

## Acts 9:36-43 | Life Restored

### InterVarsity Bible Study Guide (60 minutes)

#### WELCOME (7 minutes)

Icebreaker: Do you have a hidden talent? What is it?

We are studying the Bible together because we want to grow in our love for Jesus through Scripture and because we want to grow in our witness to Jesus through Scripture.

Let's pray and ask God to help us as we study today's passage together...

#### GROUP NORMS (3 minutes)

Let's remember our group norms as we study together today:

1. Use "I" statements (speak for yourself, not for everyone)
2. Avoid judgmental statements (no shame or blame)
3. Allow space for everyone to share if they choose
4. Practice active listening and give advice only if invited to do so
5. What we share here stays here (confidentiality)

#### INTRODUCE the Scripture Text (3 minutes)

Today we will be studying a passage about grief, death, and resuscitation. These are weighty and complicated topics. Some of us have experienced more death and loss in our communities than we could have imagined. As we begin this passage today, there is space and permission for all of us to honestly share our thoughts and tensions.

#### SEE the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

Let's read the passage and talk about what we see.

- Who are the characters? How are they connected?
- What is happening? When? Where?
- Which words are being repeated?
- Is the author comparing or contrasting anything?
- Would you like to point out anything else you notice?

Acts 9:36-43 NIV

<sup>36</sup> In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. <sup>37</sup> About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. <sup>38</sup> Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

<sup>39</sup> Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

<sup>40</sup> Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. <sup>41</sup> He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. <sup>42</sup> This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. <sup>43</sup> Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

### DISCOVER the Scripture Text (25 minutes)

Let’s discuss a few questions that will help us discover and understand the text.

1. Sending for Peter in a town about 10 miles away would have taken 7-8 hours of travel round trip. Why do you think the disciples went to such trouble to bring Peter?
2. What might it have been like to be one of the widows mourning the death of Tabitha? Why might they be showing Peter the clothing?
3. Tabitha’s ministry to the widows was so valuable to them and to the other disciples, yet there were many other miracles God could have done to bless this community. Why do you think God brings Tabitha back to life?
4. If we could communicate the core message of this text in just one sentence, what would it be? What do we sense God is communicating through this passage?

### RESPOND to the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

We’re going to mix it up a little for this study and instead of me summarizing, I want to give us as a small group the opportunity to collaborate with each other. What do we think the main message of the passage is?

Let’s discern together how we can respond to what God is saying. We will answer one option from below, whichever seems most relevant to our group’s discussion of the text.

- A. How is this passage expanding our view of what is possible when we partner with God in ministry and mission?
- B. Personally, where are you desperate for Jesus to bring new life? As a group, pray and ask Jesus to bring life in these areas.
- C. How can we as a community take steps toward bringing the resurrection life of Jesus into reality? Where do we see the need for new life around us, and what action can we take together?
- D. When Tabitha died, the disciples sent for Peter and urged him to come “at once.” Consider your ministry context and mission opportunities. What urgent thing do you sense God inviting you to act on?

### CLOSE (2 minutes)

Let’s pray and thank God for our time in Scripture together...

*Tips for leading the group discussion:*

- *Participate but keep your comments short to make space for others.*
- *Silence is okay. Encourage further discussion by saying “What else?” instead of commenting on every response.*