# LESSON SIXTEEN

## 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

## GROUP TIME

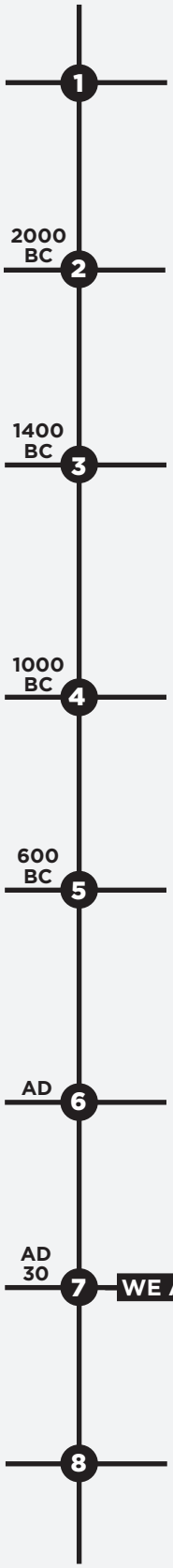
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|---|---|
| 5 minutes | **Welcome** |
| 5–10 minutes | **Attention Grabber** |
| 10 minutes | **Story / Context** |
| 25 minutes | **Discussion** |
| 5–10 minutes | **Closing & Prayer** |

## PRAYER FOCUS

- **Rooted Celebration** – Pray for everyone celebrating the completion of the fall Rooted celebration! Pray that each person would remain committed to the new discipleship rhythms they have established and continue in ongoing biblical community through a Life Group.

***<u>BEGIN</u> this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.***

# GOD'S STORY TIMELINE




**1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer** *(Genesis 1-11)*
God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.
***+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.***

**2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise** *(Genesis 12-50)*
God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
***+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.***

**3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation** *(Exodus-Deuteronomy)*
Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.
***+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.***

**4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King** *(Joshua-2 Chronicles)*
God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.
***+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.***

**5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise** *(Ezra-Nehemiah)*
Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.
***+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.***

**6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise** *(Matthew-John)*
At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.
***+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.***

**7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church** *(Acts-Jude)*
After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.
***+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.***

**8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People** *(Revelation)*
The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.
***+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.***

# 1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

***LEADER TIP***

*To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.*

## OPTION 1: THE PONY EXPRESS

In 1860, the Pony Express began carrying mail across long stretches of the American frontier. Riders traveled fast, changed horses often, and handed the mail from one rider to the next. The system depended on the message being carried faithfully. The rider's job was not to improve or edit the message or make it more impressive. His job was to receive it, carry it, and pass it on.

**POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- *What happens when a courier changes a message?*
- *Why would it matter that a Pony Express rider be considered faithful?*

**Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:**
The Pony Express reminds us that some messages are too important to alter or neglect. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul acted similarly. He wasn't inventing the gospel message but passing it on. It had been entrusted to him. Disciples are built different because they are built on and by the gospel.

## OPTION 2: THE WOMEN AT THE EMPTY TOMB

When the women went to Jesus's tomb, they expected death. They came with spices to care for His body. But when they arrived, the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty. In Luke's Gospel, the angels asked them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

The women received a message. They went and told the apostles what they had seen and heard. Their story helps us see something central to the gospel. Christianity is not built on human guesses about God or religious advice about how to live better. It is built on the announcement that Jesus truly died and truly rose again.

**POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- *How did the message the women received change what they had to tell others?*
- *Why does it matter that the gospel is news about what God has done, not just advice about what we should do?*

**Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:**
The women at the tomb remind us that the gospel begins with what God has done in Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 15:1–11, Paul brought the Corinthians back to that same message: Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised, and appeared to witnesses. Disciples are built different because disciples are built on and by the gospel.

