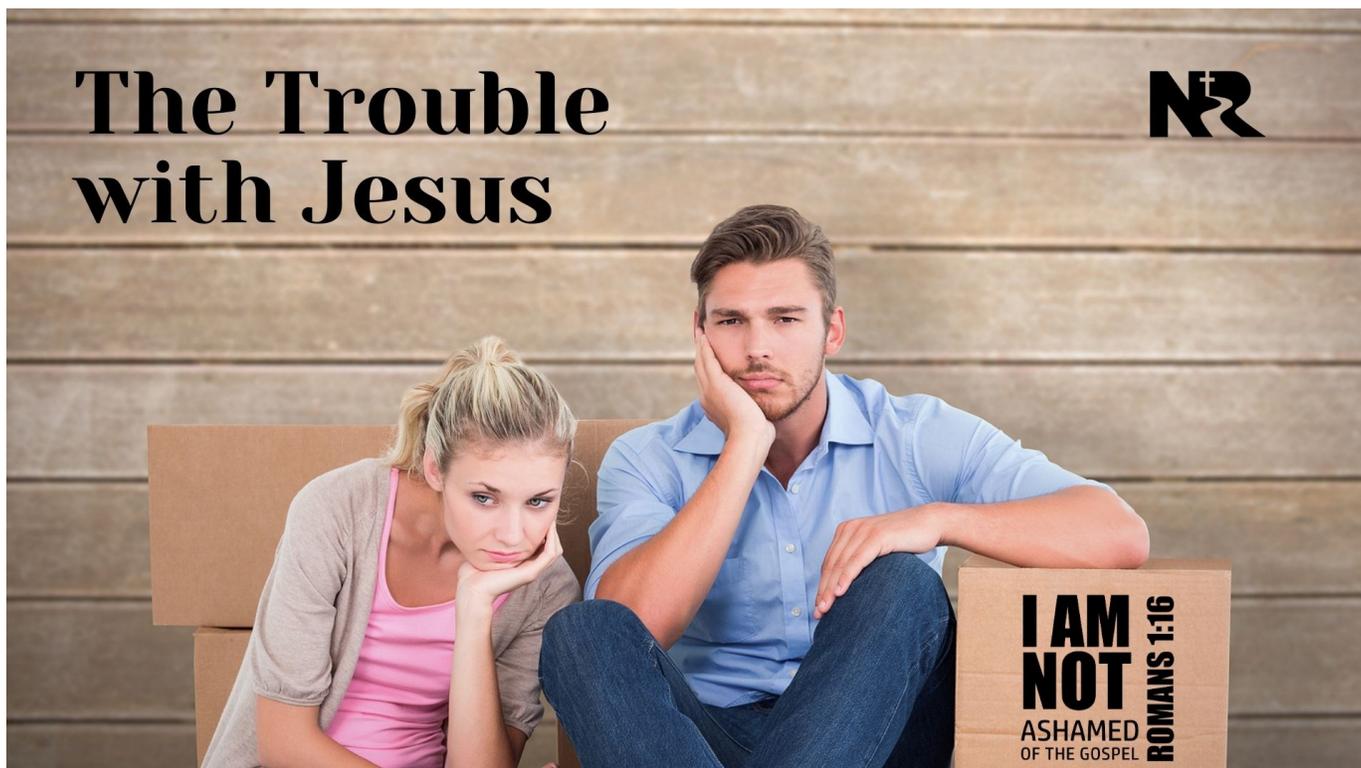


The Trouble with Jesus



Small Group Study Guide

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Thank you for being willing to lead and care for people in your Small Group! This is not an easy task, but it is an important one. You are leading a group of people to help them engage in community, and encounter God together. This doesn't mean you have to be serious and solemn when you lead, it means that you get to help a group of people learn more of who God is, what He is about, and how we can follow God more fully in our life. This can be a fun and exhilarating adventure!

Below are some things that will help you in your role as the leader:

Focus of the Series: The trouble with Jesus is that he doesn't neatly fit or easily stay in the boxes that we and our society at large try to put him in. So it is essential that we constantly do our best to understand Jesus as the Bible presents him and that we wrestle with the ways that modern historians, church movements, political causes and popular culture try to shape and package Jesus to fit their agendas. This series will look at some key ways in which our culture tries to do that.

Structure of the Study: The format of the study is broken down into three sections (Share, Study, Symbolize), progressing from easy-conversational questions, exploring the Bible passages, to personal reflection and thought. There are plenty of questions from which to choose from. Do not feel pressured to have to get through every single question in the study. The study was specifically designed in order that you can pick and choose the questions that will be most effective in navigating the discussion. The ultimate goal is for the group to engage in discussion to better understand God's grace together. If there is good dialogue happening, and you only get through a few questions, that's great! If you need more questions to help move the group along, then feel free to use whatever you need.

Some Tips For Leading The Study:

Your role is to be a facilitator. You do not need to be the in-house expert of the Bible, you simply need to lead the group in good discussion. This means speaking less yourself, and giving as many people in your group as possible a chance to share their thoughts and insights.

Silence is OK! Don't get nervous if no one answers the question right away. If too much time goes by (say, 45 second), ask if you need to repeat the question, or if the question was clear.

It's OK if you or the group does not have an answer to a question. If someone asks a difficult question, and the group is unsure of the answer, it's ok to table the question for a week in order to research the answer. Some of Apostle Paul's letters were responses to questions and problems in the church, and they waited months for an answer!

Expect God to Show Up: Most of your prep-time should be prayer-time. Ask God to be present in your group. Invite the Holy Spirit to be present in your group. Ask God to show you where He is working in your group. Pray for the challenging dynamics in the group. Allow God to lead your group's discussion by being open to what is coming to the surface in the discussion. Shepherd the group to engage with what God is doing. Pray that group members don't leave the same way they came!

Honor Start/Stop Times. Your group should agree together on when the group should start and end. Honor those times by beginning on-time, and manage the time so you don't go over.

The Trouble With Jesus: Jesus In The Spotlight

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:12

Share

1. What is something that is very precious to you?
2. When have you felt rejected?

Study

1. In what way are we like living stones?
2. What status did Peter ascribe to believers in Christ?
4. Why is it important for believers to live good lives?
5. How does being chosen by God for a special task make you feel?
6. What are the implications of believers being a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation?
7. Why do we need encouragement to live good lives among non-Christians?
8. What good deeds in your life do non-Christians see?
9. How can we do good deeds so they are both a witness and a discrete act of service (that is, not merely for show)?
10. What does it mean to live a good life?
11. To what people can your good deeds be a witness?

Symbolize

1. From what specific sinful desires will you ask God to help you abstain this week?
2. What good deeds can you use as a witness to your neighbors?
3. How do you need to change your plans for the near future so that you will be an example to the unbelievers with whom you have regular contact?