

This Is ~~Not~~ The End

Group Discussion Guide // Week 8

WARM-UP

1. Name one friend who was a really good influence on you growing up. Name a friend who was a bad influence. How could you tell whether a friend's influence was good or bad?
 2. Would you consider yourself an optimist or a pessimist? How have you had to reign in those personality traits over the years?
 3. What are some of the biggest choices you've had to make in your life?
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TRUTH

"And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." (Revelation 12:11)

We can all think of major decisions we've made that had a serious impact on the direction of our lives. Revelation 12-14 presents us with the biggest decision of all – who will we follow? Apparently there's no version of life in which we blaze our own trail. We are all followers. Either we're following the Lamb or Babylon. The stakes of this stark choice couldn't be higher.

Following Babylon

Read Revelation 13:16-18 and 14:8

People living in Roman colonies were forced to conform to Roman norms. That's what the two beasts represent. We're given an example of one of these norms in verse eight of chapter fourteen: sexual immorality. We may not live in a Roman colony, but we all experience pressure to conform to cultural norms. The problem is, these norms can often be things that God calls sin. Put simply, following Babylon means redefining right and wrong along cultural lines rather than what God has said.

- ▶ Can you think of two or three things celebrated in your culture that God doesn't endorse?

Following the Lamb

Read Revelation 14:1 and 12:10-11

Now we're introduced to those who have faithfully followed the Lamb rather than the beast... and they've won! Their conquering, however, has not come without cost. In the same way that you feel resistance when you swim upstream, turning against the cultural tide of Babylon will be met with resistance. If you're a Jesus follower, not everybody's going to be happy about it. But the rejection is only temporary. The Lamb conquers and so do his people. This should give us a realistic expectation of what life is like in this age. It's an upstream battle, but it ends in victory.

- ▶ Give an example of someone whose life experience has appeared costly, but who experiences great victory despite that cost.

GRACE

Final Judgment

Read Revelation 14:14-20

Here we're told in no uncertain terms that God will judge the earth. Those who follow the Lamb will be saved and welcomed into God's presence (the wheat harvest). Those who follow Babylon will be subject to eternal punishment (the grape harvest). We're left with the stark choice: who will you follow? The beautiful promise is that following Jesus isn't based on your ability; it's sheer grace. God has offered salvation from judgment, and all we need to do is receive his grace and follow the Lamb.

CHANGE

1. What cost are you currently experiencing for following the Lamb? How does Jesus give you strength for faithful endurance?
2. Are there ways in which you are currently following Babylon? In other words, is there conscious sin in your life you need to repent of?
3. Who in your life can you pray for who's not currently following Jesus that you want to see saved?

PRAYER

- ▶ Pray for forgiveness of sin.
- ▶ Pray for those who are not yet following Jesus, that God would save them by his grace.