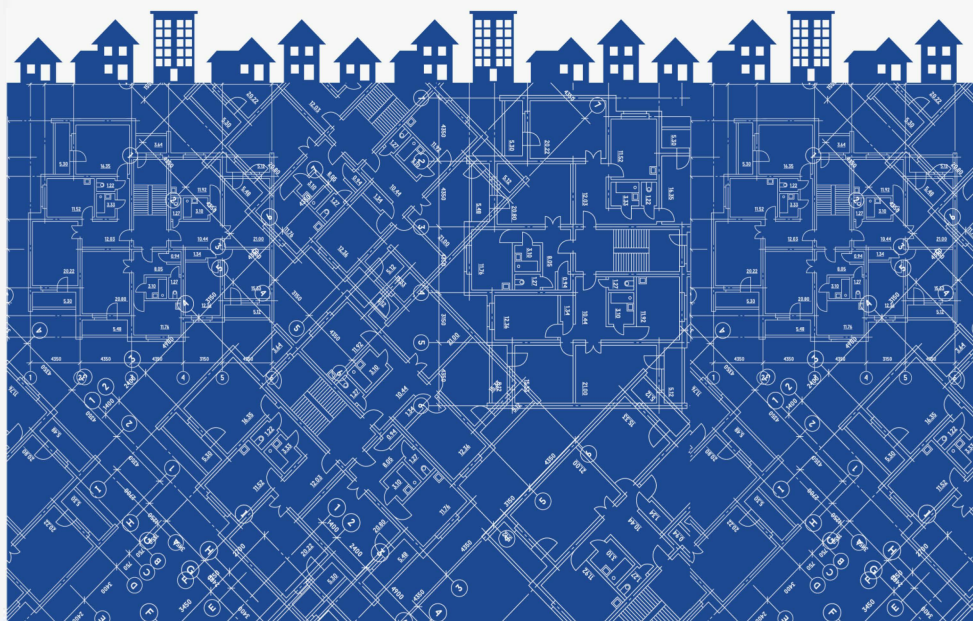


INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Foundations Class! Participating in this class shows that you are a learner. As a learner, you know that there is always more to know, always another perspective or challenging idea. In this class you will have the opportunity to hear the Bible's timeless truth explored by the instructors and your fellow students in ways that you may not have considered before. While the Bible and its God do not change, we do when we come prepared to better know Him.

As a learner, you also know that you will get out of a class what you put into it. Consider your time in this class an investment rather than merely a cost. Make the effort to read, reflect, do your homework, and discuss. You will be setting and moving toward your personal learning goals. This is a long class so make it worth the time as you invest in understanding for your benefit and the benefit of others.

This class is not intended to be a comprehensive course on biblical doctrine. It is a topic-by-topic introduction intended to give you a thoughtful and organized basis in order to articulate the gospel and begin to understand the Bible's teaching and address gaps in your understanding. In order to learn more, you will be directed to resources for further study or you might consider enrolling in courses at Bible college.

May God bless you as you proceed through the Foundations class and may you know Him more closely.

Our goals for this class:

- To have an overall understanding of the Bible's message and what it means for us
- To develop a basic biblical worldview
- To be able to articulate the gospel message
- To be equipped to share this message with someone you know.
- To move toward an answer to a question you have about biblical teaching
- To be able to articulate the gospel message
- To have the tools to learn more on our own
- To have an assurance of salvation
- To become familiar with Calvary Murrieta's statement of faith

Before we get started, keep in mind:

- We all have different experiences but the same Jesus.
- We have different education levels but the same Truth.
- We have different priorities but the same Kingdom.
- We have different questions but the same Answer.

Considering these things, please read and sign this student commitment. It will be our standard for learning together.

- I agree to participate to the best of my ability.
- I agree to esteem others before myself. I will not force my viewpoint on others or monopolize discussion time. I will respectfully discuss any disagreement.
- I agree to go to Scripture as the highest authority.
- I agree to accept challenges in order to grow.

Signed: _____

Personal Learning Goals

Throughout the duration of the class you will be working on two learning goals along with the weekly reflection or “do” tasks.

Your first personal learning goal will be to apply the biblical worldview you build in the class to sharing the gospel message with someone in your sphere of influence. You will need to tailor your approach to addressing their worldview, anticipate their questions or objections, and take a step toward actually engaging them. This can either be a specific person in your life or it can be a set of people (i.e. an age-group to whom you minister).

Your second personal learning goal will be to address a question you have on biblical doctrine. This should be a question that is meaningful to you and not trivial or easily answered (i.e. it should be more substantial than something you can solve with a simple internet search). The goal is not to have your question completely answered by the end of the class but to make decisive moves toward an answer.

DO NOT fill this section out until after the first class session but be thinking ahead of what you might set as a goal.

- The person or group I will learn to better address with the gospel is _____.
- The question I will be working on is

My group leader is: _____

My group members are: _____



Before your proper questions begin, answer this question. You will be coming back to it later in the class.

Do

How would you describe the gospel message?

Class Structure

Each week you will need to read the lesson before coming to class. In the class session we will discuss what you've been learning.

The sections in each lesson will be:



Read

Read the entire lesson text. Mark areas you don't understand.



Reflect

Reflection questions are for you to think about but be sure to actually write an answer down.



Do

"Do" items will ask you to experience or accomplish something for the week.



Discuss

These topics will be discussed in the classroom. You do not need to have an answer per se but may want to think about them before class.

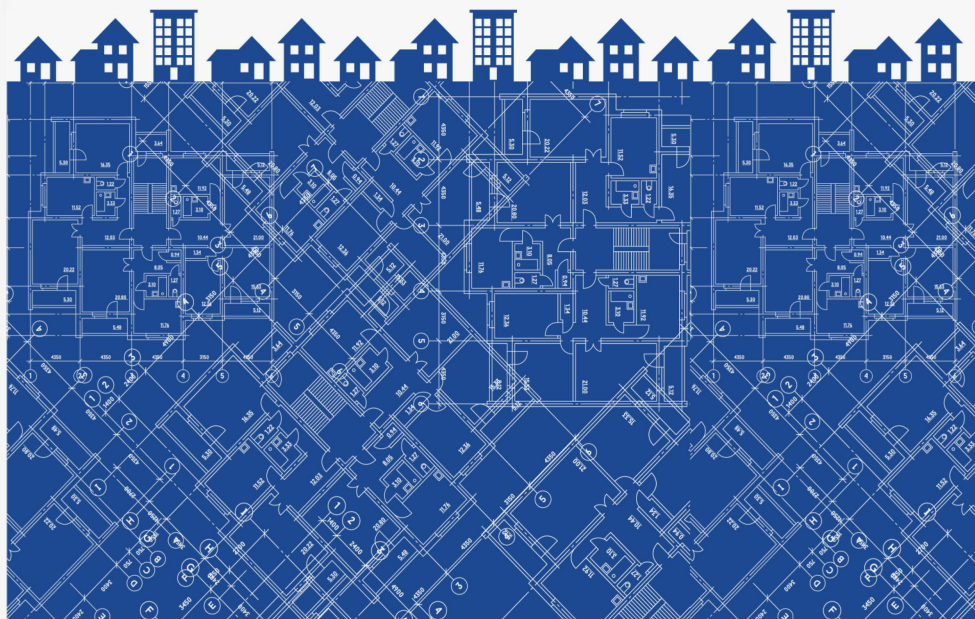


Aim

At certain points throughout the class, "Aim" items will prompt you to move toward the personal learning goals you set in the beginning of class.

Each lesson includes a suggested memory verse. You will not be asked about or tested on these. They are there for your benefit. Each one corresponds to the lesson and if you were to memorize all of them, you would have a body of biblical knowledge to turn to on a variety of subjects.

LESSON ONE: INTRODUCING THE BIBLE



In this lesson we will look at the Bible as God's word: where it came from, how it is structured, and what its general story is. In the next lesson we will discuss how to read the Bible.



When we learned about God, we saw that He reveals Himself to us partly through His creation (this is called “general revelation”). We can see aspects of God’s nature in His creation but we do not get a full understanding of who God is and what His purposes are.

Our most full revelation comes through Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-3) since He lived as one of us, showing us and teaching us who God is (John 14:9). But we learn about Jesus through the Bible, God's revelation to the writers of scripture. Both Jesus and the Bible are referred to as God's Word because they reveal God to the world (John 1:1-2; Heb. 4:12).

If God's identity and purposes are seen in the Bible, we ought to become very familiar with it.

Definition: God speaking to all people for all time through chosen writers carried by the Holy Spirit as He worked through them as individuals so that what is written is from God through man.

Inspiration means that the Holy Spirit led the writers of the biblical books in what to write, while allowing for their own personalities, cultures, and writing style to remain. They were not overtaken by God and writing under His control in some sort of trance state. Rather, they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, guided in what to write.

“knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

[illegible]

Because He inspired the Scriptures, God is the Author of Scripture but we still refer to the writers (and it is ok to refer to the author of a book of the Bible) of Scripture. The Bible, therefore, is both human and divine.





If you continue on in your study of the canon of the Bible, you will come across arguments from some that certain books are not written by who they claim to be.

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

Without getting into the details, you should be aware of several things:

- Some Bible books do not precisely say who wrote them and some do so we are sometimes making educated guesses as to the author but the earliest Church leaders often said who the author was (e.g. The Gospel of John). Anonymity doesn't negate inspiration.
- Some Old Testament books (e.g. Isaiah) change in tone, content, and use different names for God but this doesn't mean there is more than one author, as some claim. Likewise, some are different from an author's usual style but that doesn't mean they are by an imposter (e.g. Ephesians or Titus).
- Some books make no secret about being written by more than one person (e.g. Philippians or Deuteronomy 34).

Apocryphal books

The Catholic Bible has books that Protestant Bibles do not. Protestants refer to these books as the “apocrypha” from a word meaning “secret” or “hidden”. The content of some of these books is referred to in the New Testament but they have never been considered God’s Word.

The Catholic Church did not decide to include these books in their Bible until 1546 and they were long argued against by the earliest Church fathers and later Protestant and Catholic scholars alike. Before the Protestant Reformation, both Protestants and Catholics placed apocryphal books in their own section of the Bible and they were not given the same level of respect. Eventually the Protestants removed them altogether.

It must be noted that all the apocryphal books in the Catholic Bible are Old Testament books. No New Testament books claiming to be biblical were ever admitted by Catholics or Protestants and are much more blatantly unbiblical in their teaching.

The Old Testament apocryphal books were written in the times between the return of the Jews from exile and the birth of Jesus (called the intertestamental period) but Jesus Himself refers to the Old Testament canon being what it is today—this is a little complicated but it is an implication of Jesus's comments in:

- Luke 24:44: Jesus mentions the sections of literature of our Old Testament today
- John 10:31-36: He agrees with the Pharisees' books
- Luke 11:51: He refers to the first person killed in Genesis and the last person killed in II Chronicles, the book describing the end of the "Old Testament" period.

Doodles

- Some of their teaching is unbiblical or heretical.
- Some of their stories are extrabiblical or fanciful.
- Much of their teaching is sub-biblical, at times even immoral.
- Most of the Apocrypha was written in the postbiblical or intertestamental period.
- Finally, all of the Apocrypha is nonbiblical or uncanonical, because it was not received by the people of God.

- **Fulfilled prophecy**
The Bible contains predictions fulfilled hundreds of years before the events they prophecy.
- **Archaeology**
Archaeological discoveries have consistently proved the biblical accounts to be historically accurate.
- **Internal consistency**
Although compiled of 66 books by approximately 40 authors in three languages over 3 continents and 1500 years and addressing the key questions of life and meaning, there is a miraculously consistent message and overall storyline in the Bible.
- **Extrabiblical writings**
Writers who lived at the same time as the Bible's writers refer to events described in the Bible as being historical. The early church leaders also consistently quoted large portions of the New Testament in their commentaries and letters.
- **Scientific accuracy**
The Bible contains scientifically accurate information long before those facts were discovered.
- **Manuscripts**
With 25,000 handwritten portions of the New Testament and thousands of the Old Testament, there is more manuscript evidence for the accuracy and consistency of the Bible than of most ancient writings.
- **Honesty about the authors and subjects**
The Bible makes no attempt to ignore the sins of its writers and characters.
- **Accuracy about human nature**
The Bible shows an amazing level of understanding and explanation of the workings of human hearts and relationships.

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NOTES

Doodles

- **Testimony of Jesus**
Jesus referred to the Bible as given by God and as God's revelation to people.
- **Persecution of the early believers**
The earliest Christians, some who even penned the biblical books, went to violent deaths professing the truth of the scriptures.
- **Power to transform lives**
We are evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible in that we see our lives changed by its message of who God is.

Without error

Having seen reasons to believe that the Bible is reliably given by God, we believe that the Bible is without error ("inerrant") in its original manuscripts, but what does that mean?

- All the Bible is God's divine word to us; it does not only contain divine portions.
- The Bible claims to be God's word and God does not make errors.
- The Bible is "unbroken" as Jesus said (John 10:35), and therefore not compromised. While we do not have the original, handwritten portions of the Bible we trust Jesus's words here and when He says that the Holy Spirit would bring what He'd said and done to the apostles' remembrance (Jn. 15:26-27;).
- God is powerful enough to have preserved the Bible through many copies.
- There are errors that came in through people copying the Bible but we know where they are (because of differing manuscripts) and they are not on matters that change our doctrine.
- The Bible being copied is not like a game of "telephone" but rather a careful process by people who either did the work as a vocational ministry (Jewish scribes and Christian monks) or who risked safety to carry scriptures throughout the Roman Empire. They were copying written Scripture and treating the process dearly.
- There are grammatical oddities but these are not errors.
- The Bible was written in a different culture from ours and many misunderstandings, especially in how literally or in exact chronological order something should be taken.

“For most practical purposes, then, the *current published scholarly texts* of the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament *are the same as the original manuscripts*. Thus, when we say that the original manuscripts were inerrant, we are also implying that over 99 percent of the words in our present manuscripts are also inerrant, for they are exact copies of the originals. Furthermore, we *know* where the uncertain readings are (for where there are no textual variants we have no reason to expect faulty copying of the original). Thus, our present manuscripts are for most purposes the same as the original manuscripts, and the doctrine of inerrancy therefore directly concerns our present manuscripts as well.

Thus, if we have mistakes in the copies (as we do), then these are only the *mistakes of men*. But if we have mistakes in the *original manuscripts*, then we are forced to say not only that men made mistakes, but that *God himself* made a mistake and spoke falsely.



How does the person you want to share with perceive the Bible? Would anything we've learned be helpful to them? Would they believe it?

Organization of the Bible

The Bible contains 66 books: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The Jewish Old Testament had the same content as ours but the organization was different.

The Bible books are organized according to type and are roughly chronological.

Old Testament:

- **Law “Pentateuch”:** 5 books
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- **Historical Books:** 12 books
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First Samuel, Second Samuel, First Kings, Second Kings,
First Chronicles, Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- **Poetic books:** 5 books
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

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LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

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- **Prophetic books:** 17 books

Major Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Minor Prophets Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Note: the “major prophets” are called that simply because their books are longer than the minor prophets.

New Testament:

Gospels: 4 books

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

History: 1 book

Acts

Pauline Letters (“Epistles”): 13 books

Romans, I, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I, II Thessalonians; I, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon

General Letters (“Epistles”): 7 books

Hebrews, James, I, II Peter; I, II, III John, Jude

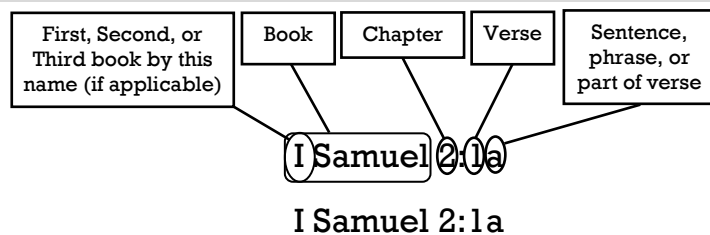
Prophecy: 1 book

Revelation

The books are sometimes organized a little differently from this but the particular organization is not really important.

Abbreviations

Working with Bible references (address of a verse in the Bible) is made easier when we are familiar with common abbreviations for Bible books. If you are new to the Bible, these will become like second nature over time. There is a comprehensive chart available in class if you would like one.



Practice: Write the full name of the reference:

I Jn. 3:2a _____

Ps. 129:1-6 _____

Chapter and Verse



While chapters and verses help us find the same place in the text, how might they be a hindrance? Another way to ask this question would be to ask how you would read the Bible differently without chapters and verses.

Pericopes (pronounced “per-ick-oh-peas”) are sections of text usually marked by section headings in your Bible. They are more of a naturally packaged section than a chapter since they encompass a complete story or teaching. There is usually more than one pericope in a chapter. You may find reading a pericope a happy medium between reading a few verses and reading a whole chapter at a time.

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew with portions in Aramaic (in Ezra, Daniel, and Jeremiah). The New Testament was originally written in Greek. Anything else is a translation.

Hebrew text of Genesis 1:1

בְּרֹאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

Greek Text of John 17:17

ἀγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀληθείᾳ ἐστίν

Translation includes subtle cultural meanings and figures of speech.

Some things are translated for understanding rather than for precise wording. For example Ps. 16:7 in the English Standard Version says:

I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.

Doodles

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

[illegible]

We do not always need to know the Hebrew or Greek words but sometimes they carry fuller or more specific meanings than a single English word may. This is why Bible teachers occasionally take time to cover a word from the original languages. The first readers would have understood the shades of meaning but, without careful study and teaching, these get “lost in translation”. Understanding this dynamic lets us understand not only the riches of the biblical text and why some dedicate themselves to studying the original languages but also the painstaking task that Bible translators meet finding the right words in the languages of cultures around the world.

Translation Options

Translations run a spectrum from those attempting to be very close (“word-for-word”) to the original language to those written “thought-for-thought” which attempt to communicate the idea of the scripture in words more easily understood.

“Word-for-word” translations may also be known as “literal translations”. “Thought-for-thought” translations may also be known as “paraphrases”.

Examples of more literal translations include the New King James Version (NKJV) New American Standard Bible (NASB), and English Standard Version (ESV).

Examples of more paraphrased translations include the New International Version (NIV) and New Living Translation (NLT).

Notice the differences in this example: John 1:10

(ESV) He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

(NIV) He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

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(KJV) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

(NLT) He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him.

(The Message) He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice.



What are some of the strengths of using more literal translations?

Reflect

What are some of the strengths of using paraphrases?

From Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith on Scripture

The Bible was written by men given by the Holy Spirit to human writers, and is God's revelation of Himself to mankind. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, truth without any mixture of error in its original texts, and salvation for its end. All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy, and pertains to all things regarding life and godliness.

- Ps. 19:7-11 | 2 Tim. 3:15-17 | 2Pt. 1:3



What sorts of things does our culture believe about the Bible?

