

LIFE
TOGETHER
DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Gospel Boast

1 Corinthians 1.18-31

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:

- **MEN'S SUMMIT Friday, October 6th 6:30-7:30a** | Gentlemen...join other guys from New City on Friday, October 6th from 6:30-7:30a @ the church building for a time of singing, teaching, discussion, and prayer. (And coffee and donuts.) *We are aiming to meet the first Friday of each month this year for these men's summits and in October we'll talk more about how you can get connected to a smaller group of guys for encouragement, support, camaraderie, and spurring one other toward love and good deeds.*
- **WOMEN'S RETREAT October 20th & 21st** | Ladies, join the women of New City for a weekend of fellowship, fun, prayer, and teaching at the annual New City Women's Retreat! Guest speaker Melissa Bush will be sharing about how we are woven together in Christ. The cost for the retreat is \$65, which includes a shared room and three meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and Saturday lunch). For those that need it, you also have the option of attending Saturday only. The Saturday only cost is \$30 and includes Saturday lunch. Please register online by October 7. Visit the City for more information and to register.

Talk briefly about your group's format and schedule for the semester.

We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from other Christians. That's what we're hoping for tonight.

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray extemporaneously, or use this prayer:

Father, help us to seek what is good and true and beautiful. Give us love for each other and for our city. Give us eyes to see you and ears to hear you. Use our group tonight/today to make us more into the people you want us to be.

OPENER

Especially in the early weeks, taking time to introduce yourselves and getting to know each other is important. Open by asking folks to **introduce themselves**: *name, hometown, where you live in Cincinnati, what you do during the day.*

Then ask, *What is your favorite part about Autumn?*

STUDY/DISCUSSION

Our series this fall is called "Life Together." We'll be working our way through the first 10 chapters of 1 Corinthians. This past Sunday Josh preached from 1 Corinthians 1.18-31.

Read 1 Corinthians 1.18-31

1. According to Paul, what's the most important thing in their ministry and community?
2. What was it about the cross that was "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles"?
3. Does the cross still seem like folly to people today? Why or why not?
4. Based on verses 26-29, what do you think the church community at Corinth was like? Why would God choose to use people like that?
5. What's been your best experience of community? What made it so helpful?
6. What does it mean to "boast in the Lord"? What other things are we tempted to boast in?
7. Read through the Handout on the next page. Do any of the readings help flesh out the meaning of 1 Corinthians 1 for you?
8. What's one thing you'd like to apply to your life this week?

PRAYER:

Spend some time together in prayer. In the early weeks, this can be a challenge for a group just getting to know one another. You may elect to just lead the group in a closing prayer, pray together as a large group, or break into smaller groups to pray. You can share requests, or simply pray about the things you discussed tonight.

HANDOUT

As we read through this section, we begin to see Paul's diagnosis of the root causes of the Corinthian conflict. They are caught up in rivalries because they glory in the superficially impressive human wisdom of this age. They are boasting about their own possession of wisdom and rhetorical eloquence - or at least how they are infatuated with leaders who manifest these skills. God, however, has revealed in Christ another kind of wisdom that radically subverts the wisdom of this world: God has chosen to save the world through the cross, through the shameful and powerless death of the crucified Messiah. If that shocking event is the revelation of the deepest truth about the character of God, then our whole way of seeing the world is turned upside down. Everything has to be reevaluated in light of the cross. (Richard Hays)

No Messiah could suffer such a death; for "he that is hanged is accursed of God" [Deut 21.23] and an "insult to God" [Targum, Rashi]. (*The Jewish Encyclopedia's* entry on Jesus)

No one who is profoundly human can really believe God would punish sin like that. (Bertrand Russell)

The cross is the wisdom and power of God because through the cross God can destroy evil without destroying us. (from Sunday's sermon)

His power works miracles in the most hopeless material. (Leon Morris)

Originally, boasting was a part of warfare. How do you get soldiers to charge into certain death, people to ride off into battle? You start with a boast. A ritual boast was when the captain or the general or the king got up and said, "Our hands are strong enough, our spears are sharp enough!" and everyone cheers and they charge... A boast is how you get yourself ready to charge out into life. Paul knows that everyone boasts in something, and he's saying, "Boast only in the Lord." (Tim Keller)

[Speaking about Billy Graham at Cambridge University] I'll never forget that night. I was in the totally packed chancel sitting on the floor with the Regus Professor of Divinity sitting on one leg and the Chaplain of a College who was a future bishop on the other. Both of these were very good men, but completely against the idea that you needed salvation from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. So dear Billy got up that night and he began at Genesis and he went right through the whole Bible and he talked about every single sacrifice you can imagine. The blood was just flowing all over the place-everywhere for 3/4 of an hour. And both my neighbors were terribly embarrassed by this crude proclamation of the blood of Christ. It was everything they disliked and everything they dreaded. But at the end of the sermon, Billy Graham dismissed the audience and invited anyone who wanted to stay behind and make a commitment to Christ. And that night to everyone's shock, 400 young women and men stayed. (Dick Lucas)