

# Small Group Guide: The Supreme Life - Reconciliation Through Christ

Based on Colossians 1:19-23

## Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting God's presence and asking Him to open hearts and minds to understand and apply His Word.

## Ice Breaker

**Question:** Think of a time when a relationship in your life was broken and then restored. What made reconciliation possible? What made it difficult?

## Key Scripture

Colossians 1:19-23

*"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel."*

## Key Takeaways

1. **Reconciliation recognizes wrong without excusing it** - God doesn't minimize our sin or ignore it; He addresses it fully while offering complete forgiveness.
2. **Grace is a gift, not a wage** - We cannot earn salvation through our efforts; it's freely given but came at the cost of Jesus' life.
3. **Baptism is the response to God's grace** - It's where we "cash the check" of salvation, uniting ourselves with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
4. **Jesus is both Savior AND Lord** - Accepting Jesus means more than just believing in Him; it means submitting to His authority in every area of life.

## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Understanding Reconciliation

1. **The pastor mentioned two unhealthy ways people deal with broken relationships: erasing people from existence ("you're dead to me") or toxic empathy (excusing bad behavior). Which tendency do you struggle with more? Why?**
2. **How does God's approach to reconciliation differ from these two extremes? What does this teach us about how we should handle conflict in our own relationships?**

3. Read Colossians 1:21-22. We were "enemies in our minds because of our evil behavior." How does recognizing ourselves as the offending party (not God) change our perspective on salvation?

## Section 2: Grace as a Gift

4. The sermon used the illustration of a check that needs to be cashed. What does it mean to "cash the check" of God's grace? Have you done this? If so, when and how?
5. Discuss the difference between grace as a "gift" versus a "wage." Why is this distinction so important to our understanding of salvation?
6. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. If salvation is entirely a gift, why do some people still struggle with feeling like they need to earn God's approval?

## Section 3: The Five Fingers of Faith

The sermon outlined five essential elements of receiving salvation (the "five fingers"):

- **Hearing** the gospel
  - **Believing** Jesus rose from the dead
  - **Confessing** Jesus as Lord
  - **Repenting** (changing your mind/direction)
  - **Being baptized** in Jesus' name
7. Which of these five elements do you think is most misunderstood or neglected in modern Christianity? Why?
  8. The pastor emphasized that some people do four out of five but never get baptized. Why do you think people hesitate to take this step? What fears or misconceptions might hold them back?
  9. Read Romans 6:3-4. How does baptism symbolize our union with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection? Why is this visual so powerful?

## Section 4: Jesus as Lord

10. What's the difference between calling Jesus your "Savior" versus calling Him your "Lord"? Can you have one without the other?
11. The sermon asked: "Is Jesus both your Savior AND your Lord?" How would you honestly answer that question about your own life right now?
12. What are some practical, everyday areas where it's hardest to submit to Jesus' lordship? (finances, relationships, career, time, etc.)

## Section 5: Sincere Apologies and Forgiveness

13. The sermon listed several insincere apologies ("I'm sorry you feel that way," "Sorry, not sorry," etc.). Have you ever given or received one of these? How did it affect the relationship?
14. What makes an apology or forgiveness truly sincere? How does understanding God's sincere reconciliation with us help us reconcile with others?

## Personal Reflection Questions

*(Allow 3-5 minutes of quiet reflection)*

- Have I truly "cashed the check" of God's grace by responding in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism?
- In what areas of my life am I holding back from Jesus' lordship?

- **Is there someone I need to reconcile with, following God's example of addressing wrong while extending forgiveness?**

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## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Examine Your Salvation

- If you've never been baptized but have heard, believed, confessed, and are repenting, talk to a pastor or group leader about taking that step.
- If you were sprinkled as an infant or before truly understanding the gospel, prayerfully consider whether believer's baptism by immersion is something you should pursue.

#### Option 2: Live Out Reconciliation

- Identify one broken relationship in your life where you need to initiate reconciliation.
- Approach it God's way: acknowledge what was wrong without excusing it, but move toward forgiveness and restoration.
- Practice giving a sincere apology or extending sincere forgiveness this week.

#### Option 3: Submit to Jesus' Lordship

- Identify one specific area where you've been holding back from Jesus' authority (finances, a relationship, a habit, your time, etc.).
- Take one concrete step this week to surrender that area to Him.
- Share your commitment with one trusted person for accountability.

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## Group Prayer Time

### Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for the gift of reconciliation through Jesus' blood.
- Pray for anyone in the group who hasn't been baptized or is considering it.
- Pray for broken relationships that need healing.
- Ask God to help each person submit more fully to Jesus' lordship.
- Pray for Loveland Christian Church as it celebrates 100 years of ministry.

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## Closing Thought

*"Reconciliation recognizes that what happened was wrong. It makes no excuses for poor behavior. But reconciliation also moves towards forgiveness and restoration in a healthy way."*

**How will you live as a reconciled person this week—both with God and with others?**

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## Looking Ahead

- **May 31st** - One Body Sunday: Single service at 10am, picnic, and graduate recognition
  - **July 19th** - 100th Anniversary Celebration
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## Additional Resources

- Re-read Colossians 1:15-23 daily this week
- Study Romans 6:1-14 on baptism and new life
- Reflect on 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 on the ministry of reconciliation