Discuss

The Storyline of Scripture

Having learned a little about how the Bible is structured, we will turn to a brief description of the overall story told by Scripture. Some knowledge of this is crucial to learning the Bible.

Doodles

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LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

Learning the Story of Scripture

Scripture tells us a complete story and we shouldn't miss it by focusing only on the details. When we approach the Bible we should ask:

- Who is God?
- Who are we?
- What is God doing in our world?
- Where do I fit into His plan?

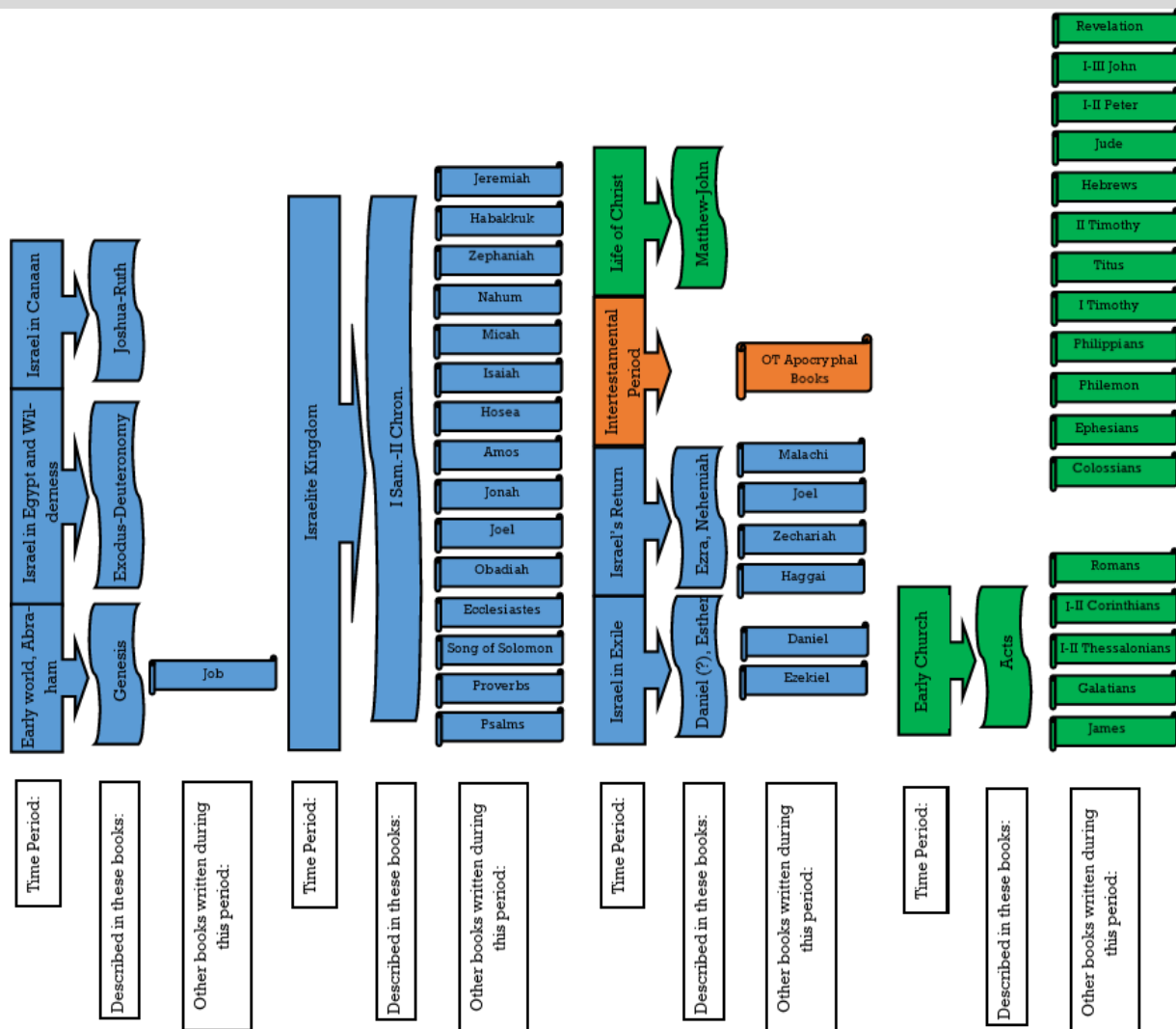
Knowing the story of Scripture will help us answer these questions.

Where'd the Story Go?

Some portions of the Bible are more story-based than others. The Law, History books, and Gospels are the most clearly narrative portions of the Bible. Poetry and prophecy may not seem like narrative themselves but they are all part of the Bible's big story.

Keep in mind that while the historical books tell us the bigger story more directly than other books, the books of poetry and prophecy were written during the time described in the historical books. Thus, they reveal other dimensions to God's story.

This chart shows how some types of books (Law, History, and Gospels) show the events of God's story while others (Poetry, Prophecy, and Letters) fill in details of the message in the story.



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LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

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In each section of the Bible's story, we will see how God has worked throughout history to rescue us individually from sin and redeem (or fix/bring back) the things that are broken in our world. This is a way of looking at the gospel that is not common for most people so don't be frustrated if it's difficult to grasp. It is also a very brief overview of the Bible story and there are other threads and aspects of the story that are not included but that you may continue to discover through further study.

Layers in each section of the story:

Event: Biblical historical events telling God's story.

Redemption of the World: How God has moved in events toward redeeming the broken world and revealing who He is to all the peoples of the world.

Individual salvation: How God has revealed his plan to save each person from their rebellion against Him.

Creation (Genesis 1-2)

Event: God creates a good world with mankind made in God's image but gives mankind the ability to choose to obey God's commands.

Redemption of the World: God created a good world for man's safety, enjoyment, and dominion.

Genesis 1:31

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

Individual salvation: Jesus, who, along with the Father, created all things, creates us anew when we believe in Him.

John 1:3

God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

II Corinthians 2:16-17

So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Doodles

For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth."

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

Genesis 12:1-3 The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³ I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

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LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

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Individual salvation: God makes promises to Abraham and seeks only Abraham's trust. Abraham believed God and simply for that was called "righteous" by God. We are given the same offer of a righteous standing with God based on our trust in Him. Later, Abraham is told to sacrifice his only son to God but God stops him at the last moment and provides a ram for sacrifice. This happened at a place called Mount Moriah, later the scene of Christ's crucifixion, the sacrifice of God's only Son for us.

Genesis 22:12–14

He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12-25)

Event: The population of Abraham's descendants (now called Hebrews or Israelites) has been subjugated under the Egyptians but through a series of punishments on the Egyptians, God releases His people in order that they may worship God freely.

Redemption of the World: God shows His power and love to His people and shows His glory and worthiness to be worshipped to the Egyptians as well.

Exodus 9:13-17

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh. Tell him, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. ¹⁴ If you don’t, I will send more plagues on you and your officials and your people. Then you will know that there is no one like me in all the earth. ¹⁵ By now I could have lifted my hand and struck you and your people with a plague to wipe you off the face of the earth. ¹⁶ But I have spared you for a purpose—to show you my power and to spread my fame throughout the earth. ¹⁷ But you still lord it over my people and refuse to let them go.’”

Individual salvation: In the last of the ten punishments (called "plagues"), God responds to the Egyptians refusal to release the Israelites by killing each firstborn in the land. The Hebrews are told they can put the blood of a sacrificial lamb over their doors to spare their families. Later, Jesus (called God's "Firstborn Son") will die as the Sacrificial Lamb so that God will spare us from punishment for having refused Him.

Doodles

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.' " And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

The Israelites in the Wilderness (Exodus 20, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

Event: After escaping Egypt, the Israelites are given God's law for how to have proper relationship of worship with Him, as well as how to treat their fellow Israelites and those outside their people. The Israelites quickly desire tangible idols to worship rather than God.

Redemption of the World: God gives His law to show His ways to His people but also gives instructions on allowing other peoples to join the Israelites in worshiping the one true God and instructions on refusing to allow the other peoples to draw Israel into worshiping their false idols.

Leviticus 22:18

Give Aaron and his sons and all the Israelites these instructions, which apply both to native Israelites and to the foreigners living among you...

Exodus 20:4–5

You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods.

Individual salvation: God gives a set of laws to his people which can teach them how to behave according to what is important to God but the people can never fully keep the point of the laws: loving God and their neighbors.

Galatians 3:24-26

The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian. For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Conquering the Promised Land (Joshua-Ruth)

Event: The Israelites enter the land God had originally promised Abraham that his descendants would have. First, they had to drive out the peoples that were worshiping false gods using violence and sexual immorality. Once established in the land, the people went through cycles of obeying the Lord and then worshiping false gods and becoming enslaved to the local peoples.

Doodles

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

Doodles

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Redemption of the World: The temple is planned by God to be the place for his people to approach Him in worship. It is also built for all the peoples of the world to be able to come worship the true God. David and Solomon rule well on God's behalf and His people, Israel are a light of who God is for a short time.

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

[illegible]

Doodles

Event: The kingdom of Israel splits into two: the northern part is still called Israel and the southern part is called Judah. The majority of the kings of this time, except a few from Judah, lead their people to worship idols instead of the true God.

Hosea 1:10–11

“Yet the time will come when Israel’s people will be like the sands of the seashore—too many to count! Then, at the place where they were told, ‘You are not my people,’ it will be said, ‘You are children of the living God.’ ¹¹ Then the people of Judah and Israel will unite together. They will choose one leader for themselves, and they will return from exile together. What a day that will be—the day of Jezreel—when God will again plant his people in his land.

Individual salvation: One prophet during this time, Isaiah, foretold that a Chosen One would come who would suffer for His people to release them from their sins. This prophecy is of Jesus and is found in Isaiah 52-53.

Isaiah 53:5

But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

Exile and Return (II Kings and II Chronicles, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)

Event: God allows the foreign empires of Assyria and Babylon to take the Israelites captive and remove them from their land. The temple is destroyed. Those from the southern kingdom of Judah are allowed to return after 70 years and rebuild the city walls and temple in Jerusalem.

Redemption of the World: God preserved his people from being spread to the point of oblivion while at the same time moving them all over the world, taking knowledge of Him with them.

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

Doodles

John 12:24-32 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.²⁵ Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.²⁶ Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.²⁷ “Now my soul is deeply troubled.

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! ²⁸ Father, bring glory to your name.” Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.” ²⁹ When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine.” ³¹ The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. ³² And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.”

Individual salvation: Jesus takes all our guilt, shame, and fear on Himself and gives us instead His position of innocence, honor, and power before the Father. All that He requires is our trusting belief. Jesus offers us a new life but this requires that we let go of our current life. The new life He gives is abundant and eternal.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

Early Church Expansion (Acts for narrative, Romans-III John for teachings and practices)

Event: After Jesus ascends to heaven, God the Holy Spirit comes to live in the disciples. The disciples of Jesus, now called apostles ("sent ones"), begin expanding the message of Jesus's salvation and establishing communities of Jewish followers of Jesus. Eventually, the followers of Jesus realize God wants them to go and bring new disciples from all peoples, not only the Jews.

Redemption of the World: God reveals a mystery to His people, that He is making a new people of all the followers of Jesus Christ, no longer only of the Jews. The church is to do what Israel never fully did: go to all the peoples of the world and make disciples of Jesus.

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

Doodles

For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands.

FOUNDATIONS

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

NOTES

2 We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. 3 For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. 4 While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. 5 God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith on The Return of Jesus

The second coming of Jesus is the hope and reminder that God is faithful, and that He has ultimate control over all things. Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly, and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. We believe that God will fulfill all future promises and prophecies regarding the second coming of Jesus

- Rev. 19:11-16 | Jn. 14:3 | Zech. 14:4



How is looking at the gospel as a story helpful?

Discuss



Aim

How does the teaching that the Bible is God's wholly true revelation to us affect your personal learning question? Does it cause confusion or bring help?

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

FOUNDATIONS

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

LESSON TWO: READING THE BIBLE



In this lesson we will discuss how we go about reading the Bible and wisely finding what it says to us.



Read

Effectively reading the Bible does not require any special degrees or really any theological education at all. You have the same Bible that any theologian or pastor has. They don't have any more access to Scripture than you do. What they may have that you don't is

- Access to helpful resources to understand the language or cultural context of the Bible
- A great amount of time spent studying the Bible and hearing how others interpret it
- A gift/calling of knowledge and teaching the Bible

Psalm 119:99–100 (ESV)

⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers,
for your testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the aged,
for I keep your precepts.

In Psalm 119:99-100 we see that truly learning God's word (even above experienced teachers) requires meditation and obedience. We learn the Bible best by allowing it to saturate our lives.

While we still need teachers (as the Bible itself tells us) we are able to learn to come to the Bible and learn from it on our own.



Reflect

How confident do you feel in studying the Bible on your own? Why?

The Importance of Knowing the Bible

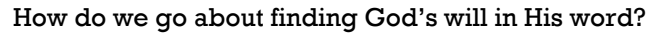
A. Scripture forms our worldview by answering our biggest questions:

- Who is God?
- Who are we?
- What is important in life?
- How should we live?

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Doodles

- B. Through knowing the word we can know God's revealed will.**

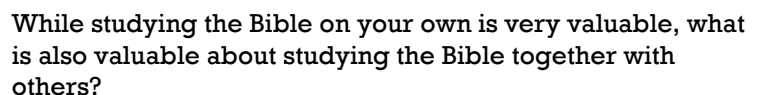
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- In our moral choices
- In our relationships
- In our interpretation of other scripture

- We have God's promises in black and white.
- We see through God's eyes.
- We have a whole cohesive document which interprets itself.

Reading on our own allows us to:

- Go at our own pace
- Focus and learn first-hand
- Accompany the Bible with prayer
- Have a time of personally approaching God in His word



[illegible]

After preparing our heart to approach the Bible, we go through a process of observation, interpretation, and application.

During the observation phase of Bible study you are looking only for the facts. You don't need to look for meanings yet. Ask:

- ### Other things to look for:

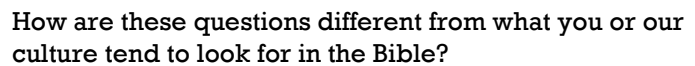
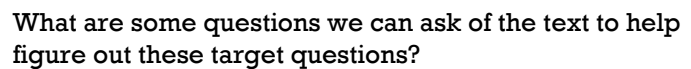
- ## Doodles

After we have looked at the facts of what we are reading we begin to interpret what we've read. We are now looking for what it means. However, we are still asking question, not jumping to making statements.

Don't overcomplicate what you are looking for when you approach the Bible. Keep these big-picture questions in mind and use the observation and interpretations listed below as tools to answering these four basic questions.

- What does this say about God? (Ultimately, look for this!)
- What does this say about me?
- What does this say about my world?
- What does this say about what happens when any of the above meet?

These are big questions and you may not know right away how to answer them right away or in all passages. Think of them as “target questions” you are looking for.

[illegible][illegible]

- Keeps the story in context by asking why it happened
- Does not need to emulate the Bible character as a hero, leaving room for Christ to be the hero
- Places God as the central actor, making Him responsible to change me.
- Finds who God is as revealed in the story and looks at self in the light of God's nature.

NOTES

This is not to say that every passage neatly fits into a magical formula or that studying and applying Scripture is simplistic. But try reading your Bible with this format in mind and see what you discover! The key is looking to Christ in the Bible. All things flow from Him.

Christ-Centered Bible Study

In order to train ourselves to keep Christ at the center of scripture, here are several questions to ask of a passage:

- Does this passage show a need for Jesus?
 - Through the characters' failings
 - Through the fallen world
 - Through showing my corrupt heart
 - Through showing a problem only Jesus can deal with
- Does this passage show a problem Jesus suffered under?
 - Can He identify with your pain?
 - How did He handle it?
 - How can He empower you?
- Is Jesus redeeming or overcoming the fallen world here?
 - Is He showing what things will be like when redeemed?
 - Is He redefining or re-teaching anything?
 - Is He taking on anyone's place with a new outcome?
- Does this passage directly refer to Jesus in the Old Testament?
 - Does it show Jesus literally appearing in the Old Testament?
 - Is there a prophecy about Jesus here?
 - Is there a person, event, or institution that points to Jesus?

Handling these questions takes time and study. Don't expect to quickly and easily answer them. It is recommended you take the Unfolding Gospel Bible Survey to help you start seeing Christ across all of Scripture and connecting your life into His story. The priority before learning to handle Christ-centered questions is to begin asking the big picture/target questions. All of this is a process so don't give up!

Doodles

NOTES



Aim

How would looking to Christ in Scripture rather than looking for a set of behaviors change the way you approach the person you are trying to reach with the gospel?

Good ways to misinterpret Scripture:

- Expect to hear only what want to hear
- Expect the God of Scripture to look like you
- Expect everything you read to directly involve you
- Expect the scripture to always support your decisions
- Look for secret meanings only you have discovered
- Accept only the interpretation you have always been comfortable with
- Never study together with others

Application

Once we have looked at what the Bible says (observation) and asked what it means (interpretation) we can move to what we should do as a response (application).



Discuss

What can happen when we jump to application without proper observation and interpretation?

"Go to the Bible looking for God. Find Him, and application will follow. But go looking for application, and you may miss both."

-**Trevin Wax**, *Gospel-Centered Teaching*, 93.

LESSON Two: Reading The Bible

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- Does this describe my current experience?
Before assuming this passage has nothing to do with you, have you thought about how maybe it does? Just because you're not sure what it means doesn't mean it has nothing to do with you.

NOTES

Doodles

- Will I experience this in the future?
Storing up wisdom on something you may experience some day is as important (if not more so) than learning for today. You may not be married, a parent, persecuted, tempted, depressed, poor, sick or anything else now, but you may be later.
- Is someone else experiencing this?
What you see in the Bible may relate to someone you know more directly than it relates to you. If you are not asking only what a passage says to someone else (and not looking at your own life also) it is healthy to look beyond yourself to others you may help.
- Does this passage speak to my culture?
You may not find a picture of yourself in a passage but the values of your culture may be challenged there. Being able to dialogue with your world using the Bible's truth is a valuable outcome of studying Scripture.
- Who would you be in the story?
You may not see a story as relating to you until you find who you are most like in the story. You are probably unlike the "hero" of the story and more like those around watching or receiving God's grace through the "hero". This may change how you read. Likewise, if the passage is warning unbelievers you do not need to apply it to yourself (if you believe) but it should inform how you see the unbelievers around you.
- What does this tell you about the bigger picture/story?
A hard-to-apply passage may make more sense when you "zoom out" and see how it is building the big story of Scripture and Christ's redemption. That story will relate much more directly and fully to you and your world than a single piece might.
- Is this passage actually not telling me to do anything?
Have you ever asked yourself how you would know if a passage is actually telling you what to do? Some don't tell us to do anything and yet we assume the best practice would be to see some command there anyway.
- Am I trying to apply a principle or a practice?
Sometimes we see something done in the Bible and assume we should do the same. But there is a difference (discussed in Lesson Seven) between a principle (e.g. generosity) and a practice (e.g. when the first church in Jerusalem shared all possessions in common).

