

WHAT IS RESURRECTION?

by Joel R. Beeke

TO THE GROUP LEADER: This resource is designed to help you lead others to better understand one of the “Basics of the Faith” booklets published by P&R. The numbers in brackets indicate the page number in the booklet. Below each question is an answer based on what the author presents, or advice on how to discuss the question. You have the freedom to adapt the questions to best fit your group.

A good teaching technique is to distribute the questions to the group and have them write down how they would answer BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, members can refine their answers based on their reading. As a group, members can discuss their views to affirm or modify what they wrote.

1. What difference would it make if there is no such thing as life after death? (5)
Use this question to get the group thinking again about what they have read. Be sure to ask them what they wrote before they read the booklet.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. List what Paul tells us are the consequences of not believing in the resurrection. (5-10)
Put a set of dominos in front of the group. Have the group list each of the consequences of denying the resurrection with one domino representing each of these consequences. In the end, knock them over, showing how futile life would be without the hope of something more than just this life.
3. Now read 1 Corinthians 15:20-27. List the benefits Paul gives us when we do accept the reality of Christ’s resurrection. (10-13)
Go through these verses, resetting the dominos for each argument Paul gives for the logic of believing in this future hope.
4. What hope can you offer to someone who refuses to accept the truth of Christ’s offer of salvation? (13-14)
Everyone is born with some kind of hope for a meaningful life. You cannot live without hope. However, unless that hope is built on truth and reality, it is a false hope, which is what most people have. A person who has lost all hope eventually commits suicide. Believers, on the other hand, have great hope. It is this hope that enables us to endure all this life throws at us, because our hope sees past this short existence.
5. List all of what we have to look forward to at our resurrection. (15-17)
Dr. Beeke gives a good list. Check each of them off as the group comes up with them.
6. What will our resurrection bodies be like? Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-53 and Revelation 21:4. (17-19)
Dr. Beeke goes through each of the qualities of our new bodies. Be sure the group understands the implications of each. Also, have them think about this: Jesus, in His resurrection body, appeared and disappeared. He entered a locked room without opening the door. What might be the implications of this?

7. What is your understanding of the Bible's teaching involving the events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ? (19-26)

The most important answer is: He is coming back! Believers throughout the ages have had differing theories on the events. Believers at Jesus' first coming thought they knew what to look for and missed it. Search for events is the wrong emphasis. We need to focus living our lives each day with the expectation of His imminent return.

This should be the longest part of your session together. Highlight in your text those points brought out by Dr. Beeke. Be sure each member of the group understands the joy we have to look forward to, but also the sheer terror awaiting those who refuse to heed Christ's call. We must get this clear in our minds or we don't truly understand the necessity of evangelism.

8. Read 1 Corinthians 15:53. After having thought through all these issues and events surrounding the resurrection, there is only one question that remains: "How, then, shall we live?" What difference will this make in your life today? (26-31)

John Piper paraphrases question 4 of the Shorter Catechism: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied (or content) in Him." Heaven isn't about us; it is, as is all of life, about Him. Our lives are to be lived constantly keeping Him first. When He is first we have joy, even in times of adversity, because we know where this all leads. Jesus defined eternal life not as a place or about us. He says it is "to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:5)

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

APPLICATION

1. If you were able to know, with absolute certainty, that Jesus would return tomorrow, what would need to change about the way you live your life right now? Make a plan, right now, to start putting those changes into place.
2. Think of one person you can ask this question: "What meaning is there to life if there is nothing to look forward to after you die?" Make a plan to share this question with that friend. Keep in mind your dependence on the Holy Spirit to prepare that person's heart to hear and receive this message of hope.

For Further Study

Lifted: Experiencing the Resurrection Life, Sam Allberry. P&R, 2012.

Bringing Heaven Down to Earth: Connecting This Life to the Next, Nathan L.K. Bierma. P&R, 2011.

The Problem of God: When the World Seems Fine Without God, D. Marion Clark. P&R, 2014.

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