

THE GOSPEL PROJECT FOR STUDENTS
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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

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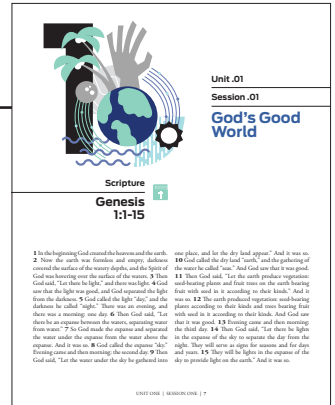
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How to Use This Study

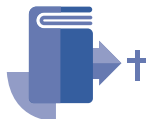
Intro

The opening page of each session contains the focal passages of Scripture for that lesson. Take a moment to read through these passages before your group discussion begins.



His Story

Intended for group and personal use, the **His Story** contains the main point of the session, questions to interact with as a group, and the key components found in the Leader Guide—Christ Connection, Essential Doctrines, and In Defense.



The **Christ Connection** specifically points out how the biblical passage for that session points to Jesus, thus connecting the dots and helping students to understand how the books of the Bible fit together.



There are **99 Essential Doctrines** we will see covered over the course of three years. Each session will contain an essential doctrine that directly relates to the Bible study material. Knowing these doctrines will help you, as a student, to be more grounded in what Christianity teaches and celebrates, as well as being better equipped to explain to others what it is you actually believe.



The **In Defense** section discusses apologetic issues and questions related to the lesson. The term “apologetics” simply refers to the task of defending the faith, or being able to explain why we believe what we believe. Thus, this section is designed to bring greater clarity about a specific part of the text, answer tough questions raised by skeptics, and to simply help you be able to better defend your beliefs to any who may ask why you believe Christianity to be true.

Our Mission

Intended for group and/or personal use, the **Our Mission** section is designed to show how the biblical passage for that day challenges the way we think, feel, and live from that day forward. It is intended to show that every session goes beyond merely learning new facts about the Bible's big stories and characters. In fact, God's intention in the pages of Scripture is to make us more like His Son, Jesus. And one of the ways in which that happens is by constantly looking to Jesus in the pages of the Bible.

Our Mission

Head

What does God's creation of all things tell us about His sovereignty over all things?

Why should belief in the sovereignty of God change the way we handle stress and anxiety?

Heart

Is it possible for our hearts to utilize parts of creation? If so, how? In what ways can we avoid this happening to us?

What are some aspects of God's original intended purpose in creation that can shape how we see things today?

Hands

What are some ways we can use creation to point others to God?

How does knowing that God's plan of redemption includes the creation itself affect the way we view things like littering, recycling, endangered species, and the treatment of animals?

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Daily Devotions

Day 1

Psalm 8

As a reflection on Genesis 1-2, Psalm 8 describes our work and responsibility as human beings. Think about what this Psalm means for us as modern believers. Notice the first and last verses of the Psalm; God is the real focus here.

What are some examples where God has covered creation with His majesty?

After considering all God has made—the universe, moon, and stars, and us—the Psalmist recognized that humanity is only a small part of God's entire creation. Still, the author affirmed that God created humanity uniquely and set us apart from the rest of creation. This allows the fact that we are made in God's image and gives the risk to co-manage creation alongside God.

How can we honor and glorify God in the way we relate to other parts of creation?

Day 2

Psalm 104

Consider the description of God in Psalm 104:1-5. Then, notice how the psalmist responded to God in verse 35:5. The psalmist often saw the world picture as continuous care.

How did the author paint a picture using words?

The psalmist praised God through recognizing several occurrences within nature. Of course, this would translate to an exhaustive list of things in creation that reflect God's goodness and creativity.

What are some additional examples in nature that reflect God's goodness and majesty?

How do these examples draw your attention toward God in awe and wonder?

