

STORYLINE

Group Discussion Guide // Week 1

WARM-UP

1. What's your favorite storyline from a movie or book? What about it do you find engaging?
 2. What's your favorite twist in a story? (Make sure to give spoiler alerts.)
 3. If someone were to ask you, "What is Christianity?" how would you answer?
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TRUTH

*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...
(1 Peter 3:18)*

The Storyline of Christianity

Christianity is much more than just a moral and ethical code. At the heart of Christianity is a story called the gospel. It's the story of God creating and rescuing the world. Like any good story, there are tensions and twists, and in this single verse in 1 Peter, we see both. Understanding the tension in the story is what leaves us awestruck at the twist that brings resolution.

The Tension

For Christ suffered once for sins... that he might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18)

If the suffering of Jesus brought us to God, then the tension in the story is the separation between God and people. When people were first created, they lived in perfect relationship with God. However, when they rebelled against God, their sinfulness meant that they were unfit to be in God's holy presence. That state of sinfulness spread from Adam to all humanity, and that meant all people are separated from God by sin. But because a relationship with

God is at the very heart of being human – we are made in his image – it begged the question, could people ever get back a loving relationship with God? If so, how?

Discussion Question

Why do you think it's impossible for sinful humans to be in the presence of a holy God?

GRACE

The Twist

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous... (1 Peter 3:18)

In the same way that Adam's guilt spread to all humanity because of his sin, Jesus Christ's righteousness was offered to humanity because of his perfect obedience. Jesus was the only human who never deserved death because he was sinless, and yet he willingly suffered and died to bring sinful humans back to God. In an unexpected twist, the innocent Jesus willingly took on suffering to pay the price our guilt demanded. Now those who put their faith in Jesus can once again have the relationship that was lost by Adam and can truly live.

CHANGE

1. The work of Christ on the cross ought to give believers full confidence that their relationship with God is certain and secure. When we don't have that confidence, we're often fearful about life consequences, wondering if God is pleased with us, and generally uncertain of what God thinks about us. How can the sufferings of Christ and the righteousness he offers lift your confidence in your relationship with God?
2. Peter emphasizes that the work of Christ "bring[s] us to God," which means that a relationship with God is of utmost importance. Do you have a "relationship" with God? What makes for a meaningful relationship with God?
3. If you've never accepted the death of Christ as the only way to get to God, would you like to today?

Pray for confidence that if you have faith in Christ's sufferings, you are free from sin and brought back into relationship with God.