and puts them into practice, the foolish man represents someone who hears Jesus' teaching but ignores it. Make sure you answer the question 'why?' - it's pretty obvious which is the right answer, so without pushing for an explanation, no-one would have to do any thinking!

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

20 minutes

1. Is there an area of your life that you find it really difficult to surrender to Jesus' influence? What would need to happen in order for things to start to change?

You may not come up with anything practical to change, but thinking through what would need to happen will help people to see where they're at with following Jesus. e.g. if someone says that God would need to change the 10 commandments in order for something to change in their life, they are making a statement about how unwilling they are to bring that thing under His authority. However, what they say today may convict them of their unwillingness to follow and something may start to change...

2. Think about the wise and the foolish men again. Are there any areas of your life where you know Jesus is talking to you about changes that he'd like you to make, but you're not listening? What are you doing about it?

3. Is there an area in your life in which you really wish you could more be obedient to God in? Have you asked God to help you to trust him and allow him to change you?

Check out – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

Bibliography

Stott J (2007) *The Message of Romans, God's good news for the world*, Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press



OK, Jesus died for me. But why should I live for him?

What does the Bible say and mean?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. What does it mean when the Bible says that we are new creations in Christ?

2. Read Romans 6:9-11. What has Jesus' resurrection achieved and how long does this last for?

3. As Christian believers, what promise do we have in Christ Jesus (v11), and what does this mean?

4. **SDL** What should our response to all this be? (v12)

5. **SDL** What should we not be doing with our bodies, and why? (v13)

6. **SDL** So what should we be doing with our bodies (v13), and what does this mean?

7. Read Romans 6:14. 'The law' refers to the 10 commandments. Why is sin no longer our master, if we trust and believe in Jesus?

8. Does the law (10 commandments) stop you from sinning?

9. Does living under grace help you to resist sin?

10. Read John 14:23-24. What is the connection between loving Jesus and obeying his teaching and why do you think this is the case?

11. **STICKERS** How much does your obedience to Jesus tell you about how much you love him?

12. **STICKERS** On the basis of your answer to the last question, how do you think things might change in your life?

13. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 again. What does 'the old has gone' mean? What, specifically, does it mean for your life?

14. What does 'the new has come' mean? And what, specifically, does this mean in your life?

15. Read Matthew 7:24-27. What is the difference between the two houses? (v25 & 27)

16. What's the difference between the two men and what they represent in this parable (v24 & 26) and which do you want to be? Why?

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

1. Is there an area of your life that you find it really difficult to surrender to Jesus' influence? What would need to happen in order for things to start to change?

2. Think about the wise and the foolish men again. Are there any areas of your life where you know Jesus is talking to you about changes that he'd like you to make, but you're not listening? What are you doing about it?

3. Is there an area in your life in which you really wish you could more be obedient to God in? Have you asked God to help you to trust him and allow him to change you?