Day 3

Psalm 96:4-5

The Book of Genesis' original audience was the Israelites, who were on their way to the promised land. After being so long among the gods of the Egyptians and foreigners, the people needed to remember who the God of Israel was. He—the god of the Egyptians, Canaanites, or Philistines—was the Creator of everything.

We are no different than the Israelites. Though we may not be tempted to bow down to wood, stone, and brass, we are just as likely to seek satisfaction through other than God. We ask questions like "God really does He love me? Or My neighbor?"

What connection did the author make between praising God and the fact that God created all things?

God uses His existence to no one and is in need of nothing, yet He decided to create everything, including me. The result of His overwhelming love should give me the strength and desire to reject anything that distracts your heart.

of the Bible, we who and change, 2:22-24, every Christ, which is in Jesus. He is the with God in the someone. He will Jesus. Since Jesus because it makes contribute to when see Him the life today?

UNIT ONE | SESSION ONE | 14

In addition to the group portions of this study, the **Daily Discipleship Guide** also includes five days of devotions following each session. As you journey through the storyline of Scripture over the course of three years, you won't have time to cover some sections of the Bible. These devotions will help with that, filling in the gaps in the biblical storyline and allowing more opportunities to cover biblical themes and insights not discussed during group time. These devotions are also aimed at equipping you to know how to read and interpret the Bible for yourself by providing simple techniques to studying the Bible. The *Seven Arrows* reading method has been provided at the beginning of each week's devotions as a reminder of common questions to ask about Scripture as you read each day.

Session Timeline

In the Beginning



1.1

God's Good World



1.4

Sin and God's Grace



1.5

Sin and God's Authority



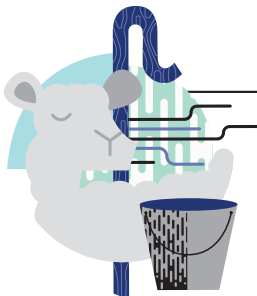
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God Foreshadows His Promise



2.3

God Provides for His Promise



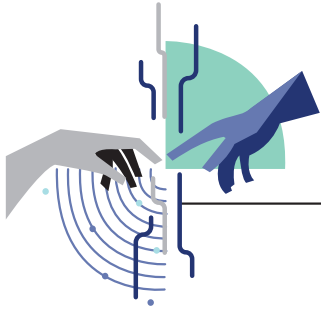
3.2

God's Gift of Love



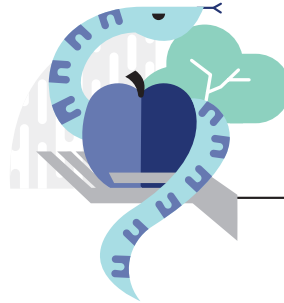
3.3

God's New Name for Jacob



1.2

God's Good People



1.3

Sin and God's Good News



1.6

Suffering and God's Presence



2.1

God Makes a Promise



2.4

God Renews His Promise



3.1

God's Mercy to a Deceiver

Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

Luke 24:27

About the Authors



J.D. Greear (unit 1, sessions 1,3-5) is pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, which *Outreach Magazine* has ranked as one of the fastest-growing churches in the United States. Greear has a PhD in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of many books, including *Not God Enough*, *Gaining by Losing*, *Jesus Continued...*, and *Gospel*. J.D. lives in Raleigh with his wife, Veronica, and their four children.



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Mary Jo Sharp (unit 2, session 4; unit 3, sessions 1-3) is an assistant professor of apologetics at Houston Baptist University and the founder and director of Confident Christianity, a non-profit apologetics ministry. She is an itinerant speaker on apologetics throughout North America and has engaged in formal debates on Islam.



Unit .01

Session .01

God's Good World

Scripture



Genesis 1:1-15

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. **3** Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day. **6** Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." **7** So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. **8** God called the expanse "sky." Evening came and then morning: the second day. **9** Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into

one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. **10** God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. **11** Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds." And it was so. **12** The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **13** Evening came and then morning: the third day. **14** Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years. **15** They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so.

How does God as Creator influence the way we understand who He is, who we are, and why we obey Him?