## OPTION 3: WHEN A SALAD STOPS BEING A SALAD

You're at a buffet with some friends, but you're on a diet so you decide to just eat a salad. You fill your bowl with lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, a few bacon bits and maybe a drizzle of Ranch dressing because you're still trying to be a human, not a full-on rabbit. But you can't pass up a good steak … so you decide this is a steak salad. But your bowl is only so big. You scoop out some of the cucumbers. But who has steak without mashed potatoes? To make room for those, you've got to scoop out some more of the lettuce and tomatoes. Better add a bit of gravy too …

At some point this isn't a salad. If you're going to make a salad, there are a few ingredients that are a must—or we aren't talking about a salad anymore. These ingredients are of first importance.

**POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- *Do you have a favorite food that someone has messed up by changing the ingredients? Tell the story!*
- *What happens when someone removes the main ingredients from a food?*

**Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:**
Foods can only be changed so much before they become something else. In 1 Corinthians 15:1–11, Paul reminded the Corinthians of the gospel truths that are of first importance. The gospel has truths that cannot be removed or replaced without it becoming something else: Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared to witnesses. Disciples do not make room for what sounds more appealing by pushing aside what is essential. We receive the gospel, stand on the gospel, and are changed by the grace of God through the gospel. Disciples are built different because disciples are built on and by the gospel.

# 2 SET THE STAGE

***LEADER TIP***

*This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.*

## OUTLINE

I. Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1–9)
II. Problems in the church (1:10–6:20)
  A. Divisions and factions (1:10–4:21)
  B. Gross immorality (5:1–13)
  C. Litigation before pagan courts (6:1–11)
  D. Fornication with prostitutes (6:12–20)
III. Replies to questions from the Corinthians (7:1–14:40)
  A. Questions about marriage (7:1–40)
  B. Limitations of Christian liberty (8:1–11:1)
  C. Veiling of women in public worship (11:2–16)
  D. Disorderly behavior at the Lord's Supper (11:17–34)
  E. Exercise of spiritual gifts (12:1–14:40)
IV. The Resurrection of the Body (15:1–58)
  **A. Centrality of Christ's resurrection (15:1–20)**
  B. Sequence of resurrection events (15:21–28)
  C. The resurrection and suffering (15:29–34)
  D. Nature of the resurrection body (15:35–49)
  E. The believer's victory over death (15:50–58)
V. Conclusion (16:1–24)
  A. Collection for the believers at Jerusalem (16:1–4)
  B. Paul's plans for visiting Corinth (16:5–9)
  C. Exhortations, instructions, and salutations (16:10–24)[1]

## CONTEXT

First Corinthians 15 begins the final major section of Paul's letter. The Corinthians had already heard him address division, pride, sexual immorality, lawsuits, marriage, Christian freedom, the Lord's Supper, and spiritual gifts. These are errors of right living in light of the gospel (orthopraxy). Now Paul turned to the resurrection. Some in Corinth were saying there is no resurrection of the dead, and Paul knew this confusion was not a small side issue. It touches the center of the Christian faith. This was an error of right belief (orthodoxy).

Before Paul explained the future resurrection of believers, he brought the Corinthians back to the gospel they first received, which is the foundation necessary to correctly understand the truth of future resurrection. The gospel is the center and source of the Christian faith. He reminded the Corinthians that the gospel is not a message they invented, improved, or outgrew. It was preached to them, received by them, and now served as the ground on which they stood.

[1] F. Alan Tomlinson, "1 Corinthians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1811.

## FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Apart from Christ, sinners build their lives on unstable foundations. We trust moral effort, religious activity, personal success, spiritual experiences, cultural assumptions, or the approval of others while drifting from the gospel itself. We minimize sin, treat resurrection hope as optional, and try to stand before God with nothing firm beneath us.

## GOSPEL RESPONSE

The gospel announces what God has done for sinners through Jesus. Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared to witnesses. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus saves undeserving people by grace and gives them new life and a firm place to stand. Because we belong to Christ, we do not build our lives on our performance, our past, or our ability to hold everything together. We stand on the gospel, and by God's grace, we are changed through the gospel.

## DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM: DISCIPLESHIP DISTINCTIVE: THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is the good news of what God has done to save sinners through Jesus Christ. At the center of the gospel is not our moral effort, religious performance, or ability to make ourselves right with God. The gospel announces that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day. Salvation is received by grace through faith, not earned by works.

