



LC STUDY GUIDE
“UnBroken”

The Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

April 16 - 29

How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

Introduction

We often think of heaven as this perfect place with golden streets, mansions, and plenty of fair-trade coffee houses. But really, we envision heaven has the domain where God’s presence reigns completely uninterrupted by the effects of sin, evil death so all that is left is complete peace, justice, and love – a perfect “shalom.” What do you think about as you dream and imagine being in God’s heavenly presence?

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ For we live by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

O – We see that Paul refers to the body as a “tent” which makes some sense as he was a tent-maker. As you re-read the passage, what do you see as he describes the nature of heaven, the after-life, and the believer?

I – Theologian N.T. Wright teaches that this passage describes heaven as “not the place we go when we die” but rather the place where God has our future bodies in store for us.” What do you think he means by this? How might this enhance our understanding of God and the after-life?

(The tent metaphor allows him to say the present body can be exchanged for a better one. Consider that Jesus’ resurrected body was not merely his first body but a glorified body that bore his scars. Two, that being embodied still matters beyond the grave (and not just being a ghost). Again, consider Luke 24 describing Jesus as not a ghost. Wright is interpreting Paul to say that our future is not about becoming disembodied but re-embodied. Further, we don’t become naked or have a bare spirit, but rather we are fully clothed in God’s righteousness. Lastly, we must notice that this new tent, this new body is not made by human hands but by God, and He has given us the Holy Spirit as a “deposit,” a sign of God’s glory.)

I – What do you think is the key understanding about death that Paul hopes his Corinthian (and his present-day) readers understand?

(In short, that they could be confident that they are with God in this life and surely in the next.)

A – Obviously it’s natural to have fears and apprehension of death and demise. Paul and his readers did too. But what hope can we find in Paul’s teaching in what God has in store for us now and later? How can these words shape our every-day reality?

- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.