How does the truth that God created all things from nothing increase your confidence and trust in Him?

Where in your life do you wish God would work faster?



99 Essential Doctrines

Creation Out Of Nothing

The Bible teaches that God created the universe—all things visible and invisible—out of nothing. This is sometimes expressed in the Latin phrase *creation ex nihilo*. Nothing except God Himself existed before He created everything. God alone is eternal; every created thing has a beginning. Therefore, the eternal God rules over all of His creation and He alone is worthy of worship. Denial of this doctrine has implications for God's sovereignty over and providence in creation. Because God created out of nothing, creation has meaning and purpose and points us to the Creator.

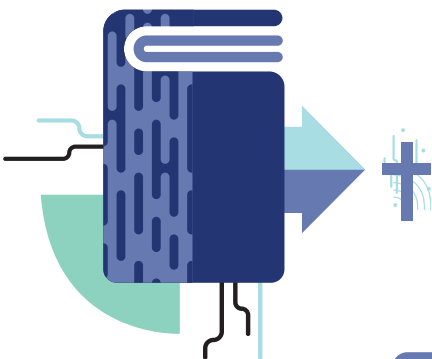
Main Point

God created all things good.

What are some processes God often uses in our lives to shape us to look more like Jesus?

What stands out to you in these verses? Are there any patterns?

What ideas come to mind when you think of God's greatness? Do these ideas inspire confidence or fear? Why?



Christ Connection

The apostle John opened up his story of Jesus' life by connecting Him to the creation story: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:1,3-4). Where our lives have been destroyed by sin, Jesus Christ—the Word, the Creator—makes all things new. Your life may be the picture of chaos, but if Jesus can create everything out of nothing, He can surely re-create everything in you.

What does “good” mean? Why did God call each step of His creation good?

Where has God gifted you? What might it look like for you to use your talents for God’s mission?

Why is belief in creation important? What are the implications if God didn’t create?

In Defense



Read other ancient creation accounts and you won't find anything like the Bible's. In other accounts, the universe comes from something. One of the gods gives birth to the physical universe, or the world results as an accidental product of some cosmic battle. In one myth, the human race arises from the blood of one of the slain gods. In another, we are created from the remains of a dead sea monster. Most of the time, the human race appears to be an accident formed by larger divine forces that did not care about our creation or our destiny. Yet, in Genesis, everything started with one God who alone created everything out of nothing. He created with intentionality and ease. He took counsel from no one, not even the angels, who He also created. It all came from Him, and He made it out of nothing.



Head

What does God's creation of all things tell us about His sovereignty over all things?

Why should belief in the sovereignty of God change the way we handle stress and anxiety?



Heart

Is it possible for our hearts to idolize parts of creation? If so, how? How can we avoid this happening to us?

What are some aspects of God's original intended purpose in creation that can shape how we see things today?

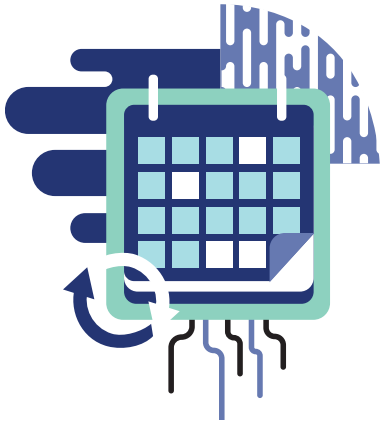


Hands

What are some ways we can use creation to point others to God?

