**BODY OF PROOF**

**STUDENT GROUP STUDY GUIDE**

**For Leaders and Students**

This guide provides an outline for each group session with students. It was created to be used along with the video teachings for *Book of Proof*.

For more in-depth, daily study between group sessions, consider using the *Body of Proof* Bible Study resource.

**Session 1 – Replacing My “If Onlys” with “If Jesus”**

**Start**

*Welcome to Session 1 of* Body of Proof. *Use this section to get the conversation started.*

**What is something you believe that you feel *very* sure of? What gives you that much confidence?**

**How does certainty in something give you hope?**

**Do you feel certain about the resurrection? What kind of hope does it give you?**

The Gospel writer, Luke, opens his book by telling his audience why he wrote it: "so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed" (Luke 1:4). The goal of this study is to provide you certainty in the hope of the resurrection.

Christianity is true, and you can confirm the truth of Christianity by appealing to what happened in history. **As we learn in our study, the power of the truth of the resurrection results in a fusion of facts and faith. The result is certainty and confidence to live with hope in Christ today.**

This study will journey to different resurrection sites throughout Israel and help us think through the hope the resurrection brings to our daily lives. We will begin in Bethany, where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Because He raised Lazarus, we can trust that He can raise us physically and spiritually.

*Pray together before watching this week’s video teaching.*

**Watch**

*Use this section to take notes and follow the video teaching.*

**Central Truths**

1. I must replace all my "if only's" with "if Jesus."
2. I will live by “if Jesus,” not “if only.”

**Notes:**

**The Tomb of Lazarus in Bethany**

Key Texts: John 11:1-55; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 10:3-42; 24:50–53

The tomb seen in this video is in a first-century cemetery and could very well be the actual tomb of Lazarus. The tomb has been recognized as such since the early fourth century. Given the continuity of village memory, we can be certain that this is the actual tomb or at least the right spot.

*For more on Bethany, view the video at this QR Code.*



**Discuss**

*Use this section to discuss the video teaching.*

Resurrection is not an abstract belief or just another fact of history but a person—Jesus Christ. After the death of Martha’s brother Lazarus, Jesus stood in front of Martha, urging her to make the leap of faith and place her hope in Him. He challenged her to trust His resurrection power and exchange her "if only" for an "if Jesus."

Read John 11:1-44 together.

**What do you think it means when Jesus says He is the resurrection and the life?**

**Why do you think Jesus take the time to ask Martha the question, "Do you believe this?"**

**Why is it important for each of us to answer this question for ourselves?**

Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead demonstrates that His claims about the Resurrection are life. In this encounter, Jesus interrupted the physical death of Lazarus and showed that He has interrupted spiritual death for all who place their hope in Him—those who turn their "if only" to "if Jesus." From this story, we see several immediate applications to our faith.

**Apply**

1. Even Jesus’s closest friends experience pain and adversity (verses 1-5).

**How can this story encourage us that pain is not the end of our story?**

1. Jesus is resourceful because He is the source (verse 3).

**What are some of the ways Jesus provides for us that can build our faith and trust in Him?**

1. Instead of being stuck in the past, Jesus wants us to look to the future (verses 9-10).

**What do you have to look forward to because of the certainty of resurrection of Jesus?**

1. The Christian lives and dies in hope; death is now no more than sleep, and there is nothing to fear (verse 11).

**How can Jesus’s power displayed in this encounter free us from fear?**  
**How are sadness and hurt different than fear  
  
How does Jesus meet us in moments of sadness and hurt?**

1. Faith trusts God through uncertainty (v. 16).

**Why is uncertainty so uncomfortable?  
  
When our life feels unpredictable and unstable, why is it important to have certainty in Jesus?**

1. Faith is not what I feel but what I believe (v. 25).

**How can our feelings deceive us?**

**In what ways are you currently trusting your belief in Jesus beyond your feelings?**

**Close**

Which of your *"if onlys*" do you need to replace with *"if Jesus*"?

Faith is taking God at His word and acting accordingly. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is not based on feelings but on faith, which is based on the facts of Scripture. Each week, our study will investigate one reason we can have certainty in Jesus. This week, we'll examine the truth that "Jesus called it." In other words, Jesus kept His mission front and center with His disciples and early followers—constantly reminding them that He would die and rise on the third day.

*Close in prayer.*

**Session 2 – Jesus Rebuilds and Restores the Wrecks of My Life**

**Start**

*Welcome to Session 2 of* Body of Proof. *Use this section to get the conversation started.*

Over the past week, your study has helped you see the importance of Jesus's predictions that He would rise from the dead on the third day.

**What was your most significant takeaway from our last group session?**

This week, we’ll discover the powerful truth of Jesus’s promise to rebuild the temple “in three days” (John 2:19) and learn what it means for Jesus to bring heaven and earth together in His resurrected body.

**What do you find most interesting or exciting about the resurrection of Jesus?**

The resurrection of Jesus upended what it meant to be in a relationship with God. Instead of going to a temple where people had to make sacrifices and participate in rituals—all of which were good and necessary at the time—we can now meet with God through Jesus. His resurrected body fulfills the role of the temple and makes His church the temple of the Holy Spirit. He compels us to bring hope to those around us in need of freedom from toil and effort-based attempts to please God.

