

Life Group Leader Guide

Experiencing Christ – Week #2

(Suggested Format and Discussion Questions)

Fellowship and Food (15 minutes) – Continue using name tags. Don't underestimate the value of learning names. If you don't have a snack coordinator, then it's up to you to follow up before the meeting to ensure a snack is provided.

Welcome (15 minutes)

- Welcome everyone, introduce any newcomers, and open the meeting in prayer.
- Have your Group Administrator bring and pass out copies of your group roster with emails and phone numbers (also send by email). This helps to "Cultivate Relationships" (Leader Practice #4) within your groups.
- Ask "When you were growing up, what was your picture of God?"

Bible Study (60 minutes) – Make copies of Discussion Questions and pass out questions. See attachment that includes just the questions. This helps people follow along and understand the questions. Question #1, #3, and #6 are the primary questions. Again realize the goal is not to complete each question.

Read Col. 1:15-23, and then review the main points of the sermon outline.

1. (Christ is Supreme over Creation) Read Col. 1:15-16. What is the significance for you of the fact that the universe was created by Christ and for Christ? What difference should this make in your outlook about world events? What difference should this make in relation to your personal behavior?

Leader Notes: The question addresses a fundamental issue: What difference does it make that the universe was created by Christ and for Christ? For any person to shrug off that concept would be tragic. For the non-Christian, such disdain leads to eternal punishment (see Romans 1:18-21). If a Christian does not give Christ's supremacy much weight, then discipline and loss of reward are sure to follow. So, Question #1 should help us worship Christ all the more, because he alone is worthy to create our universe and rule as our King!

2. (Christ is Supreme in Reconciliation) Share from *Experiencing Christ Study*

Guide, page 24, My Response: "Knowing that Christ is the ultimate authority in the church, write down ways this impacts your involvement in the local church."

Leader Notes: Hopefully, most of the people in your group will have written something in their *Experiencing Christ Study Guide* and may share it during this question. Please encourage that. One way of looking at this matter is to consider how a church focused on Christ differs from one focused on one man. In the latter case, when that person dies, moves, retires, or changes his views, the church may go through some serious struggles. The Protestant branch of Christianity has no Pope, because Jesus is the head of the church!

3. (Christ is Supreme in Reconciliation) "When we confront the supremacy of Christ, we grasp that we are not the center of the universe. All of life does not revolve around us." This extract from the sermon leads us to ask, how can we refocus our lives and get back on track? What kind of changes would it take to focus on Christ and his kingdom?

Leader Notes: This question is somewhat introspective. Perhaps we could make it more immediate by imagining our life as a meeting. Is Jesus leading the meeting, or sitting at the back of the room, or is he absent altogether. A lot of every-other-Sunday Christians, if honest, would have to admit that Jesus is peripheral to their lives, not central.

4. (Christ is Supreme in Reconciliation) Read Col. 1:19-20. The price Christ paid to make reconciliation possible for us was death. What price are we willing to pay to show our gratitude? What might we be holding back as our own and not his?

Leader Notes: This question assumes that the death of Christ has brought us close to God (reconciliation), but wonders what effect that has had. Have we, in effect, said, "Thanks for doing that, Jesus, but now I'm going to get back to what I was doing before you arrived"?

5. (Christ will present us to God) Read Col. 1:21-22. Jesus once said that the one who is forgiven little loves little (Luke 7:47). How does it feel to be free of accusation before God?

Leader Notes: This question looks at the emotional impact of being free from accusation in Christ. We suggest you look at Luke 7:41-50 as an example of one who was forgiven much and whose love overflowed toward Jesus.

6. (Christ will present us to God) Question from *Experiencing Christ Study Guide*, page 32, My Response: "Our salvation is secure in Christ. The Scriptures also put emphasis on the need to continue in the faith. Spend some time writing about what next steps you will take to continue strong in the faith, not taking anything for granted."

Leader Notes: This is a great question to break up into subgroups of 2-3 people (men with men / women with women) to make sure each person gets

to share. Use this time to also to share how God is using the *Experiencing Christ Study Guide* and Scripture memory in their life.

Share and Prayer (20 minutes)

- Ask who worked on their **memory verse** for this week. Ask for a volunteer to share the memory verse out loud with everyone. You can pick up sets of the laminated memory verses on Sunday morning for your group members. This is a great tool for encouraging the memory verse.
- Spend time praying in your group expressing short one-sentence prayers starting with “I praise you God because...” using the truths from our Colossians passage to complete the sentence. (Example: I praise you God because you are the creator.) Close prayer time praying everyone will grow in seeing Christ in all his supremacy.
- Ask for prayer requests and pray for them.

Close Meeting with the following encouragement:

Start fresh each week with the daily studies in the *Experiencing Christ Study Guide*. This means they begin Week 3 this week, even if they have unfinished days from Week 1 or 2. This will keep members from feeling so far behind that they quit using the study guide all together and it also keeps them working with the Scripture Bruce will be preaching on.