

EDO
EQUIPPED TO DISCIPLE OTHERS



A five-week study guide
How does the Bible answer
5 major Life Questions?

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Arcola Bible Church

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The Premise

Can you think of an example where a person was in danger, and did not know it? Was the danger any less real by not knowing about it?

Many of us have formed our opinions about the Bible based on what we have heard others say about the Bible (our parents, pastors, teachers, those who claim to be Christians, even celebrities). But have you ever read for yourself what the Bible says about life?

The Bible is the most translated book in history. Isn't a book that has had such a profound impact on millions of people worth reading with your own eyes?

We invite you to consider what the Bible says about five major life questions.

It may change your life.

Ray Cardwell
Teaching Pastor

Addendum: The Effects of the Fall

This is for additional study. All of the references are from Genesis, unless otherwise indicated.

Before	After
Perfect Environment 1:31 Food, no killing 1:30 No disease, death No violent storms 2:5-6	Ground cursed 3:17-18 Romans 8:19-23 Thorns, thistles Pain in child birth
Fellowship / Communication with God 1:28-30, 2:16	Hid from God 3:8 Enemies Romans 5:10 Alienated Colossians 1:21
Responsibility - To be a steward over all the earth 1:26,28, 2:15, 19-20 Pslam 8:4-8 Be fruitful and multiply	Everything is more difficult Ground resists 3:19 Creation no longer subject to man Hebrews 2:8-9
Privileges God's Blessing 1:28 Freely eat 2:16-17	Driven out of the garden 3:23-24 God's wrath
Life 2:7 Man has a physical body and a soul	Death Spiritual 2:17 Rom 6:23 Physical 3:19
Innocence / No guilt 2:25	Sin / Guilty James 2:10

Don't Stop Here

It is normal to have more questions that need answers before you are ready to respond. We encourage you to seek out those answers.

If you are interested in continuing with a similar study, we recommend our next booklet *Who is Jesus?*, a 5 week study guide. These booklets are available on the EquippedToDisciple.org website.

Seek out a person who professes a relationship with Jesus and knows the Scriptures to continue the dialogue. Also, locate a church where the pastor teaches from the Bible. There you will meet folks that can help you find the answers to your questions.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."
Matthew 7:7-8

If you live close by, we welcome you to attend Arcola Bible Church. You can visit our church website, ArcolaBible.org for more information.

Questions that Deserve Answers

There are five sections in this booklet:

1. **Who is God?**
What God are we talking about?
2. **Who is man?**
What happened to mankind?
Why are things so messed up?

3. **What has God promised to do?**
Who is Jesus?
Who did He claim to be?
4. **What did Jesus do?**
Why did Jesus come to Earth?
5. **What are we to do?**
What does God expect of us?

The Plan

We will explore one question each week by:

- Reading the verses in the section
- Recording your observations, and comments
- Meeting with another person to discuss your observations.

The Goal: At the end of five weeks, you will know the Bible's answers to these five life questions.

Section I: Who is God?

What God are we talking about?

We live in a culture where many claim there is no God. Others claim there are many gods. Still others dogmatically state it is impossible for us to know for sure.

The Bible starts with a declaration that God exists. The first verse of the Bible says:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1*

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the believers who lived in Rome. They lived in a culture similar to ours, in that there were all kinds of views about God.

Paul addressed the issue of the existence of God in the beginning of his letter. Read the following passage and write down your observations.

Romans 1:18-23

Did We Accomplish the Goal?

The premise of this series was that many of us have formed our conclusions about the Bible based upon what others have said.

You have read several passages from the Bible first hand over the last five weeks and now have the Bible's answers to five major life questions.

Who is God?

Who is man?

What has God promised to do?

What did Jesus do?

What are we to do?

You now have a basic understanding of the Bible's answers.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16

How will you respond?

The Bible is a love story. It is about the God of love who seeks to restore His intended relationship with all mankind—including you.

What Does it Mean to Believe?

To believe in Christ includes:

- 1) Intellectual agreement—I understand and agree I am a sinner, that God is righteous. I understand Jesus bore the penalty of my sin. He is offering me the gift of eternal life.
- 2) Personal application—This applies to me. I must choose to respond, to accept or reject the invitation of Christ.
- 3) A Decision—I choose to entrust my eternal destiny to Christ and what He did for me on the cross.

"Whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

Have you made the most important decision of your life - the decision that determines your eternal destiny?

Have you chosen to believe in Jesus Christ?

*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."
John 1:12*

The Creation Account

Paul claims the existence of God is evident to everyone through His creation.

That takes us back to the beginning. In the book of Genesis, chapters 1-2 give an account of the creation of heaven and earth. Read Genesis chapter 1 and write down your observations.