*Pray together before watching this week’s video teaching.*

**Watch**

*Use this section to take notes and follow the video teaching.*

**Central Truths**

1. Religion always misses grace because “religion” misses Jesus.
2. God and humanity are now to meet perfectly and completely— not in a temple, but in Jesus.
3. We are the people who bring hope.

**Notes:**

**The Tomb of Lazarus in Bethany**

Key Texts: *Matthew 27:52; Luke 19:38-42; John 2:18–22*

Dominus Flevit, which translates from Latin as “The Lord Wept,” was fashioned in the shape of a teardrop to symbolize the tears of Christ. This space was built on a necropolis—a cemetery with over five hundred ossuaries (bone boxes), many of which have Christian iconography. This spot is resurrection ground (Matthew 27:52). The views of the Temple Mount are second-to-none.

*For more on the Mount of Olives view the video at this QR Code.*



*For more on Jewish ossuaries view the video at this QR Code.*



**Discuss**

*Use this section to discuss the video teaching.*

The temple was the center of Jewish life because it was where heaven and earth met. When Jesus overturned the money-changing tables in the temple, He rejected hypocrisy and legalism. He promised to provide a new future through His Resurrection. Jesus fulfilled all the temple was designed to provide in His death and Resurrection. Through His death and Resurrection, Jesus rebuilds and restores all the wrecks in my life.

Read John 2:13-22 together.

**Why did Jesus drive out the money changers? What can we learn from His actions here?**

Reread verses 18-22.

**What did Jesus mean here? Why did this confuse the religious leaders?**

**How did Jesus fulfill the role of the temple and the sacrifices offered there?**

**Apply**

1. Jesus extends grace to all of us.

**How was overturning the tables in the temple an act of mercy and grace?**

**How does Jesus provide us with something better than empty ritual and rule following?  
  
Jeremiah said, “Religion misses grace because it misses Jesus.” What did he mean by this?**

1. The resurrection verified that everything Jesus said was true.

**Reread John 2:22. How did the resurrection prove these statements of Jesus to be true?**

1. Jesus has the power to rebuild the wrecks in our lives. Just as Jesus rebuilt the temple, He can rebuild you.

**What part of your life and story most needs Jesus’s resurrection power?**

**What are you following instead of Jesus that you need to turn away from? Ask Him to rebuild you on a stronger and surer foundation.**

**Close**

Read Luke 19:38-42.

**What led Jesus to weep over Jerusalem?**

In one of the most heart-wrenching scenes in the Gospels, Luke records Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. We can sense the echo of Jesus’s cry today as we take in the landscape of anxiety, despair, and depression around the world. *If you only knew what would bring you peace*.

Jesus wants us to have peace. The resurrection secures that peace for us. When we trust God, He can give us peace, even when we feel pressure.

**Why should the resurrection give us peace? How is it giving you peace?**

*Close in prayer.*

**Session 3 – The Greatest Comeback of All Time**

**Start**

*Welcome to Session 3 of Body of Proof. Use this section to get the conversation started.*

**What was your most significant takeaway from our last group session?**

**Share a moment in your life when you saw Jesus at work.**

In these moments, Jesus can quickly become real instead of just a fictional character in a book.

Jesus’s death by Roman crucifixion is the best-established fact of the ancient world. If we can't believe Jesus of Nazareth died by Roman crucifixion, we can't think anything about the ancient world. Our faith, and consequently our hope, is built on a solid and confirmable foundation. This week, we’ll examine that foundation as we follow the final moments of Jesus’s death and His victory over death in resurrection. Like Mary, we will see and believe (John 20:18). Standing at the traditional site of Jesus’s tomb, we’ll learn that seeing Jesus changes everything about our lives.

*Pray together before watching this week’s video teaching.*

**Watch**

*Use this section to take notes and follow the video teaching.*

**Central Truth**

* The day you see Jesus will be the best day of your life. Like Mary, you will exclaim, "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:29). That truth changes everything.

**Notes:**

**Church of the Holy Sepulchre**

Key Text: John 20:1-18

According to our best information scripturally and archaeologically, we believe the Church of the Holy Sepulchre complex to be the location of Jesus’s crucifixion, tomb, and resurrection.

The Gospels agree that Jesus was buried in a known tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57; Luke 23:50-51; John 19:38) and that after Jesus’s burial, the entrance to the tomb was sealed with a stone.

The tomb was made from stone (Luke 23:53), and it was a new tomb (Matthew 27:60; John 19:41). It was in a garden near the place where Jesus was crucified (John 19:41-42). The execution location was "near the city" (John 19:20).

Additionally, it was outside the walls of Jerusalem at the time, because Jesus suffered “outside the gate” (Hebrews 13:12).

*For more about first-century tombs, view the video at this QR Code.*



*For more on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, view the video at this QR Code.*



**Discuss**

*Use this section to discuss the video teaching.*

Jesus Christ shattered the gates of death for us and now reins as our living Lord. He is alive. We are, right now, alive with Him (Colossians 3:1-4). In other words, our living hope is based on the historical, unchangeable fact of Jesus's physical, bodily resurrection from the dead.

