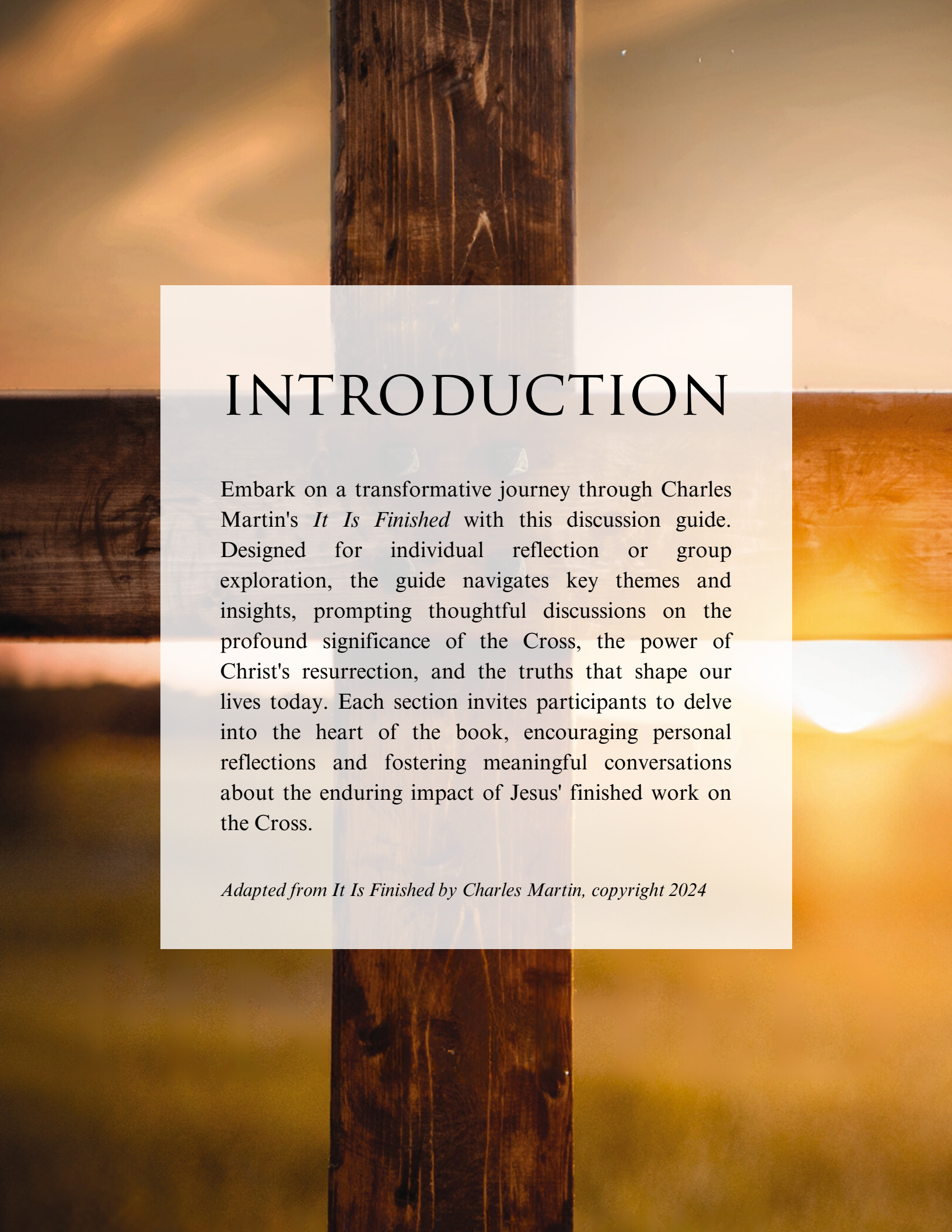


Charles Martin

IT IS FINISHED

DISCUSSION GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

Embark on a transformative journey through Charles Martin's *It Is Finished* with this discussion guide. Designed for individual reflection or group exploration, the guide navigates key themes and insights, prompting thoughtful discussions on the profound significance of the Cross, the power of Christ's resurrection, and the truths that shape our lives today. Each section invites participants to delve into the heart of the book, encouraging personal reflections and fostering meaningful conversations about the enduring impact of Jesus' finished work on the Cross.

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Introduction
Why Take a 40-Day Pilgrimage Back to the Cross?

1. In Galatians 3:1, Paul said, "Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?" Paul asks what has happened to their focus, why they have taken their eyes off of the cross. What might take our focus off of the cross today?

2. Read the three responses to Jesus in the introduction (pg. xx). How do you see each reflected in our culture today?

3. Martin reminds us that Paul declared that the Cross is offensive "because it is both a mirror of and a magnifier into our self." Do you agree with this? In what ways is the Cross a mirror and magnifier for you?

Part 1: The Origin Story of What Jesus Finished at the Cross

Days 1-10

1. The words “perfect love” and “perfected in love” and “perfected for all time” all share the same root (*telios*) as “It is finished” (*tetelestai*). How might recognizing the completeness of Christ's love in these words influence the way you view His finished work on the Cross and experience the depth of His perfect love in your life?

2. Have you ever wanted to hide from God? If so, why? Was there a time when you sensed Him asking, “Where are you?” like He did with Adam and Eve?

3. Martin says that Jesus’ death on the cross “was not a haphazard, last-ditch effort… when God realized things were out of control.” It was planned. How does that make you feel? Does it bring you comfort? Does it confuse you?