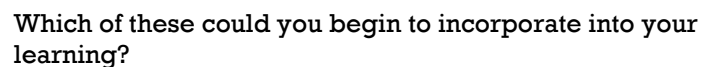
Some of these questions take us back to interpretation to make sure we have the understanding we need to apply Scripture correctly. This is not an easy task. Over time you will become more adept at wisely applying what you read in the Bible but seeking guidance from resources, friends, and Bible teachers will help with the interpretive challenges that will set you up to be able to hear from the Lord on your particular life application.

A “Raft” for Learning the Bible

We do not rely on any one method of learning the Bible. It is more like a raft made of various connected planks of wood rather than a single carved-out canoe. We combine these methods together to best get to know Scripture.

Remember that getting to know the Bible takes time, consistency, and obedience. We are always growing in our understanding. We learn the Bible through:

- Preaching
- Factual study (i.e. commentaries)
- Solo reading
- Memorization
- Devotional reading
- Discussion with others in the church
- Living according to the text



Some Methods of Reading the Bible

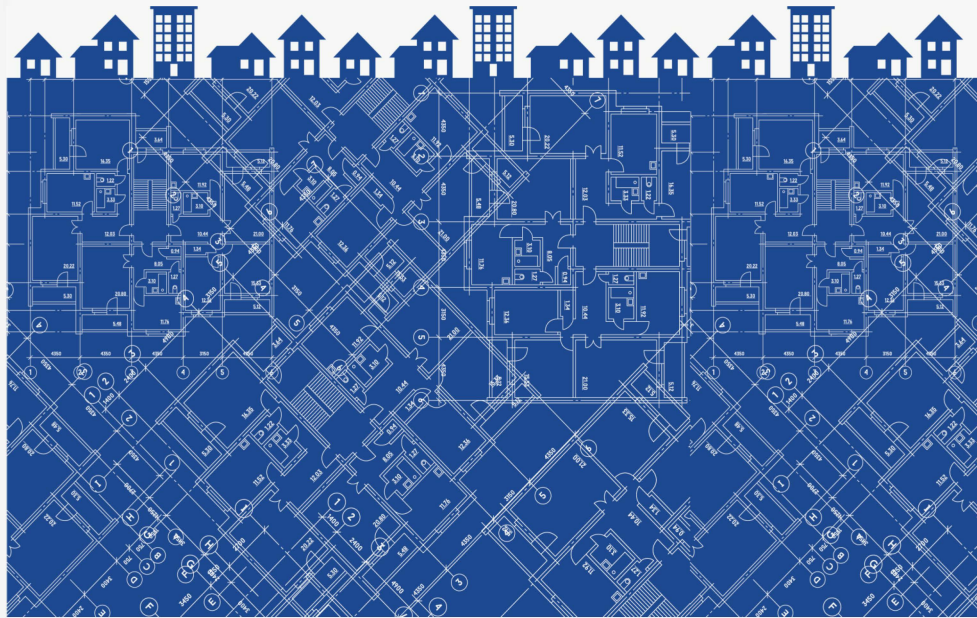
- Journaling
Writing your thoughts or prayers on a passage
- Books: (e.g. *Search the Scriptures*)
Search the Scriptures asks questions of the text without giving you answers to help you think through it. Other “devotional” books may help you see things in the Bible but be careful to not only lean on what the author has to say.

LESSON Two: Reading The Bible

FOUNDATIONS

A large rectangular area with horizontal ruling lines, intended for writing or drawing. The area is enclosed in a black border and contains 30 horizontal lines.

LESSON THREE: WHO IS GOD?



Read

Hard things first

Because, as will become more clear throughout this class, all things find their root in who God is and all we believe and do comes from our view of God, we will begin this study by looking at God's nature. We cannot describe God's nature without talking about the trinity. This will likely be the most intellectually challenging part of this class because it is really not something we can understand. In fact, our goal in this lesson is not to understand the nature of God but to be introduced to a God greater than we realize, whether we have just met or have known Him for years.

Many teachers have undertaken to use metaphors to describe the trinitarian nature of God. However, there is nothing we know that can accurately serve as a picture of the Trinity and at some point we must come to terms with not fully understanding God as three-in-one.

We should realize that the concept of the trinity is so unnatural to our thinking that it is an evidence of our God being the true God: if we had invented our faith on our own we never would have come up with something like a trinity.

But wait...

The word “trinity” is not found in the Bible but that doesn’t mean the Bible doesn’t teach it to us. We learn about the trinity by putting together various scriptures from around the Bible which add up to give us this teaching about the nature of God.

It's like if someone gave you clues about what color light they were talking about.

If they said:

Clue #1: It's red light. Clue #2: It's green light. Clue #3: It's blue light. Clue #4: All three colors are perfectly equal.

The only answer is that it's white light. We were never told the word "white" but by putting the parts together we saw the whole picture if we understand that white light is made up of these.



At various places in the Bible God refers to God as “we” or “us”, one Hebrew word for God, *Elohim*, is plural. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all referred to as God in the Bible. From this, the early Church discovered the doctrine of the trinity. Also see the chart on pg. 7.

NOTES

- Relational (God even relates to Himself!)
- One who both gives and receives glory (we see in the Bible that the Father gives glory to the Son, the Son gives glory to the Father, the Holy Spirit gives glory to both).
- Able to love Himself more than we love Him and more than we love ourselves. While our culture tells us to love ourselves, we can't have a relationship with ourselves like God can. But the God who is the source of all relationship loves us and offers us loving, unified relationship with Him, the Church, and a spouse, reflecting the kind of unity in the trinity (Eph. 2:14-16; Jn. 17:21; Mt. 19:6).

Shared Characteristics of the Trinity

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one God but each person of the Trinity has roles and characteristics. Many of these characteristics are shared among the persons. The chart below shows how we find the description of the Trinity's characteristics all through the Bible.

	<u>FATHER</u>	<u>SON</u>	<u>HOLY SPIRIT</u>
Called God	Phil. 1:2	John 1:1,14; Col. 2:9	Acts 5:3-4
Creator	Isaiah 64:8	John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17	Job 33:4, 26:13
Resurrects	1 Thess. 1:10	John 2:19, 10:17	Rom. 8:11
Indwells	2 Cor. 6:16	Col. 1:27	John 14:17
Everywhere	1 Kings 8:27	Matt. 28:20	Psalm 139:7-10
All Knowing	1 John 3:20	John 16:30; 21:17	1 Cor. 2:10-11
Sanctifies	1 Thess. 5:23	Heb. 2:11	1 Pet. 1:2
Life Giver	Gen. 2:7; John 5:21	John 1:3; 5:21	2 Cor. 3:6,8
Fellowship	1 John 1:3	1 Cor. 1:9	2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1
Eternal	Psalm 90:2	Micah 5:1-2	Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14
Has a Will	Luke 22:42	Luke 22:42	1 Cor. 12:11
Speaks	Matt. 3:17; Luke 9:25	Luke 5:20; 7:48	Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2
Love	John 3:16	Eph. 5:25	Rom. 15:30
Searches Hearts	Jer. 17:10	Rev. 2:23	1 Cor. 2:10
We belong to	John 17:9	John 17:6	...
Savior	1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10	2 Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:4; 3:6	...
We Serve	Matt. 4:10	Col. 3:24	...
Believe In	John 14:1	John 14:1	...
Gives Joy	Romans 15:13	John 15:11	...
Judges	John 8:50	John 5:21,30	...

If each person of God is equal in nature how do we tend to mistakenly see them as fundamentally different?

Discuss

In some sense, it is easier to study the Son and Holy Spirit in the Bible than it is to study the Father. The Bible tells us that while no one has ever seen the Father, Jesus (the Son) shows Him to us (Jn. 1:18). The Bible also says that no one knows the things of God unless the Holy Spirit reveals them (I Cor. 2:11-14).

The Father acts with authority. The Son (Jesus) obeys Him (Jn. 15:10) and He sends the Holy Spirit to us (Jn. 14:26). Jesus says that no one has seen the Father at any time.

The Father glorifies the Son who, in turn, glorifies the Father. The Holy Spirit glorifies both.

The Father leads the Son, and sends the Son and Spirit.

Because His very nature is that of a father we see that God:

- Is love
- Desires to protect and provide
- Is the ultimate authority



Aim

Our experience with our earthly fathers affects the way we view the heavenly Father. For you, does this play into your personal learning question?

How might it play into how the person or group you will share the gospel with?



Discuss

If each person of God is equal in nature and value but different in role and authority, what does that mean about how we see our roles, value, and authority in relationship with others?

NOTES

God the Son

God the Son is often called “the second person of the trinity”, but this term shouldn’t be allowed to confuse the fact that each person is fully and equally God in nature as we have already said. His role is that of Son in relationship to the Father. Because this is the person of the trinity who came to be born on earth as a human we know Him as Jesus.

Jesus was a man who lived about 2,000 years ago. He is a historical figure. But He is more than a man. The Bible says that He existed forever (John 1:2) before He took the form of a man. He was not created; rather, He created the world (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17).

Philippians 2:5-11 says that Jesus, who is God, let go of His glorious position and came to earth for your sake, to save you from sin. In fact, it was prophesied that Jesus would come. You may want to look at the amazing prophecies from the Old Testament that were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born at <https://alwaysbeready.com/prophecies-concerning-the-messiah/>.

Jesus was not just a man or a good teacher or a skillful magician. The Bible says that He is both fully God and fully a man. This is fundamental to our belief as Christians.

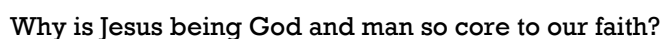
Doodles

GOD	MAN
He is worshiped (Matt. 2:2, 11; 14:33)	He worshiped the Father (John 17)
He was called God (John 20:28; Heb. 1:8)	He was called man (Mark 15:39; John 19:5)
He was called Son of God (Mark 1:1)	He was called Son of Man (John 9:35-37)
He is prayed to (Acts 7:59)	He prayed to the Father (John 17)
He is sinless (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15)	He was tempted (Matt. 4:1)
He knows all things (John 21:17)	He grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52)
He gives eternal life (John 10:28)	He died (Rom. 5:8)
All the fullness of deity dwells in Him (Col. 2:9)	He has a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39)

What does it mean that He is both God and man?

- He understands us and can help us because He’s both completely powerful and able to relate to us.
- God works in the cosmic as well as the concrete, both outside of time and in the world He created.

- He lived as the only sinless man, thus fulfilling the law and having no sins of His own to pay for. Therefore, He was a worthy sacrifice for us.
- He could actually die as a sacrifice for our sin. A spirit cannot be nailed to a cross.
- Humans, being made in God's image (more on this later) are by nature not completely unlike God. Jesus is made like us (Phil. 2:7) and we will be made like God. (I Jn. 3:2).



Discuss

Doodles

What Did Jesus Come To Do?

- To reveal the Father (Matt. 11:27)
- To be a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28)
- To serve (Matt. 20:28)
- To preach the good news of God's Kingdom (Luke 4:43)
- To bring division (Luke 12:51)
- To testify to the truth (John 18:37)
- To fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17)
- To call sinners (Mark 2:17)
- To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:19)
- To do the will of the Father (John 6:38)
- To preach (Mark 1:38)
- To proclaim freedom for believers (Luke 4:18)
- To atone for sin (Heb. 2:17)
- To save the world (John 3:17; Luke 19:10)
- To give life (John 10:10,28)
- To take away sin (1 John 3:5)
- To destroy the devil's works (1 John 3:8)
- To call Israel to her original purpose (Matt. 23:37)
- To give the Father's words (John 17:8)

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Doodles

- Jesus is God. He said He was God, the prophecies and miracles proved it, and this is what Christians believe.
- Jesus is the Messiah, the one prophesied throughout the Old Testament to come rescue Israel.
- Jesus came to earth for us. He was born as a human to go through all that you go through and ultimately to die in our place. Hebrews 10:10 explains that a sacrifice needed to be made to satisfy God's justice and so He had to have a body in order to die for us.
- Jesus rose from the dead. This was witnessed by hundreds of people. Jesus had satisfied the requirement that sin must lead to death (He wouldn't be truly just if he just ignored wrong) and made it so that death isn't the end for us.
- He did this because He loves you! Read John 3:16. You have it in writing.
- Jesus taught us that we can be one with Him and how we should live. We should continually trust in Him and love one another as we wait for His return.
- Jesus will reign on earth one day. The Bible that prophesied of His coming tells of His coming again. Then all the evil things that have been allowed will be judged and He will be gloriously in charge.



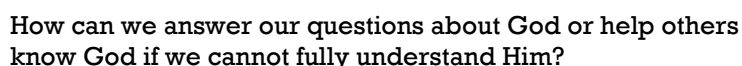


There is controversy in the Church over the Holy Spirit, not mainly over who the Spirit is or what He does but over how He works in us. When we look at the Holy Spirit working in people, let's remember that God does not fit into our mental boxes and is mysterious to us, God is personal and relational and has interacted with people since He created us, and the Bible is clear that He lives in the believers. If we can affirm those things we will be better equipped to discuss how the Holy Spirit works in us today.

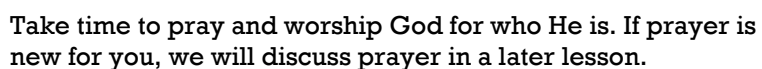
Most of the time we try very hard to be good and do the right thing. But only when we first give up and metaphorically die does God begin a new life in us, the Bible says. We're not able to do what He wants all by ourselves but with this new life of the Holy Spirit in us we get to be God's children and live accordingly (Galatians 4:6; I John 3:2).

Likewise, since spiritual things are only known with the Holy Spirit's power, we don't have an expectation that those who do not have the Holy Spirit in them to know or be changed by Him yet (I Cor. 2:14)

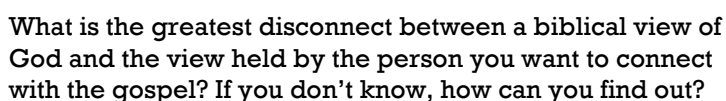
Although the Father is God Almighty He sent His Son to you. Although Christ is God Almighty He obeyed the Father and came to you. Although the Holy Spirit is God He lives in the believers. When Jesus turned things over to the Holy Spirit we went from God we could see to God who is always in us. We don't fully understand this but let's not miss its beauty!



Aim



Do



Aim

Doodles

NOTES

Doodles

Independence (“self-existence”)

This means: God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify Him and bring Him joy.

We see this in the Bible in: Acts 17:24-25 “He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples,²⁵ and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need.”

As well as in: Job 41:11; Ps. 50:10-12

For us this means:

- We can do things out of worship to God but He doesn't need us to help Him.
- We learn to receive from God.
- God is our definition of good; He is not good because He obeys someone else.
-

Unchanging (“immutability”)

This means: God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.

We see this in the Bible in: Psalms 102:25-27

**“25 Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth
and made the heavens with your hands.**

26 They will perish, but you remain forever; they will wear out like old clothing.

You will change them like a garment and discard them.

27 But you are always the same; you will live forever.”

As well as in: James 1:17; Ex. 3:14

For us this means:

- We can always trust God.
- We have a relationship with the same God every other believer does, including the people in the Old Testament.
-

The above attributes are those that we do not share with God and those below are ones we do share since we are made in His image. However, the breakdown is not really as simple as that. As we saw some attributes that we partially reflect, so with the “shared attributes” we don’t fully share them. This is because only God is God, yet we are made in His image.

Spirituality

This means: God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence.

We see this in the Bible in: Jn. 4:24: "For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

As well as in: II Cor. 3:17

For us this means we:

- Worship Him in our spirit (Jn 4:24; 1 Cor. 14:14; Phil. 3:3)
- Are united with God in spirit (I Cor. 6:17) and are the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16)
- Know internally that we are part of His family (Rom. 8:16)
- Get to be with God after we die (Lk. 23:46; Ecc. 12:7; Heb. 12:23;
- We are not a body only, since we have a spirit
-

We reflect this attribute in that:

- our inner self is our spirit/soul which is why when our body dies we are not destroyed.

Invisibility

This means: God's total essence, all of His spiritual being, will never be able to be seen by us, yet God still shows Himself to us through visible, created things.

We see this in the Bible in: Jn. 1:18: "No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us."

As well as in: Ex. 33:20; 6:46; I Tim. 1:17, 6:16; I Jn. 4:12

For us this means:

- God is our standard of morality
- God is our highest good and reward

We reflect this attribute when we:

- Act like Him (Gal. 5:22)
- Declare His goodness.
- Enjoy Him (Ps. 34:8)

Love

This means: God eternally gives of Himself to others

We see this in the Bible in: I John 4:8: “But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

As well as in: John 17:24; Rom. 5:8

For us this means:

- Love is not God (and therefore the highest good) but God is love, so we are the people who best know what love is (I Jn. 4:7-8) .
- God loves us
-

We reflect this attribute when we:

- love Him.
- accept His love for us.
- sacrificially love others based on who God is, not on who they are or who we are (Mt. 5:43-45, 22:37-39; Eph. 5:29).



How does the person you want to share the gospel with view the concept of love?

Aim

Mercy/Grace/Patience

This means: God's is good toward those in misery and distress and toward those who deserve only punishment. God withholds punishment for a long period of time.

We see this in the Bible in: Ex. 34:6: “The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, ‘Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.”

As well as in: Ps. 103:8; Eph. 4:7; II Pt. 3:9, and many other verses.

For us this means:

- God takes away our punishment but also gives us great undeserved blessings.
- He waits for people to be saved (II Pt. 3:9).
-

We reflect this attribute when we:

- Have mercy, grace, and patience for others (Matt. 5:7, James 1:19).

Holiness

This means: God is separated from sin and devoted to His purpose of being glorified by His creation.

We see this in the Bible in: Is. 6:3: They were calling out to each other, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven’s Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!”

As well as in: Ex. 15:1; Lev 20:26; Ps. 99:9; Mt. 5:48

For us this means:

- God is separate from us yet calls us to separate ourselves to Him.
- Purpose is central to who God is and who we are.
- We are called to perfection.
-

We reflect this attribute in that:

- We are called to be holy (Lev. 19:2; I Pt. 1:15-16) by being separated to the purpose of glorifying God.

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FOUNDATIONS

LESSON THREE: Who is God?

NOTES



Reflect

Do you tend to “compartmentalize” God, seeing Him not as all His attributes?



Discuss

What happens when we have an inaccurate view of God?



Discuss

What does it mean to “know God”?

[illegible]

Aim

Which of these attributes involves your personal learning question? Do you see your question any differently in the light of God's attributes?

