



ANN ARBOR  
CHURCH

# Bible Study Series





## OUR PURPOSE

Purpose:

- Why did God create us?
- What is our purpose in life?

### APPLICATION:

#### Genesis 1:26-27

What does it mean to be an “image-bearer” of God?

- We were specially designed for the purpose of bearing God’s image.
- Like a tool designed for a specific purpose- so were we designed to be like God, to think like him, act like him, communicate like him and feel like him

If God created us to reflect his image, we must learn what God is like: Psalm 103 will give us insights into a healthy, clear image of who God is and what he feels for us.

#### Psalm 103:8-14

- He is our Father- and like children we are made in his image as objects of his love.
- Some people view God differently than this verse tells us- as an absent Father, a boss, or maybe even a dictator.
- If we don’t admire God, we won’t want to be like him.

Do you think of God as a loving Father? If not, then how do you view Him? Why?

God loves us like a Father should love their child, but what does he desire from us? Does he have purposes for us other than reflecting his image?

#### Micah 6:6-8

- This scripture makes it clear that God doesn’t desire our work or our money or our sacrifice- like a boss would expect from an employee. God wants us to walk with him.

What does it mean to walk with God? Is that something you’ve experienced?

### AT A GLANCE

#### SCRIPTURES:

- Genesis 1:26-27
- Psalm 103:8-14
- Micah 6:6-8
- Matthew 22:34-40
- Matthew 7:7-11
- Acts 17:22-28

#### NEXT STEPS:

- Begin praying daily to draw nearer to God- learn how to express yourself to him and become more comfortable talking with him.
- Begin reading in the Gospel of John and write down any questions you have.
- Set the time for your next study



## OUR PURPOSE

Purpose:

- Why did God create us?
- What is our purpose in life?

### APPLICATION CONTINUED:

#### Matthew 22:34-40

- God wants us to love him more than anything else in life.

What does it mean to love God like this?  
What does it look like?

WE CAN CONCLUDE FROM THESE  
VERSES THAT OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS

How do you feel about God's purpose for your life?

To know, and  
to love,  
and to walk  
with God

Our response ought to be to seek a relationship with God.

#### Matthew 7:7-11

- God is a good Father- we can be confident he will draw near to us if we attempt to draw near to him.

How do you feel about beginning to draw near to God?

#### Acts 17:22-28

- God wants us to reach out to him, and he assures us that when we reach out we will find him.

Do you feel ready to learn to love God and seek after a relationship with him?

#### Next Steps:

- Begin praying daily to draw nearer to God- learn how to express yourself to him and become more comfortable talking with him.
- Begin reading in the Gospel of John and write down any questions you have.
- Set the time for your next study



## THE WORD OF GOD

Purpose:

To come to a mutual understanding that we must completely surrender to the Word of God as the truth.

### APPLICATION:

2 Timothy 3:14-17

- Scripture was written by God through man.

Do you believe the Scriptures are from God?  
If not, what are your doubts?

John 7:16-17

- Doubts are healthy, and it is okay to have intelligent questions and concerns about how we can trust the Bible's validity.
- There is much evidence to look to for in building our faith, but here we see that perhaps the greatest way to build our faith is simply doing the will of God.
- By beginning to really live the Word of God in our lives, we will come to a greater faith.  
Also see Romans 10:17 "Faith comes from hearing the Word."

John 8:31-32

- Jesus calls us to HOLD to his teachings if we really claim to be his followers. If we do this, we can know the truth, and this will set us free from sin.
- The Bible calls us to do more than just know it but to hold to it!

What does it mean to hold to his teachings?

James 1:22-25

- The Bible is like a mirror, it will be honest with us and show us the things in our lives that we need to change, our job is then to respond and do those things.

How do you feel about the Bible challenging your way of life?

### AT A GLANCE

SCRIPTURES:

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17
- John 7:16-17
- John 8:31-32
- James 1:22-25
- Hebrews 4:12-13
- John 12:47-50
- Psalm 1

CHALLENGE:

- Read the Bible everyday beginning in the book of Mark or John





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## THE WORD OF GOD

Purpose:

To come to a mutual understanding  
that we must completely surrender to  
the Word of God as the truth.

### APPLICATION CONTINUED:

Hebrews 4:12-13

- The Bible cuts, convicts and is relevant to our everyday life
- Nothing is hidden from God and everything we do we must give an account of one day.

John 12:47-50

- Jesus came to save the world, but His words are what will be the standard by which God will judge us

Building our own Morality:

- It is common for humanity to define right and wrong for themselves- this is precisely what Adam and Eve did in the garden.
- They wanted the knowledge of good and evil- they wanted to determine their own morality.
- Most of humanity in today's culture build their own moral code like a served-to-order meal, with everything they want and nothing they don't.
  - Our standard for right and wrong tends to be determined by the following things:
    - What our parent/ parent-figures taught us
    - What life has taught us
    - What we feel is right
      - But Jesus tells us that our morality must be built off of his words- those must act as the standard for our lives.

Is the Bible your standard for living?  
If not, do you want it to become your standard?