Genesis 1:1-31

Genesis chapter 1 gives an overview of the creation week. Chapter 2 gives more details on the creation of man and woman. Read chapter 2 and write down your observations.

Genesis 2:1-25

**Remember the goal:
Be objective and observe what the text says.**

The Most Basic Answer

After reading Genesis 1-2, we can give the Bible's basic answer to the primary question about God.

He is the one true God
who created everything.

But what about evolution and the claims of science?

This question is important, but our immediate goal is to understand what the Bible says. The Bible claims God created everything. The question of "how God did it" is too large for this series. There are hundreds of books and articles on the creation/evolution debate. Example websites devoted to this issue include: AnswersInGenesis.org, Creation.com.

If the creation account of Genesis 1-2 is true, what does the creation event tell us about God?

List some of God's attributes that were demonstrated by His ability to create everything.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

How do we Receive the Gift?

God offers the gift of eternal life, but we must choose to accept it. The Bible basically gives a one word answer. From the passages below, what is that one word?

John 3:1-16

John 1:12

John 11:25-26

Acts 16:22-31

1 John 5:10-13

According to these verses, a person either "*has life*" or "*does not have life*." There is no middle road. There is no working toward God and hoping finally to be good enough.

Consider the contrast in views:

What do most people believe one must do to be right with God?

What does the Bible say one must do to be right with God?

Section 5: What are we to do?

What does God expect of us?

Christianity has one major difference from all other religions of the world. Other religions are basically mankind trying to gain God's approval through their own effort. The definition of living a good life varies among religions, but the overall approach is the same. Individuals try their best to be a good person and hope God will accept them. They live under the bondage of a religious system, never sure if they will be good enough, wondering if God will accept them.

As we have seen, the message of the Bible is very different. Man is separated from God due to sin, and there is nothing man alone can do to overcome sin. No amount of good works will take away our sin. God has done all the work through Jesus Christ who came and bore the penalty of sin. Based upon that completed work, God now offers us the "gift" of eternal life. But a response is required; we must choose to accept the "gift".

Summarize the following verses in your own words:

Romans 6:23

Ephesians 2:8-9

John 14:6

Acts 4:12

John 10:1-18

The Character of God

What is God like?

The following passages give us more insight into the character of God. Read the following, and write down what each say about God.

Deuteronomy 4:39

Psalms 93:1-2

John 4:24

Lamentations 3:22-23

Psalms 33:4-5, Psalm 89:14

Exodus 34:6-7

1 John 4:7-9

(1 John not John)

**Remember the goal:
What does the Bible say about God?**

Summary

What does the Bible say about God?

In Genesis 1-2 the Bible declares that God:

According to Romans 1:18-23:

Who is accountable for acknowledging God?

What is the basis of the accountability?

List the character qualities of God that we read about:

How has your understanding of God changed by considering what the Bible says?

The Big Picture (Sections 1-4)

There is a Creator God who made everything.

Man is separated from God.

All men have fallen short of God's standard for living.

The Old Testament is filled with examples demonstrating man's continued failure.

However, God loves the world so much that He promised to provide a way to restore the relationship.

Jesus Christ came to take away the sins of the world.

Jesus claimed to be God and man. He provided proof through His miracles and His teaching.

Jesus bore the penalty of sin on the cross.

Jesus was raised from the dead, after three days, as more historical proof that He is who He claimed to be.

What other observations have you gained through these studies?

Summary

What does the Bible say Jesus did?

Why did Jesus come to earth?

What made the sacrifice of Jesus different from all of the Old Testament sacrifices?

Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?

What is the significance of the resurrection?

How has your understanding of the death of Jesus on the cross changed by considering what the Bible says?

Thinking it Through

If the claim of the Bible is true regarding the existence of a Creator God who made everything, how does this impact the following areas of life:

Absolute truth: Does it exist? Is it knowable? How?

The debates over what is right and what is wrong:

The accountability of man's actions:

God's intent regarding the purpose of our lives:

List some other areas of life that are influenced by the Bible's claim of a Creator God:

Section 2: Who is Man?

What happened to mankind?
Why are things so messed up?

In section 1 we read the creation account. This week we are going to take a closer look at what the Bible says about man. Read the passages below and write down your observations about man.

Genesis 1:26-31

Who is man like?
What responsibility is given to man?

Psalm 8

What does Psalm 8 say about the position of man within God's creation?

Jesus Arose from the Dead

After Jesus died on the cross, His body was buried in a tomb. After three days, His body was gone. Jesus told His disciples this would happen. (Matthew 20:17-19)

All four of the Gospel accounts cover the events surrounding the burial and resurrection of Jesus. (Matthew 28, Mark 16; Luke 23; John 20) We will look at one of them.

