

# RENEWAL WITHIN DEFEAT

*Luke 24:13-35*

**E**ven though Sandy had seldom run five miles at a stretch, she decided to enter a five-mile race. At the starter's signal she took off with a pack of male runners and kept up with them for a mile or so. Then she fell hopelessly behind. By the time she struggled across the finish line, she wondered why she had bothered to enter the race at all. Imagine her shock when she was handed a first-place trophy! The reason: all the other women in the race had dropped out or chosen to walk the route instead of run, so Sandy was the first female finisher. Obvious defeat had turned into unexpected (though hardly well-earned) victory.

Who could feel more defeated than Jesus' followers after his death? Two of them discussed their dashed hopes as they trudged home from Jerusalem. Then a stranger joined them and revolutionized their outlook.

**Group Discussion.** When and how has discouragement changed into encouragement for you?

**Personal Reflection.** When have you felt defeated with no place to turn? If the situation has been resolved, what was the outcome?

A group of women carry spices to Jesus' tomb expecting to anoint his dead body. Instead they meet angels who tell them that Jesus has risen. They run and tell the apostles and others, who think they are talking nonsense, although Peter goes to the tomb to check it out. Later that day, two discouraged followers of Jesus are walking from Jerusalem to the

village of Emmaus and talking over the gut-wrenching events of the past few days. *Read Luke 24:13-35.*

1. What makes the resurrection of Jesus hard for people to believe?
2. In the city of Jerusalem, Jesus' followers had been told that Jesus was alive again, risen from the dead. What can you conclude from the fact that these two people left the company of disciples in Jerusalem and headed home to Emmaus?
3. The two travelers gave the inquiring stranger a concise summary of Jesus' life and death, including the women's report that he was alive again (vv. 15-24). Based on their appearance and words, how had they found "Jesus of Nazareth" to be *insufficient*, that is, not living up to their expectations?
4. Why did Jesus call his two companions "foolish" and "slow to believe" (vv. 25-26)?

5. Although Jesus had not yet identified himself to the travelers, how did he demonstrate that “the Messiah” had fulfilled all that was prophesied about him (vv. 25-27)?

6. What effect should Jesus’ review of the prophecies about the Messiah have had on the two travelers?

7. How did the simple act of sharing a meal turn into a moment of revelation (vv. 28-31)?

8. Looking back, what clues had the two disciples already received about their companion’s identity (v. 32)?

9. How did realizing that Jesus was alive transform the lives of the two disciples (vv. 33-35)?

10. What difference do you think it makes whether Jesus is alive today or not?

11. In your own life, what difference(s) has it made to know that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today?

12. Because Jesus lives, he is sufficient for any need that comes up in your life this week (and beyond). This coming week, how will you keep reminding yourself of that reality?



*Pray that you will stand secure in Christ's victory over death and over every other human sorrow.*

#### NOW OR LATER

Study 1 Corinthians 15, in which Paul contrasts what would be true if Christ has *not* been raised and what is true because he *has* been raised.