Psalms 1

- This Psalm says we should be meditating on the Bible day and night
- We should be reading the Bible daily and making this an active part of our life

Challenge:

- Read the Bible everyday beginning in the book of Mark or John



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# THE KINGDOM

Purpose:

- To understand the role of the church within the Kingdom of God

## WHAT IS A KINGDOM?

- Anywhere ruled by a King
  - Historically, Kings had absolute authority over the territory they ruled- their will was final and absolute.
  - In the time of Jesus- this power was in the hands of the emperor.
    - The people of Jesus' time had always lived under the rule of Kings- so this language would have made more sense to them than it does with us.
- Biblically, it is the spiritual reign and authority of God
  - Anywhere God rules is the Kingdom of God
    - This could be in reference to Heaven, in the hearts of an individual or in the collective heart of a Jesus-following church.

## AT A GLANCE

### SCRIPTURES:

- Mark 1:14-15
- Luke 4:17-21
- Matthew 6:31-33
- Hebrews 11:13-16
- Colossians 1:15-18
- Acts 2:42-47
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

### CHALLENGE:

- Devote yourself to the church

## WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

### Mark 1:14-15

- Jesus was proclaiming the “good news of the Kingdom”
  - The good news was that by coming to earth- Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of God.
  - The good news was that through Jesus' life and his sacrifice for us- our sin would no longer stop us from being in an intimate relationship with God.

### Luke 4:17-21

- When Jesus announced the coming of the Kingdom- he did so with this description.
- Good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, sight for the blind, liberation for the oppressed.
- He is talking about the spiritual reign of God in the hearts of people, freeing us from sin, from the grip of poverty, from oppression, to again walk with God as humanity did at first.

## WHAT SHOULD OUR RESPONSE TO LEARNING ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD BE?

### Matthew 6:31-33

- We are called to seek his Kingdom first- before anything else.





## THE KINGDOM

Purpose:

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### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

#### Hebrews 11:13-16

- This chapter is filled with stories of men and women who lived lives of faith, who were set apart from the rest of the world.
- They lived, acted, thought, and communicated differently because they were citizens of the Kingdom of God rather than the world
- When you are a foreigner, community is so important, the church plays that role in the Kingdom for us because we are strangers to the world
- The church is a family, our home away from home.

### THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

#### Colossians 1:15-18

- **What is the church?**
  - The church is not a building or an event, the church is the people of God- we are the church.
- **What is the role of Jesus in the church?**
  - Jesus leads the church, and we all follow him

#### Acts 2:42-47

- **What has your experience with church been in your life?**
- **What should the church look like?**
- **How often should we "go" to church?**
  - The church is a family, when the family comes together, we should make every effort to be there
  - This requires rethinking our priorities

#### 2 Timothy 4:3-4

- While there is only one body- there are many churches, and not all these churches are teaching or living according to the standard of Jesus.
  - We must be very thoughtful and prayerful when considering which church community we will devote ourselves to.
- **What should you look for (or be careful to avoid) when deciding which church community to devote yourself to?**
  - It is essential to be united in our core beliefs and practices

#### 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- We are all of equal importance in the body of Christ.
- **How can we practically live this out in the church?**

**Next Steps:**  
**Devote yourself to the church**



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# THE PROBLEM OF SIN

- How would you describe sin?
- What is your attitude towards it?

## Isaiah 59:1-3

- What impact does sin have on our relationships (especially our relationship with God?)
- Sin separates us from God- it has great destructive relational power

## Genesis 4:2-7

- Sin is like a wild animal- and the more we let it control us, the more beastly (like a wild animal) we become
- When we sin, we become less human- true humanity is found in holiness, which is separation from sin.

## Genesis 6:5-6

- Sin grieves God, it has emotional impact on him because it is destructive to our relationship with him and others.
- What are your thoughts on this?

## Romans 6:23

- When we sin we earn death
- It is easy and normal to trivialize the consequences of sin, and therefore to not have a serious attitude about it.
- We must beware of a lazy disposition and mindset toward sin

## James 1:13-15

- Look at the progression of sin- what do you notice?
- It always starts small- and grows, like a virus

## IT IS VITAL THAT WE SEE OUR PROBLEM

### Luke 7:36-50

- This woman saw her sin, the Pharisee did not
- Jesus says that when we really recognize how our sin has hurt God and us, only then can we truly find freedom and forgiveness- self awareness is key
- How can you become more like this woman?

## AT A GLANCE

### SCRIPTURES:

- Isaiah 59:1-3
- Genesis 4:2-7
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Romans 6:23
- James 1:13-15
- Luke 7:36-50
- Galatians 5:16-23
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5

### CHALLENGE:

- Examine Galatians 5:19-21 & 2 Timothy 3:1-5
- Identify your core sins
- Next week we will spend some time talking through what we've learned about ourselves and what the next steps are





## THE PROBLEM OF SIN

- How would you describe sin?
- What is your attitude towards it?

