



LIFELINE Discussion Guide

Week of October 30, 2023

1. Read aloud the brief biographical summary of MARTIN LUTHER on page 2 below. Have each person in your group take turns by reading one paragraph each.
2. What do you know about Martin Luther? What were some of Martin Luther's greatest contributions to Christianity? What is a "reformation"?
3. Luther became a champion for "*Sola Fide*" and "*Solus Christus*" -- these are Latin mottos that proclaim the important doctrines of "Faith alone" and "Christ alone". What do these doctrines have to do with a person's eternal salvation? (see Ephesians 2:8-9).
4. What would you say to a friend who is trying to "earn" their salvation through church attendance, religious activities, or basic morality? What does Scripture say about our best efforts in Isaiah 64:6 and Romans 3:10-12. Can we earn the righteousness God requires?
5. Martin Luther was greatly impacted by the New Testament letter of Galatians. Read Galatians 1:1-10 by having each person in your group read 1 verse. What is the big idea of this section?
6. If the Bible teaches that there is only ONE true gospel, what is that gospel? (See 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21). How would you share the ONE TRUE GOSPEL in a 1-minute elevator ride with someone who wasn't a Christian?
7. Use your smartphone to access Google or your favorite search engine. What are the translations and definitions of these Reformation-era slogans? Why do they still matter today?

Sola Scriptura: _____

Sola Gratia: _____

Sola Fide: _____

Solus Christus: _____

Soli Deo Gloria: _____

8. What are some practical ways you can promote and protect these vital beliefs in your local church?
Example: Expect pastors, teachers, and leaders to teach faithfully from the Bible every week.

What is Reformation Day?



ANSWER

Reformation Day is a Protestant religious holiday celebrated on October 31. It recognizes the day German monk Martin Luther nailed his [95 Theses](#) to the door of the Wittenberg Church in 1517. This act is commemorated as the official starting point of the [Protestant Reformation](#).

Officially, Reformation Day has been commemorated since 1567. Exact dates for the holiday varied until after the two hundredth celebration in 1717 when October 31 became the official date of celebration in Germany and later expanded internationally.

Within the Lutheran tradition, Reformation Day is considered a lesser holiday and is officially named "The Festival of the Reformation." Most Lutheran churches (and others who celebrate this day) commemorate it on the Sunday prior to October 31.

The impact of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation has been enormous on global Christianity. In contrast to the extra-biblical traditions and works-based practices of Roman Catholicism, Luther called the Church back to the good news of salvation by grace alone through faith alone ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)).

Luther believed the Word of God was the supreme authority for the Christian faith, rather than tradition or papal decrees. In the process of bringing the Scriptures to the common person, Luther translated the Bible into German, published numerous books and sermons of biblical teachings, and composed numerous hymns based on biblical themes. Many of his hymns are still sung today.

Luther was brought to trial before the church, and the court attempted to force him to recant. Luther's response is often quoted: "I cannot choose but adhere to the Word of God, which has possession of my conscience; nor can I possibly, nor will I even make any recantation, since it is neither safe nor honest to act contrary to conscience! Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God! Amen."

From Germany, the Protestant Reformation expanded through Europe, influencing the work of [John Calvin](#) in Geneva, [Ulrich Zwingli](#) in Zurich, and [John Knox](#) in Scotland. The Reformation Luther led also sparked the Anabaptist (free church) movement and the English Reformation. These movements, in turn, influenced the spread of Christianity to the Americas and throughout the world where European exploration took place. South Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand all felt the impact of Luther's hammer in Wittenberg.

Robert Rothwell has noted, "Today, Luther's legacy lives on in the creeds and confessions of Protestant bodies worldwide. As we consider his importance this Reformation Day, let us equip ourselves to be knowledgeable proclaimers and defenders of biblical truth. May we be eager to preach the Gospel of God to the world and thereby spark a new reformation of church and culture."

Reformation Day remains a central rallying point for all of those who choose to follow Christ by faith according to His Word. The holiday commemorates the actions of a man who was willing to stand against the ideas of his day and to present God's Word as our guide for salvation ([John 3:16](#)) and Christian living.