That is why Paul reminded the Corinthians of the gospel as a matter of "first importance." They had received it, believed it, and taken their stand on it. But they still needed to hold firmly to it. Disciples need to know the gospel clearly because the gospel is the foundation for every part of the Christian life. We are not built on our performance, our past, or our promises to do better. We are built on the finished work of Jesus.

# 3 LOOK AT THE BOOK

***LEADER TIP***

*In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.*

**1 Corinthians 15:1–2** Paul began the final major section of the letter by reminding the Corinthians of the gospel. That is important because the Corinthians did not need something more advanced than the gospel. They needed to return to the message that first formed them as the people of God. Paul had addressed many problems in the church, but underneath every correction was the same foundation: the good news of Jesus Christ.

Paul described the gospel with four phrases. It was the gospel he "preached" to them, the gospel they "received," the gospel on which they have "taken [their] stand," and the gospel by which they "are saved." These words show that the gospel is not a religious idea the Corinthians discovered within themselves. It came to them as an announcement. They heard it, received it, and now stood on it.

The phrase "on which you have taken your stand" shows the gospel's stability. The Corinthians were not built on their wisdom, spiritual gifts, status, morality, or ability to fix the problems in their church. They were standing on what God had done in Christ. Paul wanted them to feel the weight of that. If they moved away from the gospel, they were not moving from one Christian idea to another; they were stepping away from the ground beneath their feet.

Paul also said they were saved by this gospel "if" they held firmly to the word he preached. He was not saying they earned salvation by holding on tightly enough. He was saying genuine faith holds to the true gospel. The Corinthians could not deny the resurrection and still claim to stand on the same message Paul preached. To believe "in vain" would mean receiving the message in a way that became empty because they had abandoned or distorted its center.

**1 Corinthians 15:3–4** Paul identified what he had passed on to them "as of first importance." This does not mean the gospel is the only thing that matters, but it does mean the gospel is central. Everything else in discipleship is built from here. The Corinthians needed help with unity, holiness, marriage, freedom, worship, and spiritual gifts, but none of those issues could be rightly understood apart from the gospel.

Paul said he passed on what he received. This is the language of entrusted truth. Paul did not invent the gospel out of his own religious experience. He received it and then delivered it faithfully to others. That matters for disciples today. The gospel is not ours to improve, soften, reshape, or update. We receive it as good news from God and pass it on as the message that saves.

The first truth Paul named is that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Jesus's death was not an accident or a tragedy God somehow turned into a lesson. Christ died "for our sins." That phrase tells the truth about both our need and God's grace. Sin is serious enough that Christ had to die, and grace is great enough that Christ willingly died for sinners.

Paul added that Christ died "according to the Scriptures." The death of Jesus was not disconnected from the Old Testament story. God had been preparing His people, telling them in advance that the Messiah would come to save them. Additionally, God foreshadowed substitution, sacrifice, forgiveness, and suffering through the Scriptures. The Passover, the sacrificial system, the promises of redemption, and passages like Isaiah 53 help us see that the cross was part of God's saving purpose all along.

Paul then said Christ "was buried." The burial confirms the reality of Jesus's death. He was not describing a spiritual symbol or a vague religious feeling. Jesus truly died a physical death. His body was placed in a tomb. The burial matters because the resurrection is not a metaphor for hope after hardship. The resurrection was God raising the crucified, dead, and buried Jesus from the grave.

Paul said Christ "was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." The resurrection is central to the gospel. Jesus was not merely a dead teacher whose ideas still inspire people. He is the risen Lord. The resurrection shows that the Father has vindicated the Son, that Christ's sacrifice for sins was accepted, and that death does not have the final word. If Christ has not been raised, Paul would later say, then faith is useless. But because Christ has been raised, disciples have a gospel on which they can stand.