[illegible]

Doodles

NOTES



How could you connect a biblical picture of who God is with the person or group you desire to share with?

Aim



Do

Do something this week to help you enjoy God and something to reflect one of His attributes.

Memory Verse

Exodus 15:11 (ESV)

Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

From Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith

God

There is one and only one living and true God who is sovereign, and the creator of all things. He eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each of these persons is fully God and are united as one.

•Gen. 1:26 | Dt. 6:4 | Mt. 28:19 | Ps. 45:6-7

God the Father

God is called Father because He is the Father over all creation. He is also Father by intimate relationship. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the Father of all who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

•Eph.3:14,15 | Ps.103:13 | Eph.1:3 | Jn.1:12

God the Son

Jesus Christ was fully God, and became fully man in one person, and will be so forever. He created all things with the Father and has existed always. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He perfectly upheld the divine law by His obedience to it, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.

•Lk. 1:35 | Jn. 1:1 | Jn. 1:14 | Jn. 3:16 | Jn. 3:34,35 | Jn. 14:31

•Is. 59:21 | Jn. 14:17 | Jn. 14:26 | Jn. 16:8

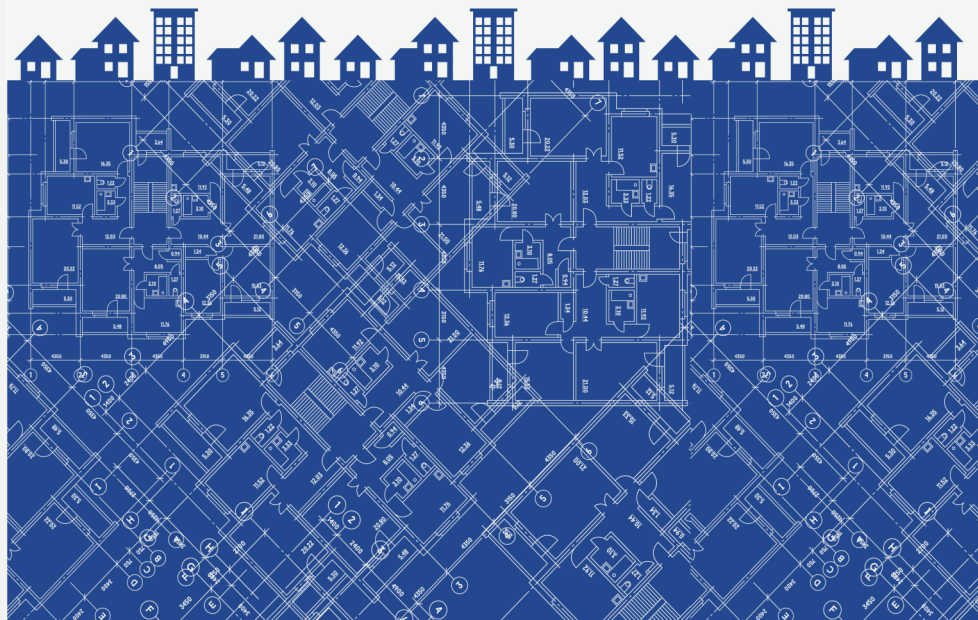
God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He exalts Christ. He manifests the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He leads all mankind in what is true and empowers the believer and the church in worship, discipleship, and service.

Doodles

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, and the page is completely blank except for the lines themselves.

LESSON FOUR: MAN AND OUR SIN



NOTES



Read

In this lesson we will look at who we are in our nature. When we look at mankind we see both great darkness as well as hope in God's redemption. Knowing what the Bible teaches about our human nature is crucial to understanding the gospel.

Origins

We see so much about the nature of humanity in just the first three chapters of the Bible. Genesis tells us that God created the first man and later from him made the first woman. God spoke all creation into existence and out of the soil of creation He formed Man.

Looking at Genesis 2:7, what do you see as unique about the creation of Man?

God said all He created was good except what? (Gen. 2:18)

What does this tell you about human nature?

What is part of God's design for Man as seen in Gen. 2:15?

What is part of God's design for Man as seen in Gen. 2:19?

Doodles

Note that man was created fully formed and intelligent. He does not evolve or become what God desired him to be but begins that way, later to fall away from this perfect state.

In God's Image

God breathed life into Adam but also crafted him in the image of God Himself. No other being in creation is created this way.

What does it mean that we are made in God's image?

- We are above animals and are given "dominion" of the earth.
- We are body, soul (or spirit), and mind.
- We have inherent value.
- We are relational.

NOTES

- We can relate to God.
- God can become human; a human can have divine nature.
- We can be represented by God.
- We can represent God.
- We carry God's identity with us.



Discuss

We will discuss each of these things in class and explore their implications.

Being made in God's image does not imply that God has a physical body (Jesus says that God is spirit). In fact, when we try to make God physical and make Him look like us, act like us, and we make Him small enough to understand and control we call that idolatry.



Aim

How would your chosen person answer why it is wrong to harm people? How do they view human nature?

Doodles

Male and Female

Genesis says that God created people male and female. When God knew that it was not good for Adam to be alone He created a woman from Adam because she would be a perfect "helper" for him. The Hebrew word helper is also used of the Holy Spirit's role in our lives. In being Adam's helper "fit for him" we see that men and women are crafted to complement one another. God gave them a noble purpose of bearing His image as the crown of creation, cultivating the garden and producing generations of people to know and glorify God. In order to achieve their purpose together God created them complementary in design and roles. One is not better than the other, nor are they the same. Being different, they become one. God designed difference into gender and there is beauty in the difference.

NOTES



Reflect

How does God's design for men and women being one reflect His nature in the trinity?



Discuss

What are some ways men and women are complementary?

Marriage

In the account in Genesis two of the creation of man and woman we also have the origin of marriage. Genesis 2:23-24 teach that men and women are made of one flesh and in marriage they become one flesh. This speaks to a sacred, physical-spiritual bond in the covenant of marriage.

Purpose

People are given designed to serve a purpose. We are created to work, make things, extend God's kingdom authority in His world, and live in relationship with each other and Him. The Westminster Catechism of 1647 sums up our purpose by saying, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever."

Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith on Family

Marriage is the union of one man and one woman who will live bound not by contract alone, but by a commitment in His love that should not be broken. We believe that men and women are opposite and equal to each other, and that marriage is before God, your family and all the main institutions of society, with a promise from each other to be loving, faithful, and true. The marriage union is a permanent promise that extends into the future.

•Gen. 2:18 | Gen. 1:24 | Mt .19:8 | Eph. 5:31

Doodles

Sin is something that we need a foundational understanding of because it is something that we deal with, are surrounded by, and are corrupted by.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Broken people, culture, and society

In Genesis 3:1-13 we see the profound change in human nature due to sin. Before they rebel against God, Adam and Eve are in perfect relationship with God and each other. After they rebel they immediately experience shame in that they know they are naked and seek to cover themselves and it drives a wedge between Adam and Eve. They experience fear for the first time when they hear God coming and try to hide. They experience guilt for the first time, realizing they have done something wrong and seeking to shift the blame onto others.

World cultures can be categorized according to these three paradigms of the human soul. While any culture has a mix of all three, one paradigm will stand out.

Honor/Shame

- Identity comes from the group
- Group goals are what is important
- Honor can be bestowed but not taken on oneself
- Social norms and rules are taught in environment, not written down
- One must hide what is shameful and not get caught
- Shame must be deflected or distracted from, or , if this is impossible, one must face the full consequence of dishonor (up to exile or death).
- Sees Jesus as taking our shame and giving us honor.

Power/Fear

- Those in power determine social rules, but the rules do not necessarily apply to them
- Those in power seek to stay in power but the rules change if the person in power changes
 - One must align with the most powerful person
 - One seeks to instill fear over others in order to gain power
- There is a tendency to abuse those below since one cannot exert power over those above
 - May involve a “benevolent dictator”
- Sees Jesus as taking our fear and giving us power

Doodles

Innocence/Guilt

- Rules and laws are very important and should be written down
 - The needs of the individual outweigh the needs of the group
 - Identity is individually formed
 - Legal rights, fairness, and consistency are highly valued
 - Legal penalties deter bad behavior
 - One desires to be found innocent at all costs
- Thinking tends to be critical, analytical, and cause-effect
 - One may separate legality from morality
- Sees Jesus as taking our guilt and giving us innocence.

Sin affected the whole of society. It broke us as individuals and a society of fallen individuals is a broken society. We will discuss the world more in a later lesson but we must understand that sin is at the core of what is wrong with our society.

A broken normal

This viewpoint on sin shows us something uniquely different and vastly more important than what we may normally assume. We can reason that if the world's natural state is sinful then bad things will naturally happen. In fact, we can ask a seemingly odd question: "If the world is evil and people are evil, why do good things happen?" and the answer is that good can only happen because of God. Good things can happen because it is part of His very nature.

We are continually surprised at how flawed we and everyone else are because our original design is to live in a good world. The fact that our existence is broken is both very normal to us and yet always seems to not be the way God intends.

The world is fallen and therefore the natural state is now a sinful state. Our reasoning also proves to be true if we take a look outside of the Bible and into our very world. People suffer and life is unfair. The most important aspects that dictate the path our lives will take happen without our control, consent, or will; those things being who our parents are, the DNA we have, and where we are born. When we see the world for what it is: fallen away from God's goodness into an evil state, we are in line with what Scripture teaches and we can better make sense of our world.

We sometimes ask, "If God is real, why don't we see Him work?" The answer is simple: God is working far more than we could ever think or comprehend. The fact that any good thing can happen is because of the grace and work of God. The fact that worse things don't happen is because of the grace and work of God. Our very existence proves two things, that God is actively working in our world, and that God has power and authority over evil.

Doodles

The doctrine of common grace takes nothing away from the doctrine of sin. Instead it shows that even the good in our society is due to the goodness of God and not us.



What evidence of common grace do you see in your chosen person or group? What do you think their motive for doing good is?

Aim

Sin is not something that is equally as powerful as God or His holiness. Sin is actually powerless in the presence of God. God did not create sin, nor does He author it. He does not cause it to happen. God cannot be tempted by sin, has not sinned and will not sin. A helpful analogy for sin and holiness is light and darkness. Light does not create darkness, rather it casts it out. A shadow is not formed because light is there, a shadow is formed because of an absence of light.

This is a heavy topic and you may be feeling the weight and the heaviness of sin. That's good. Don't undermine the gravity of sin because by making light of sin takes away the glory of God in what He had to do on the cross. ." Do not minimize sin because by doing so you directly minimize the grace of God. Yet do not focus only on sin because by doing so you insult the victory of Christ over sin. Only with an understanding of sin can we understand ourselves, our world, and the incredible grace of our God.

NOTES

In a future lesson we will see that because sin has marred our very nature and enslaved us, we need the only Free One who is divine and human, yet without sin, to come and trade natures with us, giving us a divine nature (II Peter 1:4) alongside our human one.

From Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith on Man

God created human beings male and female as His unique and crowning work of creation. By mankind's own choosing he rebelled against God and brought sin into the human race. The value, worth, and sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore we believe that every person possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

- Gen. 1:26,27 | Rom. 5:12 | Jn. 3:1



How does seeing the brokenness in our hearts and our society inform your personal learning question?

Aim



How do you personally respond to being told you are sinful?

Reflect

Doodles

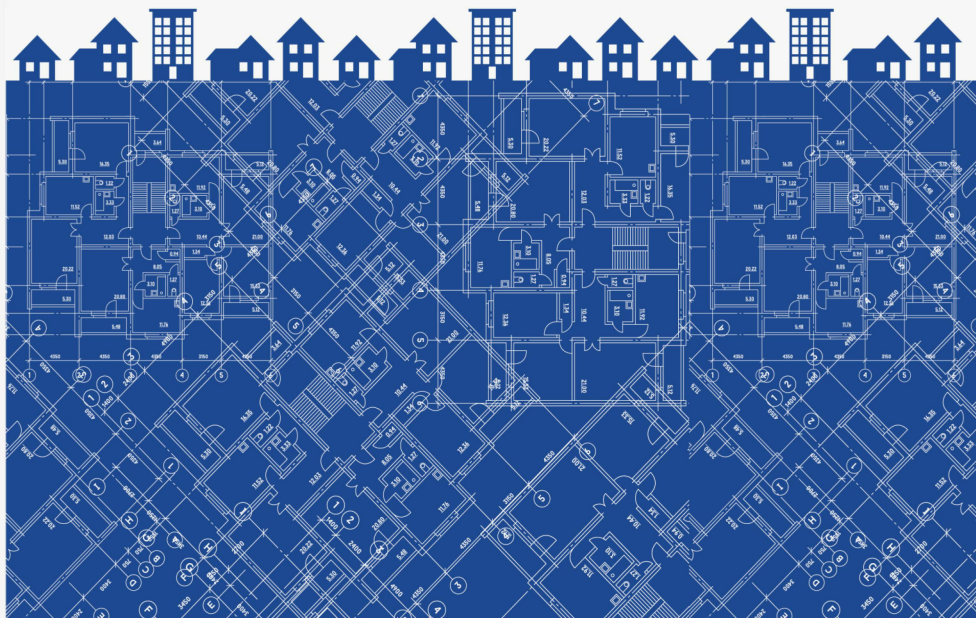
Genesis 1:27

Memory Verse

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

[illegible]

LESSON FIVE: SALVATION



NOTES

Doodles

In this lesson we will look at what it is to have Jesus as our Savior. Our salvation is not something we can get all by ourselves; Jesus gets it for us. Our salvation happens all at once when we come to trust Christ, but it also plays out over our lifetime. We will look at salvation in three stages: justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Justification

Accounted Righteous

When God justifies us He calls us right with Him. He puts righteousness in our account and views us as though we were always obedient. While He still works on the problems in our character (more on this in the sanctification section), the person who puts their total trust in Jesus is given a status of being right with God that never changes. The first example of this is Abraham but the same arrangement goes for us today: trusting belief is what God requires to make our account say “righteous.” On the cross, Jesus said “It is finished,” using a term meaning “paid in full.” Not only is the punishment of our sin paid for by Jesus’s sacrifice of Himself, He calls us righteous forever.

Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

Galatians 3:6

See also Rom. 4:3 and James 2:23

As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it *and* be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53:11

Not of Us

The Bible repeatedly makes clear that our salvation is a gift from God and not something we can gain for ourselves. The Bible describes us as being dead before Christ gave us spiritual life. Nothing about our salvation is anything we can do for ourselves. A dead person cannot will themselves to life.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

Ephesians 2:1-2

NOTES

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

Hebrews 12:2a

Society and Individuals are not Good

When we learned about people and their sinfulness we saw that all individuals and all of society are wickedly bent against God and His ways. We saw that the reason society as a whole has so many problems is because it is made up of sinful individuals. We can even see mankind's evil show itself in the lives of the people described in the Bible. There are countless stories of people doing horrible things and refusing to follow God's ways with their whole hearts. When we examine our own hearts we come to see that we are prideful toward God, trying to have our way rather than His, and selfish toward others, trying to make sure we are taken care of and making life about us. This is discussed further in the lessons on Man and Our World.

What we are saved from?

- Damnation, Death, Separation from God

When the Old Testament talks about being saved it tends to mean being rescued from danger in this world. But when the New Testament talks about being saved (e.g. Matthew 1:21; Acts 2:21, 47) it means being rescued from spiritual death and punishment. While we still die when our bodies wear out, we are not.

- Sin's Punishment, Power, and Presence

Another way to look at what we are saved from is to say that we are first saved from sin's punishment, then throughout our lives from its power over us, and when we die and enter God's presence, we are saved from sin's presence as it will no longer be a factor in our existence.

- Self

We can also say that when we follow Christ we are saved from ourselves. Our natural inclination is to set ourselves up as the authority in our lives. We seek to have our way and to get glory for ourselves. But we will find that no one but God can fill that role. We will rule our lives and seek to rule in other people's lives in a tyrannical way. We even tyrannize ourselves! To be saved by Jesus is to be saved from our own brokenness in exchange for His perfect rule in our lives.

Doodles



Reflect

Would your understanding of your need for salvation differ from this in some way? How much has your culture fed into your idea of salvation?

NOTES

The Great Exchange

God is holy and His nature defines good and evil (Is. 6:3; Ex.3:14). We try to define right and wrong according to what we think and want but we are not God. When Adam and Eve originally disobeyed God it was to try to take on His role and be like Him. But after rebelling against Him they become separated from Him and have a marred relationship with God and each other. Our sin separates us from a holy God (Rom. 5:10). Since we failed to be like God by taking His place, God came from His place to take ours (Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus lived the life of a man but did it better than any of us, being sinless and loving others completely. He represents God the Father to us and also represents us before the Father. Jesus went to the cross not only for us but as us. He represented us on the cross. Jesus takes on our identity as sinners to give us His identity as the Righteous One (II Cor. 5:21). We are given the righteous status of Christ, a standing of grace (Rom. 5:2). When we learned about our broken nature, we saw that world cultures fall into categories of one of three emphases: Honor/Shame, Innocence/Guilt, and Power/Fear. Each has a human difficulty that we see enter our nature at the Fall.

Jesus, on the cross, exchanges our shame for His honor, our fear for His power, our guilt for His innocence. He exchanges His position for ours.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

Doodles

What do we do to be saved?

As we saw above in this lesson, there is a sense in which we don't do anything to be saved, God does the saving. However, we are responsible to respond. The Bible talks about "obeying the gospel" (Rom. 10:16; II Thess. 1:8; I Pt. 4:17). How do you obey "good news"? You believe it and respond with action. Our belief of the gospel message becomes an action response when we:

- **Believe (John 6:29).** Believing in Christ is putting a desperate trust in Him to save us. For someone to be saved they do not need to understand everything about the Bible, but to believe that Jesus is all of who He says He is (John 6:29). We trust God first for salvation but still continue to be called to trust Him with all areas of our lives.
- **Repent (Rom. 10:9-10).** Repentance is the act of turning from my own way to follow the way of Christ. Our salvation comes when we first repent, but we also will have times throughout our life following Christ when we will need to turn back toward Him after straying away, whether in small or large ways.
- **Confess (Rom. 10:9-10).** Confession is declaring your faith in Christ openly, agreeing with God that you need His salvation, and letting others know of your new allegiance to Him. This does not mean that someone is not saved until they share with others about Jesus. Instead, it means that we acknowledge to the Lord our need for and faith in Him and are saved right away. Later, we do share with others also.

NOTES

God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

James 4:12

See also Matt. 7:1; 15:11,16-20



Can we discern someone's salvation without passing judgment? In other words, how do we know if someone is saved?

Discuss

Assurance of Salvation

One of the most difficult things that many Christians grapple with is how we know if we are truly saved. When we talk about those who go through the motions and yet do not have a true saving faith in Jesus, we can become concerned that this may describe us as well. There are several ways we can be assured of our salvation. Our assurance of salvation should be a mix of these things.

