

EASTER 2013

Easter 2013 – Study Guide

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Easter is one of the biggest events of the year. It's the time when people buy chocolate bunnies, eat those delicious Peeps, and hide colorful eggs for their children to find. All those things are great, and there is nothing wrong with including those things in our celebration of Easter. But, for the Christian, Easter is the pinnacle for their Christian faith and is about something way greater than candy and colorful eggs. Had Jesus not died and risen from the dead, those parties and chocolate bunnies would be the only thing we would have to look forward to when Easter came around. However, since Jesus died and rose again, we know we have been given the gift of forgiveness of our sins and an opportunity to live a different kind of life. Now that's something to celebrate!

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Have you ever given a gift that wasn't well received, or have you ever received a gift you didn't deserve? Share your story.

Into the Bible

Jesus is alive, which means salvation is alive. Many times, it's so easy to get distracted and focus on our own sins, rather than focus on the One who's done the work of forgiving our sins. The more we focus on Jesus and what He's done for us, the less we'll tend to focus on ourselves. Throughout this Easter study, allow your heart to be filled with gratefulness for all Jesus has done for you and me.

EASTER 2013

WEEK ONE - STUDY GUIDE

- 2) Read **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** and **12-17**. What is Paul concerned with, and wants to make sure the church in Corinth understands? How important was the resurrection to him, and how important is it for us today?
 - 3) Read **Colossians 1:11-14** and **2:12-14**. Sometimes we try to figure out what it means to be a Christian, and that's great. However, instead of asking that, let's try to rephrase the question and ask it in a different way. *Who* makes us a Christian? Also, in **2:12-14**, what power does Scripture say is being used in making a person "alive in Christ"?
 - 4) Read **Ephesians 2:4-10**. These verses are monumental in showing how much God loved us and to what length He went to save us. In what way does Paul describe God's generosity towards us? Also, grace is mentioned three times in these six verses. When you think of the word *grace*, what definition comes to mind?

EASTER 2013

WEEK ONE - STUDY GUIDE

How Does This Apply?

- 5) All of the above Scriptures speak of salvation and life as happening in the present. God doesn't wait to give us salvation until we've worked up to a certain scale, but once we put our faith in Him, He saves us. We aren't saved by our works, but rather we are saved for good works. What are some ways God has put you to work for Him? How do you keep yourself in check from becoming all about works?
 - 6) In the *Where Am I Today* section we talked about receiving gifts we didn't deserve or gifts we may have given that weren't fully appreciated. In the same way, Easter is really about the free gift of salvation and life that Jesus has given to us. The biggest distraction we tend to have is ourselves. We think we have to earn something, or do something. What are some things that are possibly distracting you and how can you let go of those things?
 - 7) In Ephesians, we read about the grace of God and how He doesn't hold back His grace in our lives. How has the grace of God been evident in your life? Share a story if one comes to mind.

EASTER 2013

WEEK ONE - STUDY GUIDE

- 8) Considering that we have been focusing on prayer the previous three weeks and now celebrating Easter, now would be an awesome time to read **Ephesians 3:20-21** and thank God for how He has been working in your Life Group and in our church.

Current Prayer Focus

What we're praying for together as a church:

- Neighborhood Campuses
- Building for the Statesville Campus
- 100 New Leaders at The Cove

Increase Your Learning on Your Own

This Easter, I hope you are once again encouraged in seeing how much Jesus loves each one of us and the people around us. The significance of Jesus' death and resurrection is truly life changing for all of us. His resurrection power is still alive today! It's still changing the hearts of people all around us.

9) Read **1 Peter 3:18** and **Romans 6:9-10**. What's the significance of these verses?

10) **Read Romans 8:1-10.** These verses are powerful ones for Christ-followers. We get to live an empowered life through Jesus' death and resurrection. How does this reality change the way we live our everyday lives?