4. Martin states that “there’s more mercy in Jesus than sin in us.” Do you believe that? How can you share that good news with others?

5. How does our tendency to compare ourselves to others or categorize sin on a scale impact our understanding of our own spiritual condition? How might recognizing that “dead is dead” contribute to understanding our need for grace?

6. Reflect on John the Baptist’s purpose in John 1:30-31: “I came baptizing . . . that he might be revealed.” Can we say the same about the focus of our lives? How might our daily lives be transformed if our primary focus mirrored John's, dedicated to making Jesus known through our actions, words, and interactions?

7. Martin asks, “What kind of King takes from us what He did not deserve and gives us what we didn’t deserve and can’t ever earn (pg. 69)?” Considering this, what words or images come to mind when you contemplate the concept of a king? How does this perception relate to your understanding of God as a good King?"

8. Jesus referred to God as Father over 165 times in the Gospels. Why is this so significant? How do you personally connect with the idea of God as Father? Does it come naturally to you? Why or why not?

Part 2: Why Blood Was the Only Way to Settle Our Debt

Days 11 - 20

1. Scripture tells us that many in Samaria believed based on the testimony of the woman at the well. This made them seek out Jesus to believe even more. Have you shared your testimony of what Christ has done for you? What first caused you to seek Jesus?

2. Martin writes that "It's one thing to believe *that* His words are true and *that* Jesus is the Son of God, and it's quite another to believe *in* Jesus as the Son of God and place our whole trust *in* Him." (pg. 82). Describe the difference between "believing that" and "believing in."

3. Describe the "fear of the Lord" and how it differs from being afraid of God (pg. 91). Do you fear God? Revere Him? Even if you don't completely understand Him?

4. Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly tells His followers not to fear. Do you tend to be fearful or anxious? Is it natural for you to go to God in prayer when these feelings arise? Why or why not?

5. Despite our past sins and scars, we are now identified by the scars of Jesus. In what ways does this shift in identity impact your perception of yourself and others?

6. Reflecting on the concept of moving from a state of being cursed to blessed, consider your own journey. How does repentance offer hope and a pathway to blessing in the face of generational or individual curses?

7. What barriers or burdens do individuals often carry that keep them on the outside? How might the act of surrendering these burdens to the King on the throne impact our identity and how we live each day?

8. How does recognizing our inability to earn or inherit eternal life impact the way we view God's sacrifice and our own dependence on His gift of mercy? Discuss the transformative power of embracing the impossibility of saving ourselves.

Part 3: But Why Jesus' Blood?

Days 21-30

1.How does pride or offense sometimes interfere with our ability to truly hear and obey the teachings of Jesus? What practical steps and attitudes can we embrace to cultivate a humble and receptive heart?

2. Martin writes: "To truly believe is to admit I can't, and completely and totally surrender to the One who can." (pg. 164). What is your reaction to this statement? Does it make you feel relieved? Fearful of giving up control?

3. As we envision Jesus looking at His closest friends, gently asking if His words make them uncomfortable or if they consider following someone else, how can we relate to the disciples in this scenario (pg. 183)? How do you navigate the challenge of believing and trusting in the words of Jesus, even when you may not fully understand them? Can you share a personal experience where your faith was tested by a lack of understanding, and how did you approach or overcome that challenge?

4. Consider Martin's question in Day 25. Are you focused on the temporary, or the eternal?

5. We have an enemy who has worked really hard to obscure our view of Jesus. To lessen this Cross and to lessen Jesus (pg. 201). Do you feel as though you have experienced indifference or distraction from the power of the Cross? What are some practical ways we can regain focus?

6. Return to the story of Lazarus in John 11. Notice they rolled away the stone before Jesus called him out (John 11:40-44). What stone stands between you and Jesus? What needs rolling away in your life? What is preventing you from obeying His voice?

7. Considering the beautiful exchange where Jesus takes our dirty linens and clothes us in His robe of righteousness, share moments in your spiritual journey where you felt the tangible exchange of your brokenness for Christ's righteousness.

Part 4: What Was Exchanged at the Cross?

Days 31-40

1. Martin wants us to see the Cross for what it is. Does it make you uncomfortable to think of the trash and sweat and blood associated with the cross? As you've read, how are you answering his question: "What will you do with this man, Jesus?"

2. We are invited into the daily practice of dying to self. In this ongoing process, how does the promise of Christ living in us transform the way we approach each day, particularly when confronted with the reality of our inherent sinfulness?

3. Jesus tells us that "he who is forgiven little, loves little" (Luke 7:47). In the same way, he who has been forgiven much, loves much. How have you seen this evidenced in your own life or the lives of others?

4. Consider Jesus' unwavering love shown to Peter in Day 35. How does this truth that Jesus is not ashamed of us resonate with your personal experiences of shortcomings and failures? Discuss the challenges of fully embracing the idea that nothing can ever separate us from His love. How might this assurance influence your response to your own mistakes and those of others?

5. Does your life look like the lives of those who believed in Acts? Have you put limitations on the Holy Spirit's power to move in and through you? Why or why not?

6. C. S. Lewis said that man can call Jesus a fool or a lunatic or a liar, but he cannot say that He was a great moral teacher—it would not line up with who Jesus claimed to be. Who do you say He is?

7. *Tetelestai*—"It is finished." Now, at the close of this journey, what does that word mean to you?