By our lives

God is a person and when we get to know Him more and more we are changed. Our mind, words, and actions are transformed. When we are renewed by God we will see His work in our lives and others should see it as well. The longer we follow Him, the more we will see His faithfulness, answers to prayer, and changing of our character and perspective. If no one else sees the change Christ has made in your life, you should consider why.

By trust

In one way, we have assurance of salvation by stepping back and believing what the Bible says. Jesus tells us that we must believe in Him (John 6:29, 14:6). Do you trust Christ and His promise of salvation to the point that you have stopped trying to be acceptable to Him and simply believed what He says? If you are still holding onto your doubt, your ways, your own goodness, or even what you can see, you are not fully committed in faith in Christ. Trusting what the Bible says is extremely simple and extremely difficult. But we can rest assured in what is written in the black and white for us in Scripture.

By the Spirit

Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." This means that God the Holy Spirit lives in us and assures us that we are indeed God's children because He has grace for us. As we live with the Lord, we get to know His voice which affirms our relationship with Him. If you are in doubt about your salvation, ask the Lord to speak to you.

Doodles

By the resurrection

The Bible never asks for empty belief. Jesus' resurrection is proof to us that we also will not be demolished by death but have eternal life with God to look forward to. See the appendix for reasons why we can believe in the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection is our way of seeing that "salvation works". Otherwise, Jesus would simply have died and we would have no hope when we look at our own death.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

I Corinthians 15:20

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God

Romans 8:16

What we are saved for

Relationship with God

We are saved to have a relationship with God. The Bible classifies people as either in rebellion against God and trying to have their own way (even if their way appears well-behaved) or children of God. While anyone who knows children knows that they are not always obedient, we are given a relational status with God the Father. We are made to be His children who can always approach Him and get to know Him more and more.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:13-22

Doodles

NOTES

Doodles

Keys to Sanctification

Humility and submission are two of the most important attributes that a Christian must have. In fact, they must become a state of our spirits. Humility recognizes that we need a Savior; submission puts us under His care and training. Humility and Submission are so closely tied together that they are two parts of the same thing.

Humility

We can act or be humble in action without having a spirit of humility, but you can never have a spirit of humility that doesn't act in humility.

Having a spirit of humility comes from acknowledging that God is who He says He is. It grows by having a personal relationship with God. Having a spirit of humility comes from being confident in our identity in Christ. When we come to know our identity in Christ, we are humble without being humiliated (Ps. 34:5). We learn to carry ourselves as children of God Himself which allows the confidence that comes from knowing our value and royal status.

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less."

– C.S. Lewis

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

John 13:14

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

"Knowing whose you are, who you are, and what you are for, settles basic issues about how you live."

–Sinclair B. Ferguson

Submission

True obedience is a matter of the heart which is submitted to Christ. Anyone can make an outward show of obedience but it must come from a place of submission to be genuine.

Having a spirit of submission can only come after having a spirit of humility. It requires acknowledging that we need God, and then handing over our life to Him.

Changing in Christ flows from humility and submission. It is something we have to strive to keep at the forefronts of our minds so that we can remain with a spirit of humility and submission. The more we say no to the Holy Spirit, the easier it becomes. Likewise, the more we say yes to Him, the easier that becomes.



How surrendered are you to God? What is something you are holding back?

Reflect

Once a Sinner...?

One of the greatest difficulties the follower of Christ faces is the question of what it means that we still sin after salvation. Some say that if we would only try hard enough we can live without any sin. In Romans 7:13-25 Paul expresses his inner turmoil over his sinful tendency to rebel against what he knows God would have him do.

While we are already saved from the penalty of sin when we are justified, and are being saved from the power of sin as we are sanctified, it will not be until we are glorified that we are saved from the very presence of sin.

The Bible does not call the follower of Christ a sinner, but rather a saint. While this does not mean that we no longer commit acts of rebellion against God, it means that we have been given a status as holy, righteous children of God. But as saints, we live separated to God's purposes which do not include sin. We still struggle against sin. Every Christian will have a different set of sins that are particularly difficult. Yours may not be the same as someone else's. The point should be that we strive to be like Christ and participate in His work to change us from the inside out.

Keep in mind that because of the believer's justification, our sins do not mean that we are at risk of God's wrath (Rom. 5:9), although He may discipline us (Heb. 12:6). While the Bible instructs us in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16), Jesus defends us when we sin (I Jn. 2:1).



What areas of sin have been the most prevalent in your life?
How are you struggling for obedience in these areas?

Reflect

Doodles

How Can I Grow as a Christian?

- Connect with church community
- Get to know God in the Bible
- Spend time in prayer
- Serve others
- Endure suffering
- Take in Christian teaching

Discuss

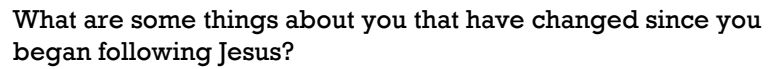


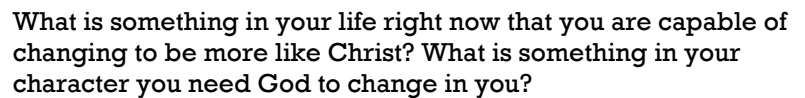
Reflect



Aim

returns He will resurrect our bodies to be joined again with our souls so that we live again on a renewed earth (I Cor. 15:42). We could say that we are dead before Christ makes us spiritually alive, we live more fully in this life until we are made to live again forever. See I Cor. 15 and I Thess. 4.





Romans 8:16-18

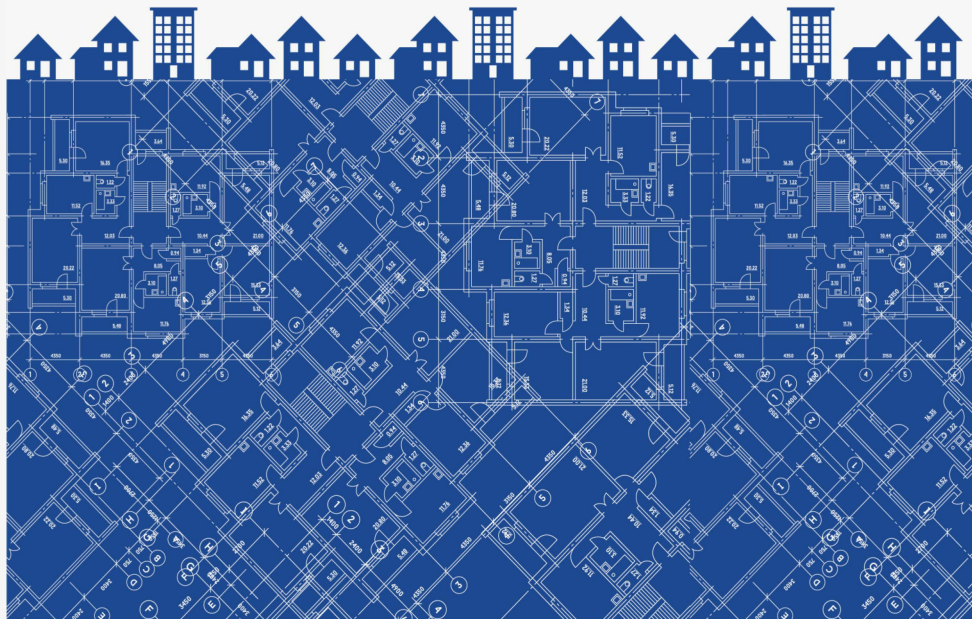
For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.

101

FOUNDATIONS

A large rectangular area with horizontal ruling lines, intended for writing or drawing. The area is enclosed in a black border and contains 30 horizontal lines.

LESSON SIX: CHURCH



NOTES



Read

In this lesson we will look at what the Bible teaches about the Church. We will discuss the dynamics of applying biblical principles in different church contexts and learn about Calvary Murrieta's mission, vision, and values as a local church.

The Beginning of the Church

Although we learn much from the lives and events described in the Old Testament, it is important to understand that the Church did not exist during this time. Likewise, while Jesus spoke at times about the Church before it really was in place, the Church was founded at the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples of Jesus. They quickly began forming church communities. The Church's story began with the Holy Spirit empowering and guiding believers to, as a family, reach global cultures with the Gospel and this continues today.

The book of Acts gives the story of the early church expanding from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to Rome.

Definitions:

Church: The community of all true believers around the world and throughout time.

Local church: A community of believers taking spiritual responsibility for one another under the headship of Christ, the power of the Spirit, and godly servant leaders.

Denomination: A collective of local churches sharing doctrine and leadership.

***Note:** When "Church" is capitalized, we mean the whole Church around the world and throughout history. When it is not capitalized we are referring to a local church community.

The Spiritual Definition of the Church

- A spiritual community (Matthew 16:18)
"Church" in Greek is *ekklesia*, meaning community
- Family of Faith (Galatians 6:10)
- Body of Christ (Romans 12:5)
- Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25; Revelation 19:7)
- Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19)

Doodles

NOTES



Reflect

What is your particular passion? Does it promote the life of the church? Do you appreciate other people's passions as well?

Because the local church is a community it must serve the needs of the whole body. A local church cannot serve only a certain type of person or a highly specific need (e.g. homelessness, education, or missions). Ministries that exist to serve one particular group or need of the Church are called parachurch organizations. A church can partner with a parachurch organization for mutual help but a church is a community and cannot be limited to serving one specific need.



Discuss

What should a church consider when including something as a ministry?

Doodles

Major and Minor

Remember that we are all one Church but we will disagree on certain interpretations of things the Bible says. Some things are so important we all must agree on them while others may be seen differently and shouldn't divide us. Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith should be taken as our church's description of major teachings we ask all in ministry servant-leadership to agree upon.



Discuss

What is an example of a major issue upon which we must agree? What is an example of a minor issue we can disagree on?

NOTES

Doodles

What makes a healthy church?

- Proper doctrinal teaching
- Proper use of sacraments
- Proper use of discipline
- Genuine worship
- Effective prayer
- Effective witness
- Effective fellowship
- Spiritual power
- Biblical church government
- Holy lives of members
- Care for the poor
- Love for Christ

From Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*

Sacraments

Sometimes called “ordinances”

- Outward representations of inner grace (represent and show changes God made in our lives because of a change in status with Him).

Communion

- Commemorates Christ's sacrifice for us and making a new covenant of faithfulness with us.
- Identifies us with Christ.
- Symbolizes receiving Christ as our Bread of Life (spiritual food that truly sustains and satisfies).
- Reminds us of our spiritual blessings in Christ
- Done over and over.

1 Corinthians 11:26

For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

Baptism

- Represents our figurative death with Christ and rising as a new creation.
- Identifies us with Christ and the church.
- Done once.

Matt. 28:19

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Doodles

NOTES

Differing Views

As with some other areas of biblical teaching, the subject of spiritual gifts is one of some disagreement within the Church. Part of this is due to the fact that the Bible does not give us a great amount of information on spiritual gifts. Part of it is because anything to do with the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives will be difficult for us to neatly organize and understand. Also, because some churches have gone so far to one side that they believe that while the Spirit may indwell believers, it is the Scripture alone that God uses to shape our lives and give us wisdom and power. Others on the other end of the spectrum will trade in biblical teaching for an “experience of the Holy Spirit” that may be only subjective, emotional, or against biblical teaching.

One part of the controversy is the question of whether or not the Holy Spirit still acts in these ways in our day or if the Bible is merely describing a way He acted in believers at the time of the Bible’s writing. At Calvary Murrieta we teach the gifts as still active today but we see a great need to interpret them only in the light of what the Bible teaches about them, to not see something as coming from the Holy Spirit that disagrees with the Bible, harms the church community, glorifies ourselves, is done for profit, implies we direct God’s power or sovereignty, or does not exhibit the fruit of the Spirit outlined in Galatians.

Natural or Supernatural

Spiritual Gifts

Holy Spirit-given abilities for communing with God and serving the Church.
E.G. Speaking in tongues

Natural Gifts or Strengths

Broad ways you tend to function best in your world; capabilities you will apply in any given situation in which you find yourself.
E.G. Learning

Abilities

General talents you are born with.
E.G. Learning languages

Skills

Specific capabilities that must be learned and practiced.
E.G. Speaking French

- Some spiritual giftings are more practical or “down-to-earth” and some more miraculous. However, just as there is a constant unifying of divine and human, cosmic and concrete, the gifts of the Holy Spirit overlap in their natural and supernatural character.
- Spiritual gifts are different from talents, abilities, or skills.
- While all people have natural abilities, only all believers have spiritual gifts.
- Spiritual gifts do not depend on specific circumstances or a job or role.
- All are for the blessing of the Church.
- There is a variety of gifts in the Church.
 - No one believer has all the gifts.
 - We need each other’s gifts and should celebrate them without jealousy or insecurity.

NOTES

Unity in the Church

The Bible constantly teaches that we must strive for unity in the Church. This applies both within a local church and among the universal Church of true believers.

Preferences and priorities differ. Your personal styles and passions will not be the same as others' in your church. If there is an area you find yourself desiring to change, God may be putting that area on your heart to get involved in service. While everyone should find their place in serving their church community, not all should serve in the same way. Don't let this be a block to unity.

I Cor. 1:10

I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

I Cor. 12:26-27

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

Some things to keep in mind:

- Every Christian is at a different place in a race.
- Every Christian is different
- Followers of Christ are not Christ, therefore we are all imperfect.
- Some of us are weird.
- Some in the church are not true believers.
- Unity must be fought for.
- Jesus gives us His plan for church conflict resolution in Matthew 18.

The Household of Faith: the Church as family

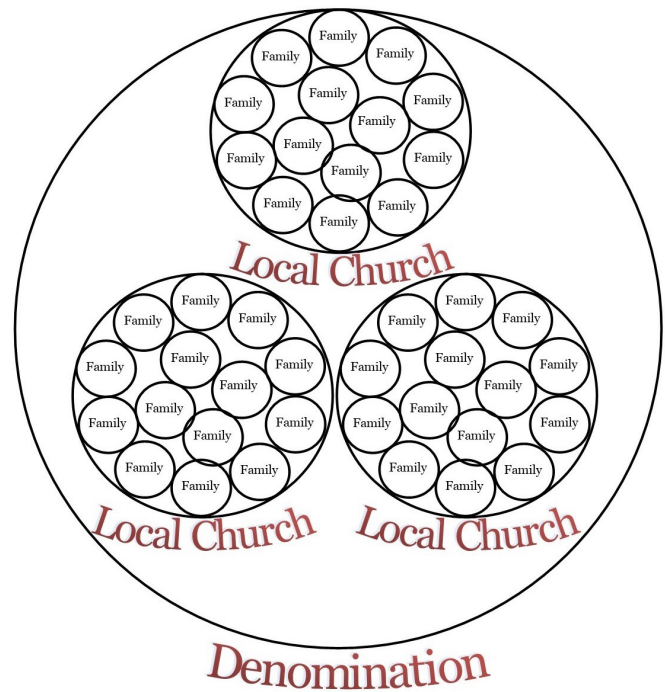
The model the Bible uses for the church is not one of a business, social club, government, school, or other institution. The family is the model of the church and it may be said to be a family of families or an extended "clan".

Doodles

NOTES

Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

Galatians 6:10



Servant Leadership in the Church

The Bible describes two primary divisions of authority in a church. These are defined and operate differently based on the particular structure of any given denomination or local church. These responsibilities are usually function in more complex ways than two distinct categories. Every local church should have godly, biblical leaders who take responsibility for the needs of the church community.

Elder: responsible to provide oversight. Teaches and guides the church spiritually. Some churches consider a pastor to be an elder, other churches see elders as spiritual leaders who come alongside pastors but who are not themselves ordained.

Deacon: responsible to provide spiritual service. Generally, assists elders in practical care for people through ministries.

Doodles

NOTES

- Each of the three main churches see themselves as the closest inheritor of the earliest church in Acts. But the goal of the Church is not to go back to the first century but to the past but to go out to the world.

Marks of Evangelicalism

A church like ours is an “evangelical” church. This term is used in different ways but we will define it along the following lines:

- Belief that the Bible is God's inspired word to us.
- Belief that God invites us to have a personal relationship with Him.
- Belief that each person must have their own faith in Christ for salvation.
- Belief that the Church must share the Gospel so that others may be saved.

Perhaps the two summary differences between evangelicals and other Christians are:

- Belief in the priesthood of all believers (only Jesus makes us able to approach the Father - we do not need a human intercessor).
- Belief in the authority of scripture over tradition (we look to the Bible as our unchanging guide rather than to historical church leaders).

Doodles

The Invisible Church

How are we to make sense of the idea that the global Church is one church and yet we sometimes discuss other churches almost as though they are of a different faith? How do we make sense of people we meet in our own local church that may not show any fruit of a relationship with Christ?

Remember that our definition of the Church is all true believers for all time. As we learned in a previous lesson that we are saved through faith in Christ, anyone in any church who has faith in Christ is part of the global Church.

We use the term “invisible church” which means the true believers in Christ inside any given church organization or version of Christianity.

- Not all in a church truly have faith in Christ and not all in a given church do not.

NOTES

- Which church one belongs to is not the definition of salvation, faith in Christ is.
- We cannot judge individual souls

Ephesians 4:5–6

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

Hebrews 12:23

You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.

The Global, Persecuted Church

Some facts:

- More Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in all other centuries combined [christianity.com]
- It is claimed that 105,000 Christians are martyred for their faith each year [Deseret News, 2011]
- Currently over 100 million Christians are being persecuted worldwide [Reuters, 2013]

You can learn about your persecuted family members from:

- Voice of the Martyrs: persecution.com
- International Christian Concern: persecution.org
- Open Doors International: opendoors.org

Our church has a group that prays together every Saturday specifically for the persecuted Church.

Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself.
Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in
your own bodies.

Hebrews 13:3

Doodles

NOTES

Discipleship

As a believer, we need to be helping others move forward in their walk with Christ, teaching them to look to Him and, in turn, training others to follow Christ. This functions on an individual, group, and even national level (Titus 2:3-6; Mt. 28:19). As we've seen in the Great Commission lesson, a believer can disciple a non-believer toward Christ or disciple a believer to follow Christ more fully. When we begin our walk with Christ we tend to focus primarily on ourselves and our wants and needs. But as we grow in Christ we become ready to help another person in their walk with Christ. Discipling another person is a mark of maturity as a Christian.

The process of discipleship can look many different ways and as long as we are accomplishing its purpose we shouldn't argue over methods.

Discipleship: the ongoing process of pursuing a relationship with others and helping them follow the leading of Jesus as Lord and His command to make disciples themselves.



Reflect

How might you go about discipling someone? Is there someone you have an opportunity to disciple?

Doodles

Our Local Church

As part of Calvary Murrieta, you should know what we are about.

To know us, you need to know our heart. You must understand our mission, which is who we aim to be, and our motto, which are a simplified set of rules we aspire to live by.

