

Reconstruction: A Foundation to Build Upon
Galatians 2:1-16 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.

Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- Share about one experience that rattles, or challenges, your faith in God. Your experience can be a personal one—i.e., something that happened to you—or something “out there” in the world that affected you.
- This week, we started a new sermon series. We’re talking about the increasingly common experience called “Deconstruction.” We can think of this experience as a taking apart, dismantling, and re-evaluation of the elements that make up your faith system.
 - To what degree have you been hearing about examples of deconstruction in your spheres?
 - Why do you think that this experience seems to be on the rise in our day?
 - Have you ever gone through this kind of experience, where you took apart and re-evaluated what you believe? Share about that experience as you are comfortable.
 - Some people move from **deconstructing** their faith to **deserting** their faith, while others move from **deconstructing** to **reconstructing** their faith. What do you think makes the difference in which way they go?
 - In your spiritual upbringing, were you **encouraged** or **discouraged** to ask honest questions, and take a hard look at the building blocks of your faith? How did that approach impact your faith formation?
- Pastor Josh brought up the topic of “church hurt” on Sunday. How would you define “church hurt?”
 - In your experience, to what degree has church hurt impacted you?
 - You’re still here, participating in a church growth group, so for those of you who have experienced church hurt, what enabled you to move through it and continue in relationship with a church family?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-17, then discuss the questions below.

- What seems to be the problem in the church at Corinth, which Paul is here addressing?
- Based on vv. 1-2, why is it important to be sure of the basic elements of the gospel?
- In v. 3, Paul calls these basic elements of the gospel, “of first importance.” What do you think that phrase means? Why are these things so important?
- In vv. 3-8, Paul lays out four essential elements of the gospel. (Josh covered these in Sunday’s sermon as well). Articulate each of the four, then discuss the following.
 - Why is each one of these elements critical to understand and believe?
- Looking at vv. 13-17, why is confidence in the resurrection of Jesus so essential to our faith?

- Pastor Josh suggested that when we experience church hurt—or for that matter, anything that causes us to deconstruct our Christian faith—we need to go back to the essential foundation of the **resurrection**, and build up from there.
 - How confident would you say that you are in the historical fact of the resurrection, on a scale of 1 to 10?
 - What factors influence the score you gave?
- In the sermon, we heard four grounds for believing the resurrection to be true. They are listed below. Which of these carries special weight for you? Which of them do you have questions about, or do you find difficult?
 - The empty tomb. *There is no disagreement—the tomb of Jesus was empty on Sunday morning.*
 - Many eyewitness accounts. *This was the ancient way of inviting anyone to verify the claim personally. History would have refuted the claim if it were not true.*
 - By all accounts, the first witnesses were women. *This fact would have debunked the resurrection accounts in the Gospels, so the writers would not have included this detail unless it were factually true.*
 - Changed disciples. *Every one of the disciples went from hiding out in fear, to publicly and courageously proclaiming that Jesus was alive, even at the expense of their lives. The only explanation for this change is that the resurrection actually happened.*
- Pastor Josh also suggested that many of us could add our own experience of Jesus as confirmation that he is alive. What would you say about your own experience as testimony that Jesus really is alive?
- Josh also claimed that the resurrection needs to be our starting point as we deconstruct, or re-evaluate, our faith.
 - If it is true, how does it impact all of our other questions about Jesus, the church, or the Bible?
 - If it is false, what is the practical implication?
- How are you feeling about the rest of this series? Are there areas you're hoping we'll discuss?
- What practical steps are you feeling challenged or encouraged to take as a result of this discussion?

Sharing/Prayer

- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for these needs, as well as for the matters that were shared during your preceding discussion.