Read John 20:1-18 together.

**How did the disciples and Mary respond differently to what they found? How were their responses alike?**

**How did Jesus demonstrate specific care for Mary? How does He provide the same kind of care for us?**

**Apply**

1. We have a living hope.

The Bible teaches us that in Christ we have a “living” hope (1 Peter 1:3), a “better” hope (Hebrews 7:19), and a “sure” hope (Hebrews 6:19).

**What do these words teach us about the kind of hope we have?**

**Living:**

**Better:**

**Sure:**

**What about Christian hope makes it distinct from the hope other faiths or non-religious people have?**

**How are hope and the resurrection connected?**

1. Our hope never disappoints.

**Why is hope found outside of the resurrection fragile or incomplete?**

**How does the resurrection of Jesus equip you to face your struggles and disappointments differently? Share an example.**

1. Without Christ, there is no hope.

**Why does the fact of the resurrection compel us to share our hope with others?**

**How would you describe the way you have encountered the risen Lord? How can you share your experience with others?**

**Close**

A few questions to think about as we wrap up:

1. **What would you do differently if you knew that you would live forever? What risks would you take?**
2. **Are you a believer who brings hope to those around you?**
3. **Do you base your hope on your feelings or undeniable truths of God's unchanging Word as a believer?**

**How would you answer those questions?**

**Who around you needs to hear about the hope you have in Jesus?**

*Close in prayer.*

**Session 4 – We’re All Traveling the Road to Emmaus**

**Start**

*Welcome to Session 4 of* Body of Proof. *Use this section to get the conversation started.*

This past week, you learned an important truth immediately practical to our Christian lives: The resurrection makes sense of our suffering. This week, we will focus on our hope in experiencing Christ.

**What was your most significant takeaway from our last group session?**

**In what ways has Jesus shown up for you on your journey through life?**

In our closing session, we’ll walk the actual first-century Emmaus road with the prayer that our hearts burn within us, just like Cleopas and his friend, who experienced the risen Christ. Without the resurrection, there would be no good news, and the New Testament would not make sense. But Jesus has risen from the dead, and we have unending hope.

*Pray together before watching this week’s video teaching.*

**Watch**

*Use this section to take notes and follow the video teaching.*

**Central Truth**

* The power that united the apostles, launched the first church, and invaded the Roman Empire was the knowledge and belief that Jesus had physically risen from the dead.

**Notes:**

**The Road to Emmaus**

Key Text*:* Luke 24:13-35

Luke writes about the road to Emmaus in chapter 24 of his Gospel. Emmaus was a village in Judea, and two disciples of Jesus (Cleopas and his friend) were walking there when the resurrected Christ joined them. They were likely returning home after the Passover festivities since the Sabbath was over.

We are told they were "about seven miles from Jerusalem." "Seven miles" is sixty stadia from Jerusalem. A stadion is about 607 feet, so they had walked about 6.8 miles.

We can trust in the authenticity of this account, and the cylindrical Roman mile markers and first-century road curbing remain to this day.

For more on Roman milestones, view the video at this QR code:



**Discuss**

*Use this section to discuss the video teaching.*

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus’s disciples are said to have lost all hope following the crucifixion. They gave up, and why wouldn’t they?

In the scene in Luke 24:13-35, two disciples on the road to Emmaus encountered an interesting stranger. Not realizing they were walking and conversing with the resurrected Messiah, they admitted, "We were hoping that he was the one" (Luke 24:21). The early Christian movement should have died out, but instead, it thrived. Why? The resurrection of Jesus.

Read Luke 24:13-35 together.

**What do you think Cleopas and the other disciple were struggling to understand? How do you think they were feeling?**

**Have you ever experienced similar emotions? How do you relate to this passage?**

**Apply**

1. We hope in times that seem hopeless. Jesus encountered the disciples on the road to Emmaus at a low point.

**What low points in your life has Jesus faithfully led you out of?**

**What kind of hopelessness do you see in our society today? How does the resurrection uniquely address that hopelessness?**

1. We hope in community with other Christians. Jesus shared a meal with these friends, and one day, we'll get to experience a heavenly feast with Him in heaven.

**How does the resurrection give Christian community a deeper sense of purpose?**

1. We hope in the promises of Scripture. Jesus referenced to the prophets to verify His resurrection.

**How can we do the same?**

**The promises of Scripture are resurrection promises. What promise are you trusting in today?**

1. We always hope in Jesus.

**Name one concrete way that you are trusting Jesus for your future.**

**Close**

As we end our study, know this: Because Jesus is risen from the dead, we will be raised with Him when He returns. Jesus Christ has the power to lay down His life and take it up again (John 10:18). More than two dozen times in the New Testament, followers of Jesus are promised to be raised with Jesus. No other promise occurs more frequently than the assurances of the believer's resurrection because it's linked with Jesus's resurrection.

**What hope does this promise give you today?**

**Share your biggest takeaway from this study.**

*Close in prayer.*