



The Case for Christ Participant's Guide
Copyright © 2008 by Lee Strobel and Garry Poole

Requests for information should be addressed to:
Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

ISBN 978-0-310-28282-2

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *Holy Bible, Today's New International Version*™. TNIV®. Copyright © 2001, 2005 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189, USA. All rights reserved.

Internet addresses (websites, blogs, etc.) and telephone numbers printed in this book are offered as a resource to you. These are not intended in any way to be or imply an endorsement on the part of Zondervan, nor do we vouch for the content of these sites and numbers for the life of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Interior design by Beth Shagene

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

Session 1

The Investigation of a Lifetime 7

Session 2

Eyewitness Evidence 21

Session 3

Evidence Outside the Bible 37

Session 4

Analyzing Jesus 53

Session 5

Evidence for the Resurrection 71

Session 6

Reaching Your Verdict 95

Session 1



THE INVESTIGATION OF A LIFETIME

For much of my life I was a skeptic. In fact, I considered myself an atheist. To me, there was far too much evidence that God was merely a product of wishful thinking, of ancient mythology, of primitive superstition.... It wasn't a phone call from an informant that prompted me to reexamine the case for Christ. It was my wife.... Eventually I wanted to get to the bottom of what was prompting the subtle but significant shifts in my wife's attitudes, so I launched an all-out investigation into the facts surrounding the case for Christianity.... I applied the training I had received at Yale Law School as well as my experience as legal affairs editor of the Chicago Tribune. And I plunged into the case with more vigor than with any story I had ever pursued.

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*

READ THIS!

If possible, read the following content in preparation for your group meeting. Otherwise, read it as follow-up.

The Case for Christ, introduction: Reopening the Investigation of a Lifetime

WATCH THIS!

DVD Introduction and Teaching Segment #1

For every DVD clip, space is provided to take notes on anything that stands out to you.

DISCUSS THIS!

1. To what degree can you relate to the comments people made about Jesus in the DVD segment? What best represents your current position regarding what you believe about Jesus Christ?

"I don't believe we'll ever know if Jesus was really what everyone says he was. I think it's a lot of folklore. I think it's a lot of historical misrepresentation. It's a lot of wishful thinking. But I don't think we know. I don't think we'll ever know. And I don't think there's any way to prove what has been claimed about Jesus for all these years."

Woman on the street

2. What are your biggest questions or objections regarding Jesus Christ and the Christian faith?



Think About This!

“So, then, Christ may be said to be a fiction in the four senses that (1) it is quite possible that there was no historical Jesus; (2) even if there was, he is lost to us, the result being that there is no historical Jesus available to us; (3) the Jesus who “walks with me and talks with me and tells me I am his own” is an imaginative visualization and in the nature of the case can be nothing more than a fiction; and finally, (4) “Christ” as a corporate logo for this and that religious institution is a euphemistic fiction, not unlike Ronald McDonald, Mickey Mouse, or Joe Camel, the purpose of which is to get you to swallow a whole raft of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors by an act of simple faith, short-circuiting the dangerous process of thinking the issues out to your own conclusions.”

Marshall J. Gauvin, *Did Jesus Christ Really Live?*

“If Jesus Christ is only a human being – no matter how splendid a specimen of humanity he may be – he is part of the problem, not its solution.”

British theologian Alister McGrath

“Historically, it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if he did we do not know anything about him.”

Atheist Bertrand Russell

3. What level of confidence do you have that Jesus is an actual historical figure? Or, how confident are you that the existence of Jesus Christ is a matter of legend or wishful thinking? Give reasons behind your response.

*“Jesus? I would say no
doubt he lived as a person
but to the extent of what
he did, I’m not sure.”*

Woman on the street

4. How possible is it for us to know if Jesus was, in fact, divine? Give reasons for your response. What factors would increase our ability to determine the truth about Jesus' identity?

"If you were selected for a jury in a real trial, you would be asked to affirm up front that you haven't formed any preconceptions about the case. You would be required to vow that you would be open-minded and fair, drawing your conclusions based on the weight of the facts and not on your whims or prejudices. You would be urged to thoughtfully consider the credibility of the witnesses, carefully sift the testimony, and rigorously subject the evidence to your common sense and logic."

Lee Strobel

7. While still an atheist, Lee's initial conclusion was this: *If Christianity is true, it has huge implications for one's life.* What do you think he meant by this statement? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment? Why?

Optional Discussion Questions

- Did you have the opportunity to read the introduction to *The Case for Christ*? Lee Strobel makes the observation that examining the evidence and the facts about Jesus is “the investigation of a lifetime.” What do you think is the significance of determining Jesus’ identity?
- In the video clip, Lee and Leslie Strobel shared aspects of their spiritual stories. Lee had antagonistic attitudes toward both Christians and Christianity, while Leslie was more neutral about the issues and uncertain about what she believed. Which of the two stories do you relate to most and why?
- Generally speaking, are you driven more by your head or by your heart? To what degree are your questions or objections about God a “heart issue” — as they were for Leslie — and to what degree is your spiritual journey a “head issue,” which requires facts and documentation, as for Lee? How might that impact your examination of the evidence for Christ?
- What patterns of church attendance did you establish growing up? How and why has that changed over the years? How would you describe your overall experience with church? If you’ve never attended a church service before, describe your impressions of what that might be like.
- In what ways do Christians repel you from Christianity? In what ways, if any, do they attract you?
- How would you react if the most important person in your life started attending church regularly and eventually became a Christian? How do you suppose your friends and family members would respond if you one day decided to become a Christian?
- Do you know anyone who has made the decision to become a Christian in the time that you’ve known them? If so, in what ways has he or she become a different person? How has their decision affected your relationship? What are some of the positive and negative changes that you have observed?