



## The Cross of Christ

### Study Guide

The Cross has become the ultimate symbol of love in the world. It is central to Christianity in that we are to forgive our enemies. As such, it is the single most revolutionary moral event that has happened on this planet. And, like all deep things in life, the Cross is largely a mystery. Yet, there are times when we get it; like the man who came to know that it could allow him to move beyond any mistake he made.

The Cross reveals God's unconditional love and vulnerability; as a teaching and an invitation to discipleship; God suffers with us. The Cross calls us beyond ourselves, our own agenda, our own life without resentment. It calls us to sweat blood for our commitments.

#### Discussion Questions

##### **PART I**

- 1.) If we understand the brokenness of Jesus on the cross we will understand the cross. How does understanding the cross allow me to move beyond any mistake I have ever made?
- 2.) When we sin, when we betray, we step outside the cross and its demands, we don't understand it. When we are at our best, we are inside the cross, "the circle of discipleship" and we get it. Do you?
- 3.) The cross reveals God's unconditional love. For those in private hells where no human can enter, Jesus can. There are times in all of our lives when we cannot open the door anymore, but God can come through the locked door. The cross allows God to descend into hell—even when you put yourself into hell. What does this say about the limits of God's forgiveness and love?
- 4.) The cross of Christ rips away the veil that separates us from looking at God. It helps us see into the heart of God, and we see that God is love. Can I believe that God loves me intensely and will never stop loving me? That God never looks at my shame?
- 5.) The Cross reveals that vulnerability is the path to intimacy. People sense that Jesus has a certain power. In the Greek there are 3 words for power: energy (power of muscle); dynamic (charismatic power); but they use the word exousie (there is no English word for it). It is a power that comes from helplessness and vulnerability. This is God's power—a power that never overpowers. This vulnerability reveals God's non-violence. How does this impact my image of God?
- 6.) What did I find most memorable in this presentation?

##### **PART II**

- 1.) What do you now understand about where God is in human suffering? Who do you say that God is?
- 2.) The wisdom of the cross teaches us that there is a necessary connection between suffering and a coming into glory. Suffering can make you deep—it can make you mature or drive you to rage. What has been your experience?
- 3.) We are all going to suffer. How will you let pain and humiliation lead you to becoming a better person rather than a bitter person? Do you know someone who has become bitter by their suffering? Do you know someone who has become deep in an "Easter Sunday" way?
- 4.) What "glory" have I brought into my life? What inferiority have I brought into my life? To get to the glory of depth, of maturity, the route is through the suffering. Am I willing to go there without becoming bitter or resentful?
- 5.) How can I carry the Cross without being resentful in life, love and sacrifice? What will I give over freely?
- 6.) What about this presentation has brought new energy to my life?

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