**1 Corinthians 15:5–8** After naming the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, Paul listed witnesses who saw the risen Christ. This list matters because Paul was showing that the gospel is rooted in real events. The resurrection was not a private impression, a group wish, or a symbolic way of saying Jesus still mattered to His followers. The risen Jesus appeared to people.

Paul first mentioned Cephas, another name for Peter. Peter had denied Jesus, but the risen Christ restored him and made him a witness. Then Paul mentioned the Twelve, the apostles who had been closest to Jesus during His earthly ministry. Their testimony became foundational for the early church.

Paul also said Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at the same time. Many of them were still living when Paul wrote this letter, though some had "fallen asleep," meaning they had died. Paul's point was that the resurrection was not hidden from examination. Still-living witnesses could testify that they had seen the risen Jesus.

Then Paul mentioned James. This is likely James the brother of Jesus, who became a leader in the Jerusalem church. During Jesus's earthly ministry, His brothers did not believe in Him. Yet after the resurrection, James became a servant of Christ and a leader among God's people. His life is another witness to the power of the risen Jesus.

Last of all, Paul said Jesus appeared to him "as to one abnormally born." Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus was different from the others. He had not followed Jesus during His earthly ministry. He had not been waiting in faith after the crucifixion. He had been persecuting the church. Yet the risen Jesus appeared to him and called him by grace.

This list of witnesses helped the Corinthians see that the resurrection belongs to the core of the gospel. Paul did not ask them to stand on

religious emotion. He reminded them of what God had done in history. Christ died. Christ was buried. Christ was raised. Christ appeared.

**1 Corinthians 15:9–11** Paul's mention of his own encounter with the risen Jesus led him to reflect on grace, saying, "For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Paul did not hide from his past. He had opposed Christ by attacking His people. He knew he did not deserve the role he had been given.

Then he said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." This is one of the clearest statements of grace in the passage. Paul's identity was not finally explained by his sin, his past, his effort, his intelligence, or his religious background. His life was explained by the grace of God. Grace met him while he was an enemy and made him a servant of Christ.

Paul also said God's grace to him "was not without effect." Grace did not leave Paul unchanged. It gave him a new identity and a new purpose. He worked hard in his apostolic ministry, but he immediately clarified, "yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." Paul did not deny that he labored. He simply refused to make his labor the source of his standing before God or the explanation for his ministry. Even his work was evidence of grace.

This helps us see how disciples are built on and by the gospel. Paul stood on the gospel because his hope rested in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul was built by the gospel because grace reshaped his life from persecutor to apostle. The gospel did not merely give Paul a new message to preach. It gave him a new story to tell about his own changed life.

Verse 11 brings the focus back to the shared gospel: "Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed." Paul's story was personal, but the gospel is bigger than Paul's story. Paul and the other apostles preached the same gospel. The Corinthians did not need a new message. They needed to hold firmly to the message they had already believed.

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:1–11**

15 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

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, i 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. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I

worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.[2]

## **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*

[2] *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Corinthians 15:1–11.

*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.*

***LEADER TIP***

*In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.*

*Leaders – share your story with your group. It takes 3-5 minutes. You are modeling this for your group, so follow the guidelines. (Click here for the guidelines).*

*Challenge – group people into 2's or 3's and have them prepare to share their story with each other next week. Set aside 15-20 minutes of your group time for this.*

**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.*

# 4 CHALLENGE

***LEADER TIP***

*End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.*

Disciples are built different because disciples are built on and by the gospel. Paul reminded the Corinthians of what matters most: Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared to witnesses. This is the gospel they received. This is the gospel on which they stood. This is the gospel by which they were being saved.

Take time this week to remember the gospel and consider where you are standing.

- What are you tempted to stand on instead of the finished work of Jesus?
- What part of the gospel do you need to hold firmly this week?
- How can the reality of the resurrection encourage your faith right now?
- Where has God's grace changed your story in a way you could share with someone else?

The gospel is not only the message that begins the Christian life; it is the foundation beneath the disciple's feet and the grace that keeps making us new. We stand because Christ has been raised. We serve because grace is at work in us. We tell the story because this good news is still the power of God for salvation.

Let's pray.