Burial Preparations:

Matthew 27:57-66

vs 62-66 What was the fear of the religious leaders?

The Resurrection:

Matthew 28:1-20 (write your observations)

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

vs 19 What does Paul say regarding the historical accuracy of the resurrection of Jesus?

The credibility of the Christian faith stands or falls on the historical reality of the resurrection.

Why did Jesus die on the Cross?

Ever since the Fall, mankind has been separated from God. The perfect righteousness and justice of God cannot ignore sin. It must be judged.

Romans 3:23; 5:12

Romans 6:23

The death of Jesus on the cross was not an act of martyrdom. From the beginning of His life, it was said that He would die for our sins. (Matthew 1:21; John 1:29)

The penalty of sin has been paid. Restoration of the relationship between God and man is now possible. What do the following say about our sin?

Colossians 2:13-14

Galatians 1:3-4

Hebrews 2:9

2 Corinthians 5:21

What are the two "transactions" mentioned in this verse? Note the first is stated as completed, but the second is stated as a potential, "*we might*".

What does it mean that man was created in the image and likeness of God?

There is more detail in chapter 2 regarding the responsibility that God gave the first man, Adam. Read the passages below and write your observations.

Genesis 2:15-17

What "job" did God give Adam?

What restriction did God give Adam?

What was the consequence of violating the restriction?

Genesis 2:18-25

vs 18 What do we learn about man?

vs 19-20 What was Adam tasked to do?

vs 21-22 What did God do?

vs 23-25 What do these verses and Matthew 19:1-6 say about marriage?

What Happened between God and Man?

We read about Adam and Eve's perfect relationship with God in chapter 2. Everything changes in chapter 3. Read through chapter 3 and record your observations.

Genesis 3:1-7

vs 1-5 What is the serpent's strategy?

vs 6 What did Eve and Adam do?

vs 7 Immediately something changed, and they knew it. What did they do?

Who is the Serpent?

This is an important question that goes beyond the scope of this study. A simple answer can be found in Revelation 12:9.

Genesis 3:8-13

vs 8 What did Adam and Eve do when God approached?

vs 9-13 What did God do?

How did both Adam and Eve respond?

Genesis 3:14-19

Write down the consequences of eating the fruit:

What Happened on the Cross?

Jesus knew that He would be crucified on a cross.

Matthew 16:21-23

All four Gospels give a narrative of the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion. (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19) We will look at one of them. Record your observations.

Mark 15:16-47

vs 16-20 Note the undeserved suffering He endured

vs 33 Darkness fell over the whole land

vs 34 Jesus was separated from God the Father.

On the cross, Jesus bore the penalty of the sins of the whole world. At this moment of darkness and separation from God the Father, Jesus was bearing our sin.

vs 38 After Jesus died physically, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom as an indication that the animal sacrifices in the temple were no longer needed.

Section 4: What did Jesus do?

Why did Jesus come to Earth?

Last week we saw Jesus use miracles to demonstrate that He is God and man. But why did He come to earth? What do the following verses say?

John 1:1-18; 14:7-11

Luke 19:10

We also noted last week that during Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were offered. What does the Bible say about the sacrifice of Jesus?

Hebrews 10:1-12

1 Peter 2:24

The Relationship is Broken

The events described in chapter 3 are known as the “fall of man”. Because of that event, the relationship between God and man is broken and they are now separated.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all man, because all sinned.
Romans 5:12

The Bible uses a number of expressions to describe the state of mankind in relation to God. What expressions are used in the following passages?

Jeremiah 17:9

Mark 7:21-23

Luke 19:10

Romans 3:10-18,23

Romans 1:29-32

Is God unloving?

Last week we saw that God is absolutely righteous and just. He is Holy. To be consistent with His character, God must judge sin and wickedness.

When we hear of a terrible crime committed against an innocent victim, there is something inside us that demands “justice”. We want some sort of punishment directed at the one who committed the crime.

Does that make us unloving?

All of God’s creation has been damaged by the fall of man.

Summary

What does the Bible say about Man?

What did God say in Genesis about man as He created him?

Man was created to:

What does chapter 3 say about man's free will and accountability?

Man was tempted and chose to disobey God in chapter 3. Summarize the consequences of the fall of man.

What expressions does the Bible use to describe the current relationship between God and man?

How has your understanding of man been changed by considering what the Bible says?

Thinking it Through

What does this say about God if the claim of the Bible is true regarding the Person of Jesus Christ?

If Jesus lived as a man, what does that say about His understanding of us?

