

Life and Death Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Who is your oldest living relative?
2. Are you afraid of dying? Explain.

Read the following passage: John 11:1-44.

Jesus was deeply impacted by the death of his friend Lazarus, even though he knew Lazarus would be raised from the dead. Navigating the loss of a friend or close relationship is often very difficult. All kinds of questions can come to the surface: Does God really love me? Why did this happen? Is it wrong for me to feel this upset or angry? Am I ever going to get over this? Jesus's experiences with Lazarus's family help us navigate the painful losses in our own lives.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Three times in this passage John reminds us that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters. Why is this important for us when we walk through painful losses in our lives? Are you confident that God always loves you? Are there moments when his love feels more tangible to you? Explain.
2. Protest and denial are natural responses when we are confronted with difficult or painful realities. Are there any realities in your life that you are having difficulty coming to terms with? Explain.
3. When Jesus was with Mary and some of the others with her, he expressed deep emotion and wept. Do you find it easy to cry when you experience loss or pain? Is there anybody you know that you feel comfortable crying in the presence of? What are some healthy ways to express the anger we might feel?
4. Do you talk to others about the sorrow or anger you feel? Explain. Are there any losses or painful experiences in your life for which you think you might have some unexpressed sorrow or anger? Explain.
5. Read Revelation 21:1-5; 9-27; 22:1-5. Do you get excited about what followers of Jesus will experience in the next life? Explain.
6. Read Philippians 1:15-26. What did Paul believe was the reason he would not yet die? How should we think about the purpose of our time in this life?

Pray