

Small Group Discussion Guide: *Life, Resurrection, and Eternity*

The discussion explores the Christian hope of resurrection life. Examining 1 Corinthians 15:35-50, the focus is on the mystery of the bodily resurrection, where believers will experience both continuity and transformation in their resurrected bodies, similar to how a seed transforms when it grows. The concept of eternal life in a resurrection body brings a profound assurance, contrasting with the temporal nature of earthly life. The group is encouraged to live with a focus on eternity, letting go of rigid life plans and finding strength in the hope of eternal life with Christ.

Opening Reflection

1. Share a recent experience where your community came together. What was meaningful about it?
2. What images or metaphors resonate with you when you think about those who have come before us as a "great cloud of witnesses"?

Icebreaker:

"Have you ever been part of a crowd cheering someone on, or been cheered on by others? What was the experience like?"

This icebreaker connects to the idea of a "great cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 12 and introduces the themes of encouragement and community, both in faith and in everyday life.

Scripture Exploration

Primary Passage: Hebrews 12:1, 1 Corinthians 15:35-50

1. Read Hebrews 12:1

- How does the image of a "cloud of witnesses" cheering us on impact your understanding of the Christian journey?
- What are some examples of people (historical, biblical, or personal) you feel are part of this "cloud" that encourages your faith?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-50

- How does Paul describe the mystery of the bodily resurrection?
- Discuss Paul's agricultural metaphor of seeds. What does this image suggest about the transformation between our earthly bodies and our resurrected bodies?

Core Themes Discussion

1. Discontinuity in Resurrection

- Paul describes our resurrection bodies as being "imperishable" and "glorious." What stands out to you about this transformation?
- Consider the pumpkin analogy shared. How might this help us understand the "seed" of our current bodies and the "fruit" of our resurrected bodies?

2. Continuity in Resurrection

- Reflect on the story of Jesus and Thomas (John 20:24-27). Why might Jesus' resurrection body still bear the scars from His earthly life?
- How does the continuity of Jesus' body after resurrection help us understand what might carry over from this life to our resurrection life?

3. Eternity in Resurrection

- Read John 5:24 and Romans 6:23. How do these verses expand on the hope of eternal life in Christ?
- Share how the promise of eternal life with God influences your day-to-day perspective or choices.

4. Temporality in Our Current Life

- Read James 4:13-15. How does this passage about life's uncertainty challenge our expectations or plans?
- Share a personal experience when your plans were changed unexpectedly. How did this affect your faith or perspective on God's role in your life?

Application Questions

1. In light of the resurrection and the promise of eternal life, what is one way you feel encouraged to live out your faith with renewed purpose?
2. How can our group support one another as we "run with perseverance" in the midst of life's uncertainties?

Prayer & Reflection

- Spend time in prayer, thanking God for the promise of the resurrection and asking for strength to live in the hope of eternity.
- Close by praying for perseverance, especially for any specific challenges group members are facing.

This guide invites participants to explore the mystery and hope of resurrection and to reflect on how the promise of eternity with God impacts their lives now.