


1 **Take time to read the account of the crucifixion this week in John 19:16-30.** The cross, comprised of wooden timbers and iron spikes was the gas chamber or electric chair of the first century. It originated as a means of maximum torture. We might wonder how such a despicable, horrible death could proclaim Jesus' deity and majesty. Yet John makes it clear that Jesus was glorified in the midst of horror.


 *On one hand we want to avoid a morbid preoccupation with the gore of the cross, but how do we avoid the opposite problem of becoming desensitized to it?*

 *What impact has the story of Jesus' crucifixion had on your life? What impact would you like it to have?*


 *The New Testament apostles explain what Jesus' death accomplished. Read 2Cor. 5:20-21; Gal. 2:20 and share with your group how these passages impact you.*

 *Do you wear a cross as a necklace, ring, pin, or tattoo? If so, what is its significance for you?*

2 **As we reflect on the cross this week, think about the following ironies of the crucifixion highlighted by a New Testament scholar named D.A. Carson.** What do each one of the statements below mean in the context of the crucifixion story and what are the associated theological implications?

 *The one who is mocked as king is King:*

 *The one who is utterly powerless is transcendently powerful:*

 *The one who "can't save himself" saves others:*

 *The one who cries out in despair trusts God:*

3 **Jesus reviewed his purpose in this last public discourse (John 12:20-36).** What did he say concerning *Belief, light, judgment, and The Father* and what importance should it have for us?

4 **Look up the three occasions in Jesus' earthly ministry when God spoke from heaven (Matt 3:16-17; 17:1-5; John 12:27-30).** Why do you think the Father spoke audibly at each of these points? Is there anything that ties the events together?

5 If you were to apply the spiritual principle of “dying in order to live,” which was illustrated by the wheat kernel, what would it look like in your life? Be prepared to share a practical example with your study group.

6 Think through some of the paradoxes Jesus speaks of in the passage (John 12:20-36):

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” What does this mean?

“Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” People whose priorities are right have such an attitude of love for the things of God that all interest in the affairs of this life appear by comparison as hatred. Where are you investing your life—in the here and now or in eternity? How can you grow in this area?

“If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.” How can you be a servant of Christ who will one day be honored?

“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself: He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.” How would Jesus’ death lead to life? How do you see this principle working out in your life?

“So the crowd answered him, ‘We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?’” The people struggled with Jesus’ teaching about the Son of Man. Son of Man is a messianic title (see Daniel 7:13-14), and Jesus’ favorite title for Himself. It connoted suffering and glorification. Discuss the paradox of suffering and glorification.

7 What do you think Jesus means when he says “whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life”? Which parts of your life would change most radically if you “hated your life in this world?” If you are a follower of Jesus what parts have already changed?

8 How does God make it possible for those who are spiritually dead, blind and hard hearted to leave the darkness and enter his light? Why is believing Jesus both essential and life changing?

PRAYER REQUESTS