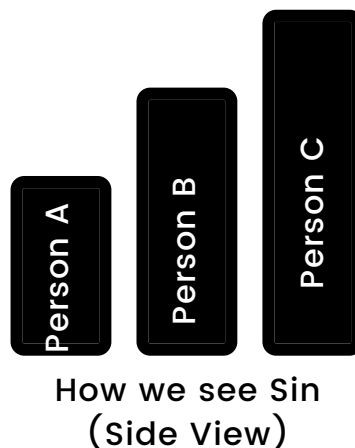
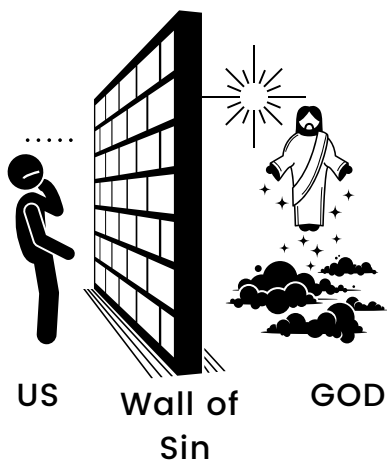
### Galatians 5:16-23/2 Timothy 3:1-5

- There is a tension between good and evil in all of us (flesh & spirit)
- Spend some time defining terms so there is no misunderstanding on what these words mean
- Explain the concept of core sin, helping them understand that every bad behavior is rooted in something deep in our heart- we must uncover those deeper truths about ourselves if we are ever going to repent and be with God
- When considering what our core sins may be, we are asking the question:  
• What sins are most likely to turn us away from God?

### Challenge + Prep for the Next Study:

1. Examine Galatians 5:19-21 & 2 Timothy 3:1-5
2. Identify your core sins
3. Next week we will spend some time talking through what we've learned about ourselves and what the next steps are

### HELPFUL GRAPHICS:





# THE GRACE OF GOD

Purpose:

- To grasp the power of Jesus' sacrifice and our desperate need for God's grace

## WHAT IS GRACE?

### Ephesians 2:1-10

- Unmerited favor: God's gift of mercy and forgiveness given to a humanity that doesn't deserve it and could never earn it by their own work or effort.
- When we live for ourselves, we are enemies of God.
- We are saved not by our own effort, but by the love and mercy of God through Jesus.

## WHY DO WE NEED GRACE?

### Romans 3:22-24

- All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God
- All humanity is spiritually bankrupt- totally unable to save ourselves spiritually- our sin has irrevocably separated us from God, and we have no way of earning our way back into his presence.
- Earning our way to heaven is like trying to jump across the Grand Canyon
- No matter how far you can jump- whether 10 feet or 30 feet... you won't get close to crossing the 47,520 feet to get from one side to the other.
- Our efforts to 'earn' our salvation are meager at best- the cost of sin is far too high, and we cannot afford it- we don't have the right currency, we need divine help.

### 2 Corinthians 5:21

- God knew when he created mankind we would rebel, and he knew what it would cost him to save us.
- God is just, a price is demanded for our sin, and only Jesus could pay that price.
- Jesus lived a perfect life, and he offered that life to God in place of ours, he switched his record with ours and was punished for our sin while we enjoy the fruits of his perfect life.
- **ANALOGY: Courtroom** →

## AT A GLANCE

### SCRIPTURES:

- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Romans 3:22-24
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Matthew 26:36-46
- Matthew 26:47-56
- Matthew 26:57-68
- Matthew 26:69-75
- Matthew 27:26-44
- Isaiah 53:4-6
- 2 Samuel 9:1-10
- Matthew 26-28

### NEXT STEPS:

- Watch the Passion of the Christ and/or read through the full account of his sacrifice in Matthew 26-28 reflect on what it cost Jesus to pay our sin debt



What do you think about this?  
Is it hard for you to accept how badly you need God's grace?





## THE GRACE OF GOD

Purpose:

- To grasp the power of Jesus' sacrifice and our desperate need for God's grace

The cost of God's grace was the suffering of Jesus.

### THE EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

#### Matthew 26:36-46

- His friends weren't there for him when he was overwhelmed with sorrow

#### Matthew 26:47-56

- He was betrayed by Judas and abandoned by his disciples

#### Matthew 26:57-68

- He was falsely accused by his enemies, mocked, spat on and beaten

#### Matthew 26:69-75

- Was denied by his close friend Peter

### THE PHYSICAL SUFFERING

#### Matthew 27:26-44

- Jesus was tortured by being flogged, beaten, mocked, and crucified

### THE SPIRITUAL SUFFERING

#### Isaiah 53:4-6

- Jesus carried the burden and punishment for our sin
- He felt the full weight of the consequences of our sin so that we didn't have to- he paid our price while we receive his reward

## How do you feel about what Jesus went through for us?

### A Helpful Picture of God's Grace

- 2 Samuel 9:1-10
  - Mephibosheth was worth nothing in his culture, just a destitute, crippled man of a disgraced house.
  - We are like Mephibosheth, spiritually crippled, destitute, unable to help ourselves.
  - God shows us kindness, love and grace because of Jesus- just as David showed Mephibosheth kindness, love and grace because of Jonathon.

#### NEXT STEPS:

- Watch the Passion of the Christ and/or read through the full account of his sacrifice in Matthew 26-28 reflect