Jesus used miracles to demonstrate His deity. What can we expect people to say regarding the miracles?

Since Jesus claimed to be God, can it be said of Him that He was just a good man? (What are the options?)

If Jesus is both God and man, what is Jesus able to do that no one else can do?

1 Timothy 2:3-6
John 14:6

Summary

What does the Bible say about Jesus?

God gave the ten commandments to reveal how man is to live, but man continues to fall short.

What was the purpose of the Old Testament sacrifices?

What was unique about the birth of Jesus?

How does the Bible show that Jesus is truly a man?

How did Jesus demonstrate that He is also God?

How has your view of Jesus changed?

Thinking it Through

State how the following views of life are impacted if the Bible's claims regarding man's nature and his separation from God are true:

Before the Fall, Genesis 1-2

Our view of human life:

Our view toward work, responsibility and consequences:

Our view of marriage and family:

After the Fall, Genesis 3

Our view of suffering in the world today:
(disease, sickness, death, decay etc.)

Recap of Weeks 1 & 2

The first three chapters of Genesis lay the foundation for the entire Bible.

These chapters present a narrative of the events surrounding creation, man's first rejection of God, and the foundation of several life principles:

Who God is

The nature of God, personal and relational

The origin of man

The dignity of human life

The origin of work and labor

The basis for accountability and consequences

The origin of marriage and family

The existence of Satan and evil

The origin of death, decay, and disease

Jesus the Son of God

Jesus is unlike any other man. In addition to being fully man, Jesus is also God. This was demonstrated by His actions and His words. What do the following verses demonstrate about Jesus? Write out your observations.

His Actions:

Mark 2:1-13

Matthew 8:1-4

Matthew 8:23-27

Luke 4:31-41

His Words:

Luke 7:11-17

John 5:16-18; 8:53-59

John 10:22-33

The Birth of Jesus

The birth of Jesus is described in the beginning of the New Testament, in the Gospels. Write down your observations about the birth of Jesus.

Luke 1:26-35

What does the Bible claim about the birth of Jesus?

Matthew 1:18-25

What does vs 21 say about why Jesus came?

Jesus the Man

What do the following verses say about the humanity of Jesus?

Luke 2:40-52

Matthew 4:1-4

John 4:3-6

John 11:33-36

Mark 14:32-34

Literal or Figurative?

There is an ongoing debate whether to interpret the creation narrative literally or as a figurative allegory.

In fact, this debate causes many Christians and churches to avoid the topic. If the account of the creation and the fall of man did not actually happen, then the account of God restoring His relationship with mankind makes no sense!

Christians speak of "being saved". From what do I need to be saved? The most basic answer is anchored in Genesis 3. Due to Adam's (and all of mankind's) rejection of God, the intended relationship between God and man has been broken for all eternity. The consequence of this is hell. We need to be "saved" from an eternal separation from God in hell.

Sections 1&2 provided an overview of the Genesis accounts which lays a foundation for the rest of Scripture. The remaining sections lead us through more of the Bible as we explore what God did to restore His relationship with mankind.

The rest of the Bible is essentially a love story - A God of love seeking and offering to restore His intended relationship with all mankind.

God is extending to us an amazing invitation!

Section 3: What Has God Promised to do?

Who is Jesus?

Who did He claim to be?

God called out Abraham in Genesis 12 and promised him land, a great nation, and blessing. Through his descendants all the families of the world would be blessed. The descendants of Abraham were to represent God to the world.

The Giving of the Law

God gave the Old Testament Scriptures, and the ten commandments, (part of what is called "the Law") to the nation Israel. These commandments form a concise summary of how God expects man to live and to treat one another. Read Exodus 20 and write down your observations.

Exodus 20:1-17

This passage claims that God has the right to:

This passage claims that mankind is accountable to:

Man Continued to Fail

The Old Testament describes man's failure to live by the ten commandments. The Bible calls man's failure sin. Sin means that all men fail to live according to God's standards.

However, God did not leave man in a state of hopelessness and failure. Included in the Law God gave to Israel is a means through which the consequences of their sin could be removed.

God allowed for a substitute sacrifice to be made to cover the consequences of their sins. The notion of animal sacrifices may seem rather barbaric to us, but God was demonstrating to Israel the severity of sin. Sin needed to be judged. The animal sacrifices outlined in the Old Testament illustrated a means for the justice of God to be satisfied and for man's relationship with God to be restored.

All of these sacrifices pointed to a promised Savior who would, one day, die for the sins of all people. Read and write down your observations of Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:1-6

God was promising that there was coming a man who would take on the penalty of all our sins. The Old Testament is filled with promises to Israel of a coming Messiah who would take away sin and bring blessing to the entire world.