You also need to know our vision which looks out into the future and defines what we want to be; it's our aspiration and goals. And finally you must know what we value, which is how we desire to live; things we'll be intentional about; our principles and standards; it's our DNA.

NOTES

Mission

- To love God completely
- To love people authentically
- To make disciples globally

Motto

- To live the **Great Commandment** (Mark 12:28-34)
- To fulfill the **Great Commission** (Matthew 28:18-20)

Vision

- We see a united body of worshipers enjoying God, loving unconditionally, giving freely, and attracting their neighbors to Jesus
- We see disciples making disciples in sustainable national churches around the world
- We see the Father enjoying the passionate worship of His people.

Values

- **Instruction:** Experiencing God as we believe, read, share and live His Word
- **Participation:** Encouraging all believers to discover and use their unique ministry gifts
- **Character:** Honoring God as our character is transformed resulting in genuine fruit
- **Stewardship:** Serving God with generous hearts as we invest our time, talent, and treasure in building His kingdom
- **Relationship:** Encountering God as we center our affections on Christ, sharing His grace and mercy with all people

Doodles



Reflect

Which part of our church Mission, Vision, Motto, and Values are you most passionate about and/or capable of moving us forward in? Which part is hardest for you to get behind and/or help with?

[illegible]

NOTES

From Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith

The Church

The church is both local and Universal. The Universal Church is the community of all true believers for all time. The local church is a faith filled community of worshipers who are united as an intentional community of disciples who are learning and living out the gospel together.

- Acts 2:42 | Heb. 10:25 | Eph. 5:25 | Rev 5:9,10 | Heb. 12:23

Baptism

Baptism is the public declaration of a believer's faith, pursuing obedience to the teachings of Jesus, and sharing in Christ's burial and resurrection. We believe it symbolizes death to your old life and announces your new life in Christ, which celebrates your inclusion into God's family.

- Mt. 28:19 | Acts 8:36-38 | Rom. 6:3,4

Communion

The bread and cup of Communion is remembered and celebrated when we look back to Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection. We look inward by examining our own heart in light of the cross, and look forward to drinking the cup new with Him in His Father's Kingdom.

- 1 Cor. 11:23-26 | Lk. 22:17-19 | Mt. 26:29

Doodles



Do

Visit persecution.org/take-action/ and find a persecution situation to pray for or a letter to write.



Do

Take a prayer request from class and pray for it this week.



Reflect

What do you expect from your church?

NOTES



What should we do when our church doesn't meet our expectations?

Discuss



How does the person you want to share with perceive the Church? What would help them connect to a church?

Aim



Does your experience with church factor in to your personal learning question? How?

Aim

Doodles

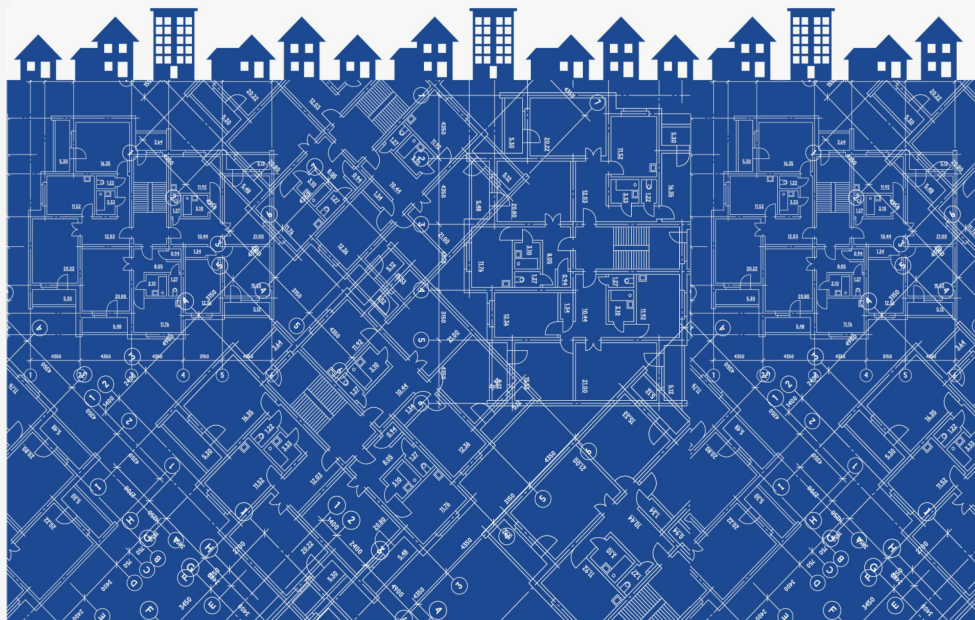
Memory Verse

I Corinthians 12:26-27

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

LESSON SEVEN: WORSHIP AND PRAYER



NOTES



Read

In Lesson Seven we studied the Church. In this lesson we will look closer at an aspect of the life of the Church, worship. We often think of worship as only the act of singing praise to God but it is much broader than that.

Worship is all the activities of the Church community, anything we organize ourselves to do in order to glorify God. Ultimately, the life we live following and serving Christ is a life of worship. We can and should live in such a way that we are worshipping God every day.

- Worship is an encounter with the living and holy God (Ex. 3:1–6)
- Worship is reserved for God alone (Ex. 34:14)
- In worship, we ascribe to the Lord the glory due him (Ps. 29:1–2)
- We can worship because of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (Heb. 10:1–10)
- We should worship with reverence for God (Heb. 12:28)
- When we draw near to God, he draws near to us (James 4:8)
- Worship honors God for who He is and what He does (Dt. 10:21)
- Worship brings us to God's presence (Ps. 100:2,4)
- Worship takes us outside ourselves (I Pt. 4:10)
- Worship brings us together (Ps. 122:1)

"The inner essence of worship is to know God truly and then respond from the heart to that knowledge by valuing God, treasuring God, prizing God, enjoying God, being satisfied with God above all earthly things. And then that deep, restful, joyful satisfaction in God overflows in demonstrable acts of praise from the lips and demonstrable acts of love in serving others for the sake of Christ."

-John Piper

Doodles

Worship in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God told the people where, when, and how He expected them to relate to Him in worship. He did this through the Law given to the Jews through Moses (in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

The reason the Old Testament Law for Israel covered life in sometimes exacting detail is that all aspects of one's life are a response to who God is.

NOTES

Worship is the proper response to who God is, therefore, all aspects of life involve worship. The Law described what worship was proper, therefore the Law involved all aspects of one's life. The heart of the Law was to spell out how love for God and one another should play out in everyday situations. The Law was given in the Wilderness as God took His people out of Egypt to begin forming them from being only His chosen people to being the people who reflected Him to all other peoples.

God's people were to show the nature of their God through the lives they lived and the organization of their community. Their worship was their witness.

The Old Testament commands are summarized in the Ten Commandments. These can be divided into commands about a proper relationship with God and with others.

In the New Testament, Jesus and Paul say that all the commandments (and even all the Old Testament) can be summarized in these two:

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37).
- Love your neighbor as yourself (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Rom. 13:8-10).

The core of the Law of God is to rightly relate to Him by rightly relating to others. This is the meeting place of Law and worship.

All of our lives as followers of Christ can be brought under the banner of worship to Lord and our lives and communities witness to the world. Because we do not follow the structure of the Old Testament Law that outlines lives for us, we are moved by the Holy Spirit and guided by the New Testament to live lives of worshipful obedience. But the principle that all of our lives can be worship remains the same.

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

If we looked at the context of this verse, we would see that it isn't talking only about doing all small things as an act of worship to God, but to worry less about fleeing the effects of the world and more about making choices based on faith for the good of the Christian community.

Doodles

NOTES

In the Old Testament, when Israel's king Saul made a sacrifice to God that was outside the way God had prescribed, the prophet Samuel confronted Saul, saying,

1 Samuel 15:22

“What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.”

Likewise, Jesus tells His then Jewish listeners that they should wait to bring an offering to the Lord if they had a broken relationship with someone they could proactively be restored with.

Matthew 5:23–24

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Worship is a matter of relationship, and our relationship with God is bound to our relationship with others.

"[I]f you are right with Him you will inevitably be right with all your fellow-creatures, just as if all the spokes of a wheel are fitted rightly into the hub and the rim they are bound to be in the right positions to one another."

-C.S. Lewis



Reflect

How are your relationships? What does how you handle them show about your God?

Doodles

A Matter of the Heart

The first and tenth of the Ten Commandments (to have no other gods and to not covet) are like bookends to the others because they show that worship is an internal matter of the heart.

When Jesus was speaking to a woman asking His opinion on the correct location of worship, He responds that worship is not a matter of proper locations (or any other rule) but a matter of the spirit.

NOTES

Many religions have sacred places where worship is to be conducted (this was the perception of the Samaritan woman in John 4). But for followers of Christ, we collectively (as the Church) are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are the proper place of worship and we do so in our souls, in community, and wherever we go.

John 4:24

For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit
and in truth.

We worship in spirit as opposed to worshiping only physically, emotionally, or intellectually. We worship from our souls.

We also worship in truth. Our view of God must be accurate in order to worship Him for who He really is. We also worship in truth when we worship genuinely and not to try to convince ourselves, God, or others how spiritual we are.

“Right worship, good worship, pleasing worship depends on a right mental grasp of the way God really is.”

- John Piper



Reflect

Is your worship to God primarily emotional, intellectual, physical, or is it really a mixture of these from the soul?

Worship is our purpose

Throughout the Bible we see that God calls all people to worship Him. We are built for worship and all people find something to worship. Ultimately we worship either God or ourselves because to choose to worship anything else is to say that we will have our way over God's way.

“There can only be two basic loves... the love of God unto the forgetfulness of self, or the love of self unto the forgetfulness and denial of God.”

-Augustine

Our fallen nature is a corrupted version of how God made us. Idolatry is making God (or gods) in our image (thus putting ourselves at the highest place of worship. But God who made us in His image desires to make us more like Christ, the only unfallen man.

We become like what we worship. We will become either a distortion of how God created us or we will be conformed to the image of Christ (Col. 3:10).

Doodles

NOTES

How do you know what you worship? Ask yourself:

- What guides your choices?
- What do you most fear?
- What do you most cling to?
- Whose opinion is most important to you?
- What do you most enjoy?
- What happens when you are wronged?
- What happens when you are wrong?

When we find what has the place of ultimate authority in our lives we have found our god. When we are that god, we see anyone who comes against as committing a kind of blasphemy against us. We then, seeing ourselves as God, choose to either bring our judgment on them or, in what we see as our incredible magnanimity and mercy, dole out grace as we see fit. When we see ourselves in the place of God we try to solve all problems and do not know what to do when we find ourselves to be wrong (it is confusing and debilitating when your god fails you, even if that god is you).



Reflect

If you are able to answer the above questions, what or who is your god/God? Don't rush to answer if you don't yet know.

The Bible tells us that we become like what we worship.

Psalm 115:3–8 (NLT)

- ³ Our God is in the heavens,
and he does as he wishes.
- ⁴ Their idols are merely things of silver and gold,
shaped by human hands.
- ⁵ They have mouths but cannot speak,
and eyes but cannot see.
- ⁶ They have ears but cannot hear,
and mouths but cannot breathe.
- ⁷ They have hands but cannot feel,
and feet but cannot walk,
and throats but cannot make a sound.
- ⁸ And those who make idols are just like them,
as are all who trust in them.

“What people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or for restoration.”

-G.K Beale

NOTES

Our world tells us to be more like other people and to be ourselves (yes, this is a contradictory message). When we seek to conform to our world or to be our “true self” we dishonor God by not conforming to Him. We will also find ourselves gravely disappointed. If we want to find our life, we find it only in trading our life for one with the Life-giver (Matt. 16:25). After all, He traded His life for ours.

Worship ought to encompass not only all of our individual lives but also the collective life of the Church. One definition of worship is all the activities of the Church community, anything we organize ourselves to do in order to glorify God. Ultimately, the life we live together following and serving Christ is a life of worship.

- Learning
- Fellowship, including meals
- Lord's Supper (Communion)
- Prayer
- Reverence
- Spiritual activity
- Joy
- Generosity

We don't see music/singing in the list but we know that Jesus and His disciples sang hymns (Mk. 14:26). It is interesting for us in the 21st century Church that the main thing we think of as "worship" is not even in this list!

Function and Form

The particular practices (forms) of worship are not to take precedence over the heart (function) behind the worship. The life of the Church looks differently across time and culture but the standard of worship remains the heart's response to God.

Because worship can come in many forms, we shouldn't be afraid of rituals or programmed worship if they do not distract us from a true heart of worship. After all, God commanded the Israelites to worship in ritualistic ways.

Modes of worship

Now that we have seen that the function of worship is more important than the form, let's discuss some general forms of worship. We glorify God in all these ways.

- **Enjoyment** (Neh. 8)
- **Obedience** (I Sam. 15:22-23)
- **Singing** (Ps. 100:2)
- **Service** (Heb. 13:16)
- **Giving** (II Cor. 9:7)
- **Learning** (Ps. 19:7-11)
- **Prayer** (Ps. 16:2)

Doodles

NOTES



Reflect

Are any of these “modes of worship” surprising and/or challenging to you?



Aim

Looking at the list of questions to find who our god is, how would you answer on behalf of the person or group you are seeking to reach out to?



Aim

If you are able at this point to answer those same questions for yourself, does that answer inform your personal learning question? How?

[illegible]

Do

Choose a “modes of worship” and use it this week in glorifying God. If you can’t decide, consider how you can do enjoy something God has given you and thank and praise Him through that experience.

Doodles

NOTES



Read

In this part of the lesson we will learn about prayer. Prayer is a part of worship but we will look at it on its own. Prayer is not complicated but it is difficult. Most of us wish we spent more time in prayer, knew what to say when we pray, or saw clearer answers to our requests.



Reflect

What is most difficult for you about prayer?

What is Prayer?

Prayer is simple to define. It is communicating with God. We can do this with our thoughts, with our words, or even in a wordless groan through the Holy Spirit.

We say “communicating with” rather than “talking to” God because, as we will see, prayer is a two-way conversation between God and people.

When we pray, we are exercising a privilege granted to us to speak directly with the God of all the universe; the same God we read about in the Bible, and He desires to commune with us. This should set the stage for a discussion of prayer.

Why do we pray?

We pray for a number of reasons that all revolve around a core element of the Bible’s message: God desires to commune with His people. So we pray because:

- We can. We have an invitation into God’s presence and we have the ear of the Almighty. We must not take the gift of prayer for granted.
- Jesus did. We read in the Gospels that Jesus was constantly praying to the Father and He regularly did so during long nights alone. Jesus said that He did nothing but what He heard from the Father. As we saw in Lesson One, the persons of the trinity have relationship with one another. If even the Son of God prays, we who have been brought into relationship with God pray also.
- We must: not in the sense that we grudgingly obey a biblical command to pray but in the sense that anyone who has been redeemed

Doodles

NOTES

and has the Holy Spirit in them have had our very nature changed. We “must” pray in the sense that we “must” breath or “must” spend time with one we love. We have a beautiful need for communicating with our Beloved.

- God desires to answer. Jesus teaches that God, our good Father, actually desires to give gifts to His children and wants us to come ask Him for what we need. God is actually glorified when we go to Him as our Provider and Parent.

Something that we should note when studying the Bible's teaching on prayer is that, unlike what we may assume, the Bible doesn't so much tell us to pray as it assumes we pray. Teachings on prayer usually begin with phrases like, "when you pray..." or "if you pray...". These imply that people are praying but need to be instructed on how to pray and what the effect of their prayers will be. Even a "prayer command" like "pray without ceasing" is really assuming we do pray and need to be encouraged on the "how" and "why" of prayer.



What makes prayer difficult?

Discuss

Doodles

Modes of Prayer

There are several general ways, or “modes” of praying. Each is for a somewhat different purpose. We may use any or all of these modes in a time of prayer. Modes are different from methods, which are specific ways of praying and will be discussed later.

Adoration

A prayer of worship to God. This is speaking the truth about who God is, enjoying Him and reminding yourself of the nature of your God.

Psalms 71:23

My lips will shout for joy,
when I sing praises to you;
my soul also, which you have redeemed.

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Doodles

NOTES

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is telling the truth about what God has done. It is key for healing and re-orienting ourselves and our view of our circumstances.

Philippians 4:6

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.



Reflect

Why would Philippians tell us to thank God when we're anxious?

Confession

Confession is bringing our sin to God. It is telling the truth about our heart's condition. Confession should be specific and honest: God already knows the state of our heart and the acts of rebellion against Him we commit so when we come before Him we shouldn't hide. Remember that we are new creations in Christ and need never hide from God like Adam and Eve did. In confession we come to God for healing and help.

Psalm 38:17–18

For I am ready to fall,
and my pain is ever before me.
I confess my iniquity;
I am sorry for my sin

Petition

Petition is bringing our requests to God. It is telling the truth about your need. Remember that we are told to ask God for what we need and that we honor Him when we come to Him as our source. We need not be concerned that we are being selfish in asking for our own needs. We should pray for ourselves more, not less.

Matthew 7:11

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Doodles

NOTES

We should note that these “modes of prayer” are not necessarily outlined in the Bible the way they are in this lesson. You may think of others and some may be combined or may overlap (like petition and intercession or adoration and thanksgiving). Prayer should not always consist of the same element. We can use all of these modes of prayer when we communicate with God.



Reflect

Which of these modes do you often use in prayer? Which could you use more?

Other types or times of prayer

- Corporate
Corporate prayer is prayer together as the church community. Jesus says that wherever two or more are gathered in His name He is there with them (Matt. 18:20). Corporate prayer is often intimidating to newer believers but it is an excellent way to learn to pray and to connect with the church.
- Daily/standard prayer
We have the opportunity to spend time with the Lord in prayer each day. Don't concern yourself with a specific amount of time but rather with having a focused time where you can fully be in prayer.
- Quick/emergency
Sometimes we have only a second to quickly call out to God for help. This doesn't need to be in the midst of crisis; it may be before an unexpected conversation or confusion.
- Extended/dedicated
At times we feel drawn to pray for an extended period. We may need to get away and pray for an hour or part of a day. Sometimes we wake up at night and the Lord may be beckoning us to pray. Sometimes we plan to have times like this but have no daily habit of prayer. Extended times of prayer should be in conjunction with daily prayer but not replace it.

Doodles

Methods of Prayer

Methods of prayer are different from modes of prayer. Modes of prayer are kinds of prayer or postures of prayer. Methods are ways we pray. You may resonate with certain methods and not others. These are not a matter of right and wrong but of preference and practicality. We can be creative with prayer methods.

NOTES



What are some methods of prayer?

Discuss

Prayer without Ceasing

The Bible talks about praying without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). Some Christians have taken this to mean that they should ideally spend time on nothing but prayer. However, God wants us to live and think and none of us can actually pray every waking moment. Praying without ceasing really means to continue to pray about things without giving up. Keep praying and see what God may do in your situation and your heart.