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Daily Devotions



Day 1

Psalm 8

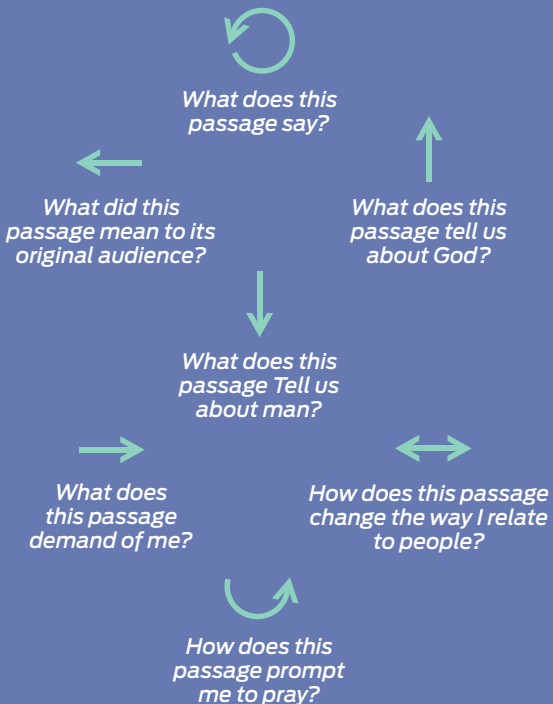
As a reflection on Genesis 1–2, Psalm 8 describes our worth and responsibility as human beings. Think about what this Psalm means for us as modern believers. Notice the first and last verses of the Psalm: God is the real focus here.

What are some examples where God has covered creation with His majesty?

After considering all God has made—the universe, moon, and stars, and so on—the Psalmist recognized that humanity is only a small part of God’s entire creation. Still, the author affirmed that God created humanity uniquely and set us apart from the rest of creation. This echoes the fact that we are made in God’s image and given the task to co-manage creation alongside God.

How can we honor and glorify God in the way we relate to other parts of creation?

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Psalm 104

Consider the description of God in Psalm 104:1-9. Then, notice how the psalmist responded to God in verses 33-35. The psalms often use rich word pictures to communicate truth.

How did the author paint a picture using words?

The psalmist praised God through recognizing several occurrences within nature. Of course, this wasn't intended to be an exhaustive list of things in creation that reflect God's goodness and creativity.

What are some additional examples in nature that reflect God's goodness and majesty?

How do these examples draw your attention toward God in awe and wonder?

Psalm 96:4-5

The Book of Genesis' original audience was the Israelites, who were on their way to the promised land. After living so long among the gods of the Egyptians and foreigners, the people needed to remember who the God of Israel was. He—not the gods of the Egyptians, Canaanites, or Philistines—was the Creator of everything.

We are no different than the Israelites. Though we may not be tempted to bow down to wooden statues, our hearts are just as likely to seek satisfaction things other than God. We ask questions like: *Is God real? Does He love me? Is He worth it?*

What connection did the author make between praising God and the fact that God created all things?

God owes His existence to no one and is in need of nothing, yet He decided to create everything, including you. The truth of this overwhelming love should give you the strength and desire to reject any idols that threaten your heart.

1 Corinthians 8:5-6; John 1:1-3

God didn't just create everything; He created everything *through* His Son (1 Cor. 8:5-6). If you reread the creation account now, you might think, "I see the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters (Gen. 1:2) and God the Father speaking things into existence, but where is the Son?" We find our answer in the Gospel of John (1:1-3,14). Every time God spoke things into existence, the Son was there. God created everything through His Son, and all things exist and hold together because of His Son.

The Word of God creates. Sin destroys. This is true without exception. Even in our own lives, sin unravels relationships, pushes darkness into our hearts, and enslaves to addictions. Jesus, the Word, re-entered this dark, sin-filled, chaotic world. And that Word brought life and light again.

What might it look like for Jesus to re-create what sin has destroyed in your life?

Colossians 1:15-18

When we read the last book of the Bible, we recognize that Jesus is both the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:13). Every book of the Bible points to Jesus Christ, which is what Paul explained in these verses.

Creation has always been about Jesus. He is the center of it all. He was the Word with God in the beginning, spinning galaxies into existence. He will be the center when all is said and done. Since Jesus is the center, Lord, and goal of all creation, it makes sense that life works best when He controls it.

How does all of life change when Jesus is at the center?

What are some ways you see Him being at the center of your life today?