

DISCUSSION GUIDE

ICEBREAKER: If you could eliminate one weakness or limitation in your life, what would it be?

OVERVIEW: The Bible is the best-selling book of all time. It is the greatest work of literature in all of human history. Just about every home in America has a copy, and many homes have multiple copies. But what is the Bible all about? Is it just a bunch of unrelated stories, or is there a central them? The main point of the entire Bible is to answer one question — to solve one problem: How can sinful people be reconciled to a holy and just God? In this study we will go deeper with the important doctrine of reconciliation.

1. Read 1 Peter 3:18-22. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. Look back at 1 Peter 3:19-20. What does this verse mean?
3. Look back at 1 Peter 3:21. What does it mean that "baptism... now saves you"? Is baptism necessary for salvation? Explain. (See John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9.)
4. What does reconciliation mean? What is the difference between reconciliation and forgiveness?

5. Why does mankind need to be reconciled to God? (See Isaiah 59:2; John 3:36; Colossians 1:21.)
6. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. Who initiates reconciliation – God or us? What does this say about God?
7. Read 1 Peter 3:18. What was the cost of reconciliation? Why couldn't God just forgive us without a debt being paid?
8. Read 1 John 4:10. What does it mean that Christ is the propitiation for our sins?
9. What are the two phases of reconciliation?
10. Read Romans 5:1. According to this verse, what is the result of reconciliation with God? What are some other results of reconciliation with God? (See Romans 5:2; Galatians 4:4-5; Romans 5:11.)
11. Read 2 Corinthians 5:19-20. Now that we have been reconciled to God, we have been given the ministry of reconciliation. What does this ministry entail?

The Last Word: "That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us." 2 Corinthians 5:19