Fasting

The one method of prayer we will look at specifically is fasting. Some are confused or uncomfortable with the idea of fasting, yet we see it as a common practice in the Bible. Jesus Himself fasted and prayed. Fasting is the act of denying ourselves something in order to focus on God in prayer. Typically and traditionally this is the denial of food. Fasting is not magical or a mystical secret formula for more successful prayer. So what does fasting do?

- Sets aside our flesh for a time so we can focus the spirit. This may be for the sake of time but is more so about exercising rule over our flesh so that our appetite doesn't direct us. We walk a spiritual and not a physical walk and fasting is a way to remind ourselves of that. Fasting may make someone feel physically weak and tired which can draw us into a humble place of being conscious of our need for the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, the Father who gives us our daily bread, and the Spirit who sustains our life.
- Creates a constant reminder to pray. When we fast we feel constantly hungry, especially after awhile, it's like a ribbon tied to your finger to help you remember your purpose of praying, no matter how busy you may be.

Doodles

NOTES

- Serves as a spiritual mourning over a situation. At times of sin or sorrow (whether our own or someone else's) we might fast as an act of mourning and seeking God. We are not wallowing or despairing in this act of mourning but are being honest about a difficulty and are setting aside life-giving food to prayerfully address a situation that has spiritually or physically brought death in order to speak with the Life-giver.

Fasting shouldn't be done to show how spiritual you are and should be kept private in order to curtail our tendency to show off or seek sympathy (Matt. 6:16-18).

It shouldn't be done to the risk of your health. If you have a medical reason to eat a certain way, consider fasting in a way other than with food. Also, going without water for an extended time is dangerous and many people drink water during a fast.

We can fast from things other than food such as TV, social media, music, sleep, or anything that we may need to disentangle ourselves from in order to be more free to seek God.

There is not a correct amount of time for a fast, however it should be long enough to make you hungry and give you time to pray.

If you have made a decision to fast for a time, don't force that decision on others. Allow them to choose whether or not to fast along with you.

Remember that fasting is a temporary break from something that is not morally wrong but that you are exercising mastery over. Sinful activities are not to be fasted from temporarily but permanently removed from our lives.



Are there “right” and “wrong” ways to pray?

Discuss

Doodles

NOTES

Praying in Jesus's name

Jesus tells us that if we pray in His name He will do it (John 14:13-14). What does it mean to pray in Jesus's name? It is much more than tacking a spiritual flourish onto the end of our prayers.

Remember that we are given full and confident access to God's presence in prayer because Jesus has granted us His status as Children of the Father by trading identities with us at the cross (II Cor. 5:21, Eph. 3:12; I Jn. 3:1). We bear only the image of God but the name (identity) of Christ. To pray in His name, then, is to pray what He would pray, according to His will (I Jn. 5:14–15). We pray to the Father the same way Jesus would, submissively and obediently (Mk. 14:36; Jn. 8:28). His requests are for things that are within the Father's will (Jn. 17).

We have a custom of saying, “In Jesus’s name I pray” at the end of a prayer and there is nothing wrong with that, but we need to realize that it is not a magic phrase to make our prayer “work” or just the proper way to “sign off”. Praying in the name of Jesus is actually a great grace in our lives since we are welcomed in to God’s presence with all the rights Jesus Himself has to pray to the Father. We should remember as we enter into prayer that we are praying in Jesus’s name and we should make our requests as we see Jesus doing.



Do

Look up at least one thing the Bible specifically tells us to pray for and write it and the verse reference here.

What about our prayers that don't seem to be answered?

- Sometimes we wait a long time but God still answers (Lk. 8:41-56).
- God may be showing us that His grace is enough (II Cor. 12:7-10).
- Even Jesus got a “no” to a request but submitted to the Father’s perfect will (Mark 14:36).
- God may be doing more than we see (Jer. 29:1-23).
- Persistent prayer keeps us looking to God (I Chron. 16:11; Lk. 18:1-8).
- Ask if you are praying for something in God’s will (I Jn. 5:14-15; Mk. 14:36).
- Some things we pray for God to do can be done by us.
- God may be answering “no” or “wait” but those are still answers.
- Sometimes God answers yes and we never notice or remember.
- Prayer changes us.

Doodles

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Doodles

NOTES

Meditation

The Bible speaks about meditation in addition to prayer. Prayer and meditation are different in that prayer is direct communication with God while meditation is focused and deep thinking about the truths of God's word, His commands and promises (Ps. 119:48, 148) and His works (Ps. 77:12).

Our meditations are to be righteous ponderings on godly things (Ps. 19:14; Phil. 4:8).

Meditation in a Christian sense is not to empty the mind but rather to fix it on God, not to center our minds on ourselves but on God, not to erase the self but focus it on Another. Meditation may be the simple act of thinking about God and His ways or it may be a very deep spiritual-mental focusing on what we know to be true and right. It is not to be something odd but pure and God-focused.



Does the person or group you are aiming the gospel at pray? Why or why not? If so, to whom and how?

Aim



Has your personal learning question become a hindrance to praying? Have you prayed about your question?

Aim



If you have never attended a prayer meeting (corporate prayer) visit one in the next two months. If you have never prayed out loud in corporate prayer do so even once.

Do

Doodles

Memory Verse

John 4:24

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Memory Verse

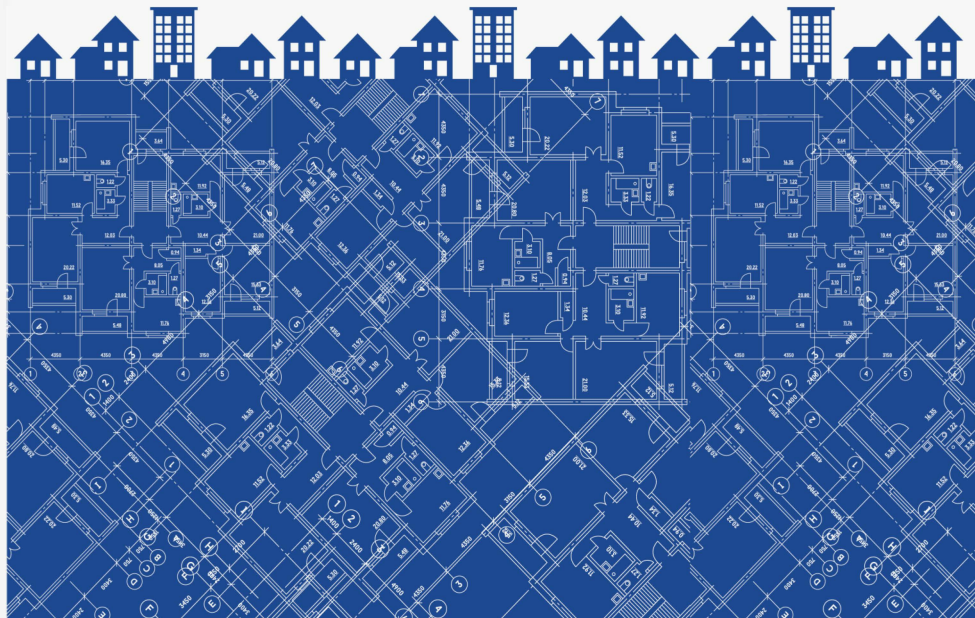
Colossians 4:2

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

FOUNDATIONS

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, and the page is completely blank except for the lines themselves.

LESSON EIGHT: OUR WORLD



NOTES



Read

We have looked at the nature of God who created the world and His creation of people in His image. In this lesson we will look at the rest of God's creation and explore two meanings of "world" in the Bible.

The word *cosmos* in the Greek New Testament translates in English as “world” but has several meanings in Greek. We will use these meanings to discuss the Bible’s teaching on the world. In this lesson we will examine two and discuss a third meaning in a later lesson.

The First Meaning of “Cosmos”

The first meaning of “cosmos” (world) refers to the created, ordered, natural world around us. This is the earth and can include the entire created universe.

God is creative and He is a God of order, as we saw in Lesson Two. He made the world out of nothing and organized it and made it beautiful. He created the whole universe and all life.

The Bible tells us that God's creation shows His glory (Ps. 19:1). When we look at what He made we can see that it did not appear by chance. It was made by God and is varied and beautiful. In fact, the earth is clearly designed for us to live upon (scientists refer to this observation as the anthropic principle). Therefore, creation shows His glory in that God is creative as well as loving.

“Each of the things that have been made fulfills its own particular purpose in creation... Not a single one of these things is without worth, not a single thing has been created without a reason... [R]ecognize greatness even in small things, adding continually to your wonder and causing your love for the Creator to grow.”

-Basil of Caesarea (330-379 AD)

Cosmic and Concrete

We often emphasize the spiritual over the physical but (like we saw in the nature of man) the physical and the spiritual are always linked in the Bible. The one has a direct impact on the other.

For instance, the obedience of Israel to God is constantly linked to their land being blessed. When they are disobedient, God curses their land or removes them from it.

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Likewise, Jesus came in the flesh to live a physical life on earth. The Bible tells us that when God makes a new heaven and earth for His eternal Kingdom it is a physical place with actual dimensions. Our idea of eternity and heaven often fails to take into account that God has from the beginning used his physical created world to dwell with us and will do so again.

In Greek philosophy the physical world is an imperfect version of a cosmic reality.

In Eastern thought the physical world is an illusion.

In Christianity the Creator is incarnated in His creation. In the same vein, we who have the Holy Spirit live out our spiritual faith in very real and physical ways.



Reflect

Do you tend to see your world through a more physical or more spiritual lens, or do you bring the two together?

Our Respons(ibility)

The physical world is made by God and is not some separate realm from spiritual things. Therefore, it is important to God and should be important to us.

God cultivates and enjoys His creation. We reflect Him and fulfill a part of His purpose for humankind, when we who are redeemed do the same.

We cultivate creation by tending and using it. We have a responsibility to take care of God's world by:

- Treating animals kindly
- Maintaining healthy environments
- Stewarding environmental resources
- Maintaining order among chaos in nature
- Feeding people
- Preventing damage or recovering from natural disasters.
- Healing the sick
- Furthering scientific discovery



Reflect

Does caring for creation seem a Christian or secular pursuit to you?

Doodles

NOTES

Enjoying Creation

God rested on the final day of creation, seeing that all was good. God does not grow tired, so His “rest” is one of satisfied enjoyment. We enjoy creation when we:

- Appreciate its beauty
- Enjoy learning about it
- Marvel at God's glory behind it
- Enjoy food
- Enjoy outdoor activities
- Find joy in the work of cultivation

The Effect of the Fall

Another way that the physical and spiritual are linked is seen in the curse God gave after Adam and Eve rebelled against Him.

When God made the world, He made all things good. Adam and Eve were given the command to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. This first meant having children, naming the animals, and enjoying the fruit of the land.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, He cursed them in direct relation to the original command. Where God told them to be fruitful and multiply, God added pain to childbirth. Where God had told them to be subdue the earth, He added the punishment of weeds, toil, and fruitlessness.

Likewise, as a direct result of the first sin, there were immediate internal results in Adam and Eve (shame, guilt, fear as discussed in session 3) as well as external results. They turned to nature (fig leaves) to cover their shame and God gave them animal skins to cover themselves further. Thus, Man's sin directly affected nature.

Because God's world was ordered and free of death before the Fall, we can see things like disasters and diseases as a result of sin.

In order to punish the increasing wickedness after Adam and Eve had more children, God eventually responded by bringing creation back to a chaotic state when He flooded the earth.

After the Flood, God repeated His command to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. The original intent of God for us in the earth did not change, but the earth and humankind had.

Doodles

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- They can be in only one place at a time and are bound by time and place (Dan. 10:12-14; Lk. 1:26).
- There is an unknown but very large number of angels (Dt. 33:2; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11).
- Some people see what the Bible calls “cherubim”, “seraphim”, and “living creatures” as types of angels and some see them as a creation different from angels.
- Angels are sent to protect believers and children but the Bible does not say that we each have a particular “guardian angel”.
- The Bible does not say that we become angels when we die.
- Angels are not to be prayed to or worshiped (Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; 22:9).
- We will one day rule over angels (I Cor. 6:3).
- Angels do not receive mercy for sin (II Pt. 2:4).

Demons

- Demons are by nature angels. They are the angels who rebelled against God. This is why they are alternatively referred to as “fallen angels” or “evil spirits”.
- Because demons are by nature angels, we need not go into as lengthy a description of them. We should see them as having the same abilities and inabilities as angels but using those abilities against God’s purpose and people rather than for them, as angels do.
- They are bound by space and time (Dan. 10:12-14) and are not all-powerful or all knowing. The Bible does not say that demons read our thoughts. They, like angels can observe our actions.
- They can oppress people emotionally and physically (I Sam. 16:14; 18:10; 19:9; Mk. 5:2-5; Matt. 17:14-18; II Cor. 12:7).
- They can control people to the point we called it “possession” but a believer is already indwelt by the Holy Spirit who will not dwell with a demon (Mk. 5:2-5; II Cor. 6:14-16).
- The Bible distinguishes between natural illness and illness caused by demonic attack (Matt. 4:24).
- There are different types and/or powers of demons but we are not given details (Matt. 17:21; Rev. 19:11).
- Demons know God and fear God but hate Him (James 2:19; Mk. 1:24).

NOTES

- Idol worship in the Bible is said to be the worship of demons (Dt. 32:16-17; I Cor. 10:20).
- Demons can teach people doctrines (I Tim. 4:1).
- Believers are given some measure of authority to rebuke demons in Jesus's name (Lk. 10:19; James 4:7; Jude 9).
- Demons will ultimately be cast into hell forever (II Pt. 2:4; Matt. 8:29; Rev. 20:10).

Satan

- “Satan” means “adversary” and the Bible says that his original name was Lucifer. He is also called “the devil”.
- Satan is a real being, not a metaphor for evil.
- The Bible describes Satan as the father of lies and first to sin against God who seeks to tempt and destroy those made in God’s image (Jn. 8:44; I Jn. 3:8; I Pt. 5:8).
- Satan tempts people (Eph. 6:11; Mk. 4:1; I Thess. 3:5).
- He masquerades as an “angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14).
- God allows Satan opportunities to tempt and oppress people. We don’t fully understand why, but God is in control (Job 1:6-12; Rev. 20:7-8).
- Satan, being a demon and therefore of angelic nature, is not the equal and opposite of God. He will ultimately be judged along with all demons (Rev. 20:10). He is not all-knowing, all-powerful, or everywhere.

Doodles



Reflect

Knowing what the Bible does and doesn't teach, how should we view satanic/demonic activity in our world?

[illegible]

NOTES

Second meaning of *cosmos*

We have seen the first meaning of *cosmos*/“world” as God’s ordered, physical universe.

A second meaning of cosmos is the world system. The world system is corrupted by sin. It is this sense of “world” we refer to when the Bible tells us not to love the world or the things of the world.

Just as individual people are corrupted by sin, so the societies they create are corrupted.



What are some things worldly powers and societies pursue?

Reflect

As you read the Bible, notice how instances of God (often through His people, especially kings, prophets, and Jesus) interacting with the people running the current power structures of the world are very important passages. These interactions may at times involve God's people defeating the worldly powers or being subjugated under them. It may involve a warning of God's judgment or an undeserved blessing. Much of what we think in the Bible is one individual interacting with another individual is actually God, through His people, interacting with an opposing kingdom.

As God uses and arranges His natural world, so He uses the world system for His purposes. The Bible talks about God using Egypt to protect and grow the Israelites and using Pharaoh to show how powerful God is. He uses Babylon to preserve a faithful portion of His people in exile and uses a Persian emperor to bring His people back to their lost land (more on the events of the Bible's story in a later lesson). While corrupt in their humanity, this world's governments and power structures are allowed authority by God (John 19:11).

Not of this World

During Jesus's ministry, various groups, even among His disciples, expected the Messiah to come overthrow Rome and establish God's Kingdom on earth. But they were too earthly in their thinking. Jesus said that His Kingdom is not of this world. It would not function like every corrupt world power system. It is not established by force but by martyrdom, the sacrifice of Jesus and His people. In fact, while Jesus's followers thought that He would overthrow Roman power and establish a Jewish Kingdom. His would be a kingdom to overthrow the rule of sin and the devil and welcome all peoples into Christ's good reign.

Doodles

NOTES

At the height of His popularity the Jews tried to make Jesus a king but He refused. When faced with the Roman and Jewish powers of the time, He allowed Himself to be overcome by them and be crucified but through His sacrifice He redeemed the fallen humanity that put Him on the cross in the first place.

Following Jesus's teaching, we who are subjects of His Kingdom:

- Do not seek to attach ourselves or the Church as a whole to the world system.
- Do not see any human political entity as God's Kingdom.
- Do not fear corrupt power but trust our King.
- Do not look to the world for direction but to our Lord.
- Are not surprised by persecution but expect it.
- Are not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

The Kingdom: Already Here and Not-Yet Come

In the Old Testament the best government Man could manage was the kingdom under David and Solomon but this was brief in the larger scheme of history. We see in studying the Bible that David is a foreshadowing of the Promised Messiah who was to establish God's true Kingdom that was corrupted after David.

When Jesus arrives as that Promised Messiah, He said He was bringing God's Kingdom and called Israel to enter it. When He died, rose, and ascended to heaven without having defeating Rome, Jesus's Kingdom did not seem to have come; however He established it on earth by His coming, sacrifice, and giving His authority to the Church and promised to return to establish the Kingdom fully and forever. It may seem that Jesus didn't change things, but He began a whole new way of life, uses us whom He's given new life to so we can be part of changing the world, and He will fully establish His reign in the future.

We live between Christ's first and second coming. Because the Messiah has come, we are redemptive in our world. Because He is coming again, we know we will not ultimately be its redeemers.

“We overcome, not because we’re a moral majority or a righteous remnant, but because we’re blood-covered sinners who know that if the gospel can change us, it can change anyone.”

-Russell D. Moore in *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*

Doodles

The God of Justice

As long as we view a human government, political party, or country as the representative of Christ and His Kingdom on earth we will be forced to justify its actions.

But, when we view Christ as the King of Kings we:

- Do not need to pretend human governments do no wrong.
- Take responsibility to enact God's justice in the world, while leaving judgment to His authority.
- Work alongside worldly governments to establish justice.
- Exercise our legal rights when necessary while we are also able to lay down our rights.

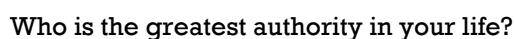
The Church is instructed to obey (Rom. 13:1-7) and pray for (I Tim. 2:1-4) civil leaders.

We operate within laws that do not force us to disobey God, but finding the line on this takes wisdom and should be decided as a church body. We must pray for the persecuted believers who deal with this question daily.

Dual Citizens

We are citizens of this world and of our country and we are taught in the Bible to obey our earthly governing authorities (Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-7).

We are also citizens of heaven, subject ultimately to Christ as King (Phil. 1:27; 3:20; I Tim. 6:15). This creates a tension for the Church that will challenge our worldview, our safety, and our comfortability.



Reflect

NOTES

Doodles

Guarding Ourselves

The world system is not only in the governments of the world but in the value system of the world. The Church must guard herself against any value system that is not from the Bible.

Bear in mind that the unbiblical value systems that are the most dangerous are the ones you are likely the most comfortable and familiar with. American cultural values and church cultural values may or may not align with the biblical Gospel.

The world system pursues money and power, the subjects of God's Kingdom pursue justice and redemption. The world is cannibalistic, consuming others to feed themselves, while Christ is sacrificial, giving Himself for the good of others.

In the next session we will talk about a third meaning of “cosmos/“world” and how we engage our world with the gospel.



What is an American value that is not a gospel value?

Reflect



Look at your list of things the world pursues. Do you pursue the same things?

Reflect

“We can learn to be pilgrims again, uneasy in American culture, as we should have been all along. But we are not pilgrims cringing in protective silos, waiting for the sound of trumpets in the sky. We are part of a kingdom, a kingdom we see from afar (Heb. 11:13) and a kingdom we see assembling itself all around us in miniature, in these little outposts of the future called the church.”

— **Russell D. Moore** in *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*

NOTES

From Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith

Social Justice

God loves justice. He commands His children to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Additionally He chooses to accomplish His justice through the awareness, advocacy and action of His children, who work for justice in actively loving all vulnerable, marginalized and afflicted people.

- *Is. 61:8* | *Prov. 31:8,9* | *Prov. 24:11,12*



Discuss

How do we successfully live as “dual citizens”?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's part of a bound notebook.

Aim

How does your chosen person view the world system and role of government?

NOTES



Do

Do something this week to care for or enjoy God's creation.



Do

Look up a few officials who represent you in government and pray for them. Pray also for believers and missionaries living under repressive regimes.

Memory Verse

I John 2:17

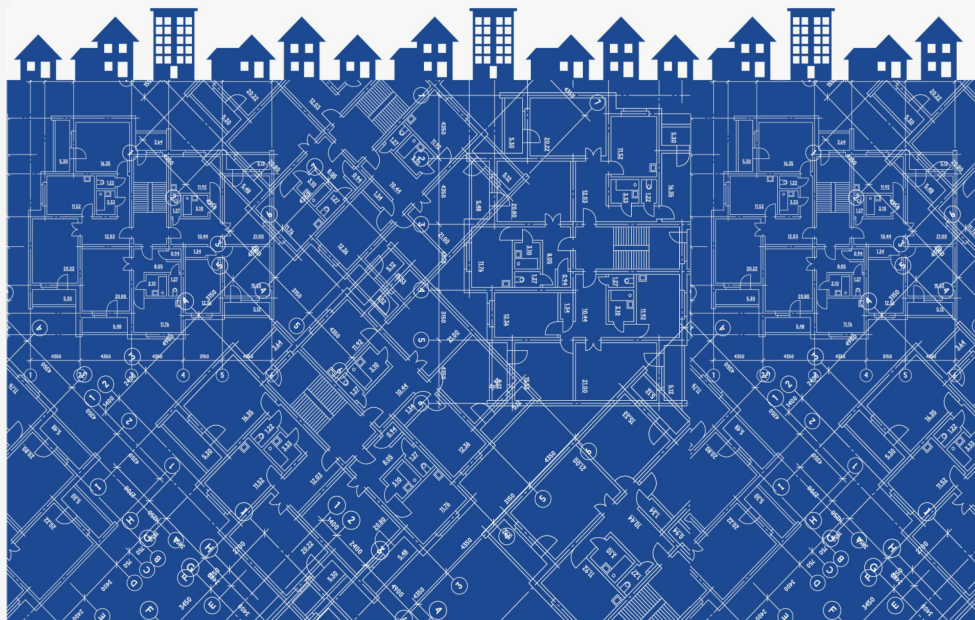
And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Doodles

FOUNDATIONS

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

LESSON NINE: THE GREAT COMMISSION



NOTES



Read

In Lesson Four we saw two meanings of “world”: the created universe and the corrupt world system of power. In Lesson Five we learned what salvation is. In this lesson we will discuss our mission to take that offer of God’s salvation to the whole world.

The third meaning of cosmos (“world”) is the people of the world. The Bible tells us not to love the world or the things of the world and it also tells us that God loved the world (John 3:16). We are not to love the world system, as we saw in Lesson Four, but we are to love the people of the world. It is the people that God loves and gives Himself for.

We are commanded to love those who persecute us and use us. God loves the world and us because He is love. We act like His children when we love not because of who others are, and not even because of who we are, but because of who God is. A divine nature is born in us when we come to faith and we cannot love the people of the world without the Holy Spirit in us.

Are People Good and Society Bad?

If we are not to love the world system, but the world system is built by corrupt people, how can we then love corrupt people? It is often said that people are naturally good but society is bad. However, if you put good people together you don’t get a corrupt society.

We do not separate the world system from the individuals in it to the extent that we see them only as good victims of a bad society. Society is corrupt because it is made up of corrupt individuals who harm one another in various ways.

Should We Hate the Sin but Love the Sinner?

Just as it is impossible to really separate the people of the world from the value system of the world, it is impossible to separate sin from people who are sinners.

A small view of sin comes from a small view of God and leads to a small view of His grace.

We tend to look for loopholes for why sin is not such a big deal in God’s eyes. We looked at the sin nature of all Mankind in Lesson Three and we must understand the seriousness of sin.

Doodles

LESSON NINE: The Great Commission

NOTES

"Sin is not an offense against the magistrate, or against the law, or against some conventional standard; sin goes farther and means more and strikes God in the heart, and thus shakes the universe. What it means in all the fullness of its significance we shall know in eternity. Meanwhile, I say of my Saviour, He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him. How, why, I know not: but I feel that it being so the sinner may call upon him too, and thus be saved."

-Joseph Parker

A God who doesn't mind sin doesn't mind sinners. A God who doesn't mind sinners doesn't actually love sinners. Think of sins committed against you or others. Would you be able to call God good if He didn't care about those things? Would He be good if He didn't care that we all in our own ways have tried to kick Him off His rightful throne and put ourselves there as our own rulers? Could He be truly loving if He didn't care that it will rob our lives if we run our lives and that when we run our own lies we inevitably find ways to suck the lives out of others without even the self-awareness to notice or care?

If God is good, He cares about sin and is wrathful toward sinners. It would be completely inaccurate and unbiblical to see God as passive about sin or only loving toward sinners.

In fact, Psalms 5:4-5 and 11:5 even use the word “hate” to describe God’s wrath toward those whose rebellion against Him makes them arrogantly act like they deserve to stand before God and commit violence against others made in His image. Some of us have a very difficult time seeing God this way but we must understand two things: First, God does not hate irrevocably in the sense that He desires anyone’s destruction. When a sinner’s purpose is against God, His purpose will be against them. However, He ultimately desires their good, which comes only in their submission to Him.

Second, God does not owe anyone forgiveness and love. In Lesson Four we saw that angels/demons are not granted forgiveness after once rebelling against God. The fact that people do receive an offer of forgiveness is only because God is merciful in His nature. Some of us are surprised by His wrath but we should be much more surprised by His mercy. So, in one sense God's purpose is against sinners. In another sense His purpose is for them. He did not wait until they repented to love and make a sacrifice for them. Let's look at a few verses.

Romans 5:8

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:20-21

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Doodles

NOTES

How we see God and His righteousness directly affects how we see our selves and our world. These, in turn, affect how we will seek to bring the gospel message of salvation to our world.

When I more fully understand the gravity of the world's sin, which includes my own, I am more shocked by the grace of a righteous God who sends redeemed sinners to a sinful world because He desires to redeem them from their sin.

“Love the sinner, hate the sin” is well-meaning motto but while we try to separate a person from their sin in our opinion of them, God seeks to separate the two in actuality. In order to not overlook our sin but not destroy us, God the Father poured our sin and His wrath on Jesus.



Reflect

Is it more difficult for you to come to terms with God's mercy or God's wrath?



Discuss

How should we biblically view our sinful world?



Aim

Does a full discussion of God's wrath and love help inform your personal learning question?



Aim

How can you help give a full view of God's wrath and love to the person you will seek to share the gospel with?

Doodles

NOTES

Note: When we say “The Great Commission” we often refer to Matt. 28:19-20 but there are four other instances of Jesus telling His disciples to take the Gospel to the whole world: (Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:8).

Be Fruitful and Multiply

God's original command and intent for Mankind was to fill and subdue the earth. Adam and Eve gave up that privilege when they rebelled against God. Yet God repeated the command after the flood. His intent for us had not changed (we saw this in the context of the earth in the last session). When Jesus gave His disciples the command to make disciples in what we call the Great Commission, there is an echo of the command to be fruitful and multiply, although now we are to multiply disciples of all the nations of the earth teaching them submission to Christ's authority rather than subduing the natural world under our authority.

The Great Commission is not something Jesus came up with at the last minute or something that entered God's plan after Jesus's resurrection. It is woven throughout the entire Bible from Mankind's first rebellion against God to God using His people to be a light to all who didn't know Him to sending Jesus to be that light when God's people failed.

Jesus gave those who follow Him the same mission God has been accomplishing all along: to bring the whole world under His perfect Kingdom rule.

Doodles

Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Matthew 28:18–20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Great Commission is the part of the Bible's storyline we live in. God is using us, the Church to extend His Kingdom by inviting all people into the truth. That is our mission and opportunity!

NOTES



Do you consider the Great Commission your commission?

Reflect Why or why not?

Make Disciples

Discipleship is helping others follow Jesus along with us. This can mean a believer who is learning to walk with Christ more closely or it can mean the process of using a relationship with a person who doesn't follow Christ to teach them His ways, inviting them to follow Him themselves as they see the Christian walk demonstrated in us.



Reflect

What strengths and weaknesses do you have in the area of helping others follow Jesus? Do you have an opportunity with anyone?



Aim

Does seeing discipleship as evangelism change the way you would approach your person with the gospel? Why or why not?

Doodles

NOTES

Of all Nations

Jesus's command to make disciples does not reference individuals but all the "nations". In Greek, the word is *ethne* (from which we get our word "ethnicity") and refers not to countries but cultures or "people groups". The Bible refers to the nations throughout its story and God desires them to bring their unique forms of worship into His Kingdom.

Revelation 5:9-10

And they sang a new song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign on the earth."

Revelation 7:9-10

After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"

As God called the Jews to enter His Kingdom and only some accepted, He told them to go and call the Gentiles (nations). This purpose is woven from the beginning to the end of the Bible and is our mandate as the Church.

Doodles

Across Time and Place: Contextualization

Because God desires the worship that each culture brings into the Kingdom, we must strive to preserve the cultures we introduce to the Gospel. Missionaries must help them find how their culture worships God and lives as the Church and also what aspects of their culture need to be changed by the Gospel. This is very difficult and takes great wisdom and care.

The Bible gives us much in the principles of being the Church but very little in the practices (see session 9). In planting churches in other cultures we should not ask them to adopt our culture or our church style, but find their own way using the principles of Gospel life.

Likewise, other cultures have something to teach us about how to understand the Gospel and be the Church.

NOTES



What is the difference between exporting our culture and exporting the gospel?

Discuss

Do Missionaries Help or Hurt?

Some have accused missionaries of damaging the places they go. But the data shows a different picture:

- Missionaries have promoted mass education, printing, and medical care.
- Missionaries mobilized reform of unjust colonial practices.
- Missionaries resisted racist views that were deemed scientific.

Adapted from Robert Woodberry's "The Social Impact of Christian Missions"

While many missionaries have disregarded the culture of the people they are witnessing to, God uses humans to do His will around the world.

"If missionaries hurt cultures, we would expect conditions to be worse where they've had more influence; but we find exactly the opposite."

-Robert Woodberry, University of Texas

We should also be aware that not all aid is helpful in the mission field since developing societies and empowering them is a better, though more complicated and slow, approach than doing for them what they will one day need to do for themselves.

Evangelism Near and Far

“Missions” and “The Great Commission” are not terms found in the Bible. However, the example of missions in Acts is one of going out cross-culturally with the Gospel message to plant reproducing church communities. The Great Commission passages have Jesus telling his disciples to go to the nations of the world. From this we see that missions is not everything the Church does to be a witness to the world but the focused, strategic effort to reach the nations.

Doodles

- 10% of the world believes Jesus is their savior and share with others.
- 33% identify as Christians but may not have any relationship with Jesus.
- 53% of the world has never heard the gospel.
- 30 times more missionaries are sent to areas where the gospel is easily accessible than areas that have never heard it.

NOTES

“Evangelism” is a term from the Bible. Evangelism can be anything we do to spread the Gospel message anywhere. All missions is evangelism but not all evangelism is missions. We should be evangelizing our nearest neighbors (the “unchurched” but there are people around the world who will never hear the Gospel if no one goes to them (the “unreached”).

In But Not Of The World

Since its earliest days, the Church has struggled with what it means to be among the wider world while maintaining its witness and obedience to Christ.

We must neither become like the world by watering down our message nor hide the message behind a wall of irrelevancy.

We must learn the language, mentality, and needs of the world around us (and adapt as these change over time).

We must also care for others because they are made in God’s image and we are His followers, not simply as a means to “getting them saved.” We must love authentically, but our greatest act of love is to introduce them to Jesus.



Reflect

Do you find yourself more attached to the world or in Christian “bubble”? What could you change?



Aim

How well do you understand the language, mentality, and needs of the person you want to reach with the gospel?



Discuss

How do we engage our world without compromising our faith?

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NOTES

Your Global Reach

As a part of the church you have opportunities to pray, give, learn, or go globally. Consider taking the Preparing to Go or Pathlight to Global Awareness classes offered at our church. Remember, God calls us into His bigger story! Take a step and see what's in store.

From Calvary Murrieta's Statement of Faith

Missions

We believe all followers of Jesus will commit to His instructions, by living intentionally in their participation of the mission of Christ to make disciples who in turn make disciples of all nations. Our passion and ideal is to go to where the gospel is not being communicated by a local church. We pursue authentic relationships with sensitivity and awareness of all culture and customs. We believe the Bible instructs Jesus' disciples to model Christ's love, humility, and mercy, which demonstrate the gospel with our words and our lives.

- Rev. 5:9,10 | Mt. 28:19,20 | 1 Thess. 2:8 | Rom. 15:20



Is your view of evangelism overly global or overly local?

Reflect



Aim

Of Honor/Shame, Innocence/Guilt, and Power/Fear, which best describes the mentality of the person or group you want to share the gospel with?



Do

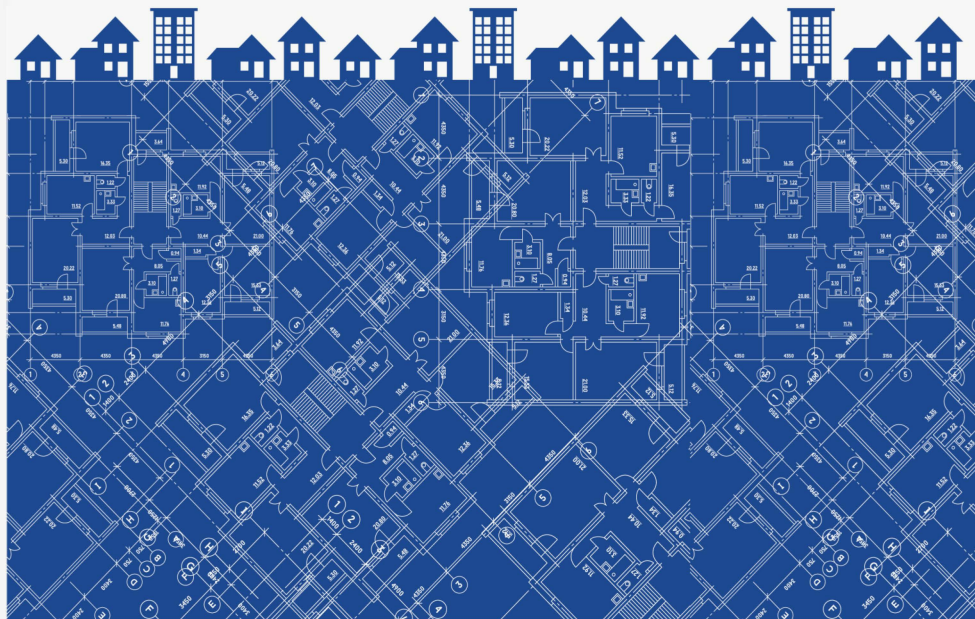
Go to calvarymurrieta.com/ministry/missions-ministry to learn about Calvary Murrieta's heart on missions.

While there choose one missionary and pray for them for at least this week.

Doodles

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COURSE CONCLUSION



As we conclude our Foundations class, the instructors and mentors want to commend you for investing several months in introducing yourself to the teachings of the Bible. We hope you have grown in your knowledge of God and, built relationship with someone in class, and moved forward in your personal learning goals.



Reflect

What was the most valuable thing you feel that you learned?

What do you want to learn more about?

Have there been any changes in your heart or life since the beginning of the class?

What area(s) might God be calling you to trust Him to grow you in?

Now that you won't have the Foundations mentors working with you, what relationships in your life will be a godly relational help to you after this class?



Aim

How have you moved forward in addressing your personal learning question?

What will help you move forward to address this question now that the class is finished?



Aim

How have you moved forward in finding how you could connect the gospel to someone in your life?

How can you move forward in this now that the class is finished?

You will not be done discovering who God is and what a life of following Christ is until you live with Him forever. In this life we live as disciples, finding ourselves more greatly hungering for our God and more greatly trusting Him to satisfy us. You are not done learning, living, being challenged, suffering, and growing.

Look for other Calvary Classes in the future and may our God bless you and may you journey on with Him in new and beautiful ways.

Resources for Further Study

- 

Ultimate Bible Guide, Holman Bible Publishers
- 

Visual Theology, Tim Challies and Josh Byers
- 

Major Bible Themes, Lewis Sperry Chafer and John Walvoord
- 

The Bible Knowledge Commentary
- 

Knowable Word, Peter Krol
- 

Search the Scriptures, Alan M. Stibbs, ed.
- 

30 Days to Understanding the Bible, Max Anders
- 

blueletterbible.com
- 





carm.org
 Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry
- 

alwaysbeready.com
 Always Be Ready Apologetics Ministry
- 

biblica.com
- 

openbible.info
- 

desiringgod.org

- 
 Beginner Resource
- 
 Advanced Resource
- 
 Book
- 
 Website

Note: These recommendations do not mean that we agree with each and every viewpoint in these resources.

FOUNDATIONS

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