

LifeGroup Study “When Reasonable Becomes Rebellion” 3/29/2026

Main Passages: *John 11:45-57*

Culture Code Emphasis

Presence > Preference

Main Idea / Question

Sometimes rebellion doesn't look reckless—it looks reasonable. Whenever Christians try to protect a world we prefer by reshaping Jesus into something safer, we're repeating John 11...calling it wisdom while we sideline the Messiah.

PORCH TALK

(Intentional but accessible — start relational, move reflective)

Leader Setup: Jesus raises Lazarus...many believe...leaders fear the consequences...they choose self-preservation over truth. They don't deny the miracle. They deny the implication. They reject Jesus not because He's false, but because He's costly.

Conversation Starters (choose 3–4):

- What stood out to you most from this passage/this week's sermon?
- Where have you been tempted to be “reasonable” where God has called you to be obedient?
- How can self-preservation slowly become self-worship?
- In what ways do you think we have a tendency to “revise” Jesus to suit our preferences?

Support Scriptures: *Romans 12:1-2, Psalm 37:3-9, Philippians 2:5-8, Isaiah 64:8, Mark 14:35-36, 1 Peter 5:6-10, Jeremiah 10:23, Psalm 9:10*

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LIVING ROOM

(Deeper formation conversation — walk slowly through the text)

1) Fear Can Make Rebellion Sound Reasonable

Read: *John 11:45-51, Matthew 16:25, Isaiah 53:5-6*

Context: When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, many Jews who had witnessed the miracle believed in Him. When word made it back to the chief priests and Pharisees, they gathered together to address their concerns about what this growing belief in Jesus might trigger.

Say: Safety and comfort can become an idol in your life. It can also be a good thing that you want too much. What we can't imagine losing might reveal what we're actually worshipping.

Ask (go slow): What feels too important to lose? Where have you believed yourself to be in control of a situation only to find that God was working out a different predetermined plan? What tends to be your response when your stability or control is disrupted? What do you do to challenge your fears and return to faith and obedience?

Reflection Thought:

Once comfort, safety, and routine become an idol, surrender starts to feel irresponsible, obedience starts to feel dangerous, and Jesus starts to feel expendable.

2) God Can Turn Rebellion Into Redemption

Read: *John 11:51-52*

Context: Caiaphas unintentionally prophesied the true nature of Jesus' coming death while trying to rationalize why He should be killed.

Say: Idols always demand a sacrifice. When we worship something other than God, we will eventually be willing to sin in order to protect it.

Ask: What are you prone to sacrifice first to accommodate your preferences? Have you noticed that making the initial sacrifice to prioritize your preferences can make it easier to allow other things to be sacrificed as well?

Support Scriptures: *Romans 12:1-2, Psalm 37:3-9, Philippians 2:5-8, Isaiah 64:8, Mark 14:35-36, 1 Peter 5:6-10, Jeremiah 10:23, Psalm 9:10*

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Reflection Thought:

The gospel is not that we have to figure out what to sacrifice to keep our lives intact. The gospel is that God has provided the true sacrifice in His Son that we might have life.

3) Refusing Grace Hardens The Heart

Read: *John 11:53-57, Romans 8:32*

Context: After the council of Pharisees and chief priests convened, they planned to kill Jesus going forward. Since Jesus was no longer walking publicly among the Jews, they gave orders for people to report Him if they knew where He was.

Say: We may protect a fear, excuse a habit, defend a wound, and preserve a kingdom one small and seemingly benign choice at a time. But before long, we build routines, justifications, relationships, and thought patterns that keep Jesus at a safe distance from the thing we refuse to surrender. We may never say “crucify Him”, but we reinterpret Him into a safer Jesus who will not threaten what we worship.

Ask: What boundaries have you set before Jesus to control how close He can come? What are you afraid He will take if He is really Lord? How do we know that surrender to Jesus is safe?

Reflection Thought:

If God did not spare His own Son, your deepest security cannot rest in your ability to control outcomes. It comes when the Father gives up His Son for you.

Support Scriptures: *Romans 12:1-2, Psalm 37:3-9, Philippians 2:5-8, Isaiah 64:8, Mark 14:35-36, 1 Peter 5:6-10, Jeremiah 10:23, Psalm 9:10*

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AFTER GLOW

(Slow reflection — pastoral, personal, anchoring)

Read: Philippians 3:7-8, Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Say: The most dangerous thing in your life may not be open rebellion. It may be the part of your life where you have become very reasonable about why Jesus cannot be Lord there. But the safest place in the world is not in your control. It is surrendered to Jesus.

Ask: Where do you struggle to trust God’s lordship in your life? Why is this an area you insist on maintaining direct control? What is true about who God is that makes surrender the best and safest choice?

Reflection Verse: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”
Proverbs 3:5-6

FOLLOW-UP & CHALLENGE

Identify: Identify areas in your life where you are hesitant to give ultimate lordship to God.

Be Honest: Have an honest conversation with the Lord about why those areas are off limits, whether that is fear, apathy, or something else.

Listen: What does God say that directly speaks to those places? Spend time in prayer and in His Word and allow the Holy Spirit to direct your understanding and your heart.

Seek Support: Confide in a brother or sister in Christ who you can trust to love, challenge, and encourage you as you work to release the “off-limits” areas to the Lord.

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