DISCUSSION GUIDE

BUILT DIFFERENT :

“A Disciple Stands on the Gospel”

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 15:1–11

MEMORY VERSE

“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples are built on and by the gospel.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Discipleship Distinctive: The Gospel

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: GOSPEL PROCESS AND OBJECTIVE

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–2. Paul described the gospel's objective and how it is passed along. Which two phrases describe the process of passing along the gospel? Which two phrases describe the outcome in the lives of the Corinthians?

Suggested Response: Paul described the process, saying 1) he preached the gospel to them, and 2) they received it. The objective of the gospel is salvation. Paul described this outcome, saying 1) the Corinthians were standing in the gospel, and 2) were being saved.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: THE GOSPEL CORE

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–8. Paul reiterated that the gospel is received and said he faithfully passed it on to the Corinthians. What are the central truths of the gospel? Make a list.

Suggested Response: Paul said Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared to people. Furthermore, the truths of the gospel are given by God's revelation, that is, in accordance with Scripture (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: PAUL'S STORY

Read 1 Corinthians 15:9–11. How did Paul describe himself? What was his story?

Suggested Response: Paul said he was the least of the apostles and did not deserve to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church of God. He said he was what he was by the grace of God, and God's grace was what changed him. Paul said he worked hard, but it was the grace of God with him.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: STANDING ON THE GOSPEL

In 1 Corinthians 15:1–2, why did Paul remind the Corinthians of the gospel they had already received?

Suggested Response: Paul reminded them because the gospel is the center and source of a disciple's life. Disciples never move beyond the gospel. The Corinthians had received the message and taken their stand on it, but they still needed to hold firmly to it. The issues they faced that Paul addressed in the previous chapters could only be fixed if they held fast to gospel truth. And their confusion about resurrection (later in chapter 15) threatened the foundation of their faith. Paul was helping them see that right belief and right practice go hand in hand. The gospel is not only how the Christian life begins. It is the truth that keeps holding us up.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: WITNESSES

In 1 Corinthians 15:3–8, why are the death, burial, and resurrection essential to the gospel? Why did Paul emphasize Jesus's appearances after His resurrection?

Suggested Response: These truths are essential because the gospel is the announcement of what God has done through Jesus. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised. His

death dealt with our sin. His burial confirmed that He truly died. His resurrection showed that God raised Him in victory. Paul emphasized Jesus's appearances because they demonstrate that the gospel message is based on real witnesses, many who were still alive when he was writing. The gospel is not based on private opinion, religious tradition, or emotional feeling.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: GRACE THAT CHANGES PEOPLE

In 1 Corinthians 15:9–11, how does Paul's story show that disciples are built by the gospel?

Suggested Response: Paul's life shows that the gospel is powerful to change people who are far from God. But it is not self-help, a series of steps to a better life, or merely changed thinking. The gospel is God's grace for undeserving people, bringing about new life. Paul had persecuted the church and did not deserve to be called an apostle, but the risen Jesus met him with grace. That grace did not leave Paul unchanged. It gave him a new identity, a new purpose, and strength to labor for Christ. Paul's story shows that the gospel is not only the foundation we stand on. It is the grace that keeps reshaping our lives.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: Paul reminded the Corinthians of the gospel. Why do disciples need to be reminded of the gospel? Where in your life do you need to be reminded of the gospel this week?

Suggested Response: I need to be reminded because I can easily assume the gospel while building my daily life on something else. Also, the gospel is central to my faith and is the source of my faith, so it is helpful to continually return to the truth of the gospel and the grace I have received. This helps me not rely on works, activities, or even churchy things. The gospel is not a beginner truth.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses.

QUESTION 2: Paul said the Corinthians received the gospel and took their stand on it. What are disciples tempted to rely on instead of the gospel? What is one thing you are tempted to rely on instead of the gospel?

Suggested Response: Disciples are tempted to rely on moral living, acts of service, performance, their effort, their reputation, the number of Bible things they know, or maybe church activity. Paul called these things works (Galatians 2:15–16, Philippians 3:3–11). They may be good, but they cannot save our souls. Only the gift of salvation, which is received by grace, can save a person.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses.

QUESTION 3: Paul outlined the truths of the gospel and attached them to the Scriptures. Why is this important? How does that strengthen your confidence in the gospel?

Suggested Response: This reminds me that the gospel was not invented by a person nor is it a story based on religious emotionalism. It is God's saving plan that runs through the whole narrative of Scripture. It is also truth that is received by faith. When my faith feels weak or my circumstances feel uncertain, I can remember that the gospel rests on God's faithful promises, not on how strong I feel in the moment.

QUESTION 4: Paul listed witnesses who saw the risen Jesus. Why does it matter that living people saw the risen Christ? How can that encourage your faith?

Suggested Response: It matters because Christian faith is not built on wishful thinking, private feelings, an emotional experience, or moral advice. Paul pointed to living witnesses because the resurrection happened in human history. Jesus really died and He really rose again. That encourages my faith because I do not have to stand on how strong I feel in the moment. I can stand on what God has actually done in Christ.

QUESTION 5: Paul told his story of life change and emphasized that it was only through God's grace. How has God's grace changed the way you see your identity?

Suggested Response: God's grace helps me see that my past does not have the final word over me. I do not deny my sin, but I do not have to be defined by it. In Christ, grace gives me a new identity and a new purpose. Like Paul, I can say that anything good in me is because of God's grace.

QUESTION 6: How can our group help one another know the gospel clearly and tell how God's grace has changed us?

Suggested Response: Our group can keep coming back to the gospel in Scripture, prayer, conversation, and encouragement. We can help one another speak the gospel clearly, remember what Jesus has done, and tell honest stories of grace. Disciples are built different because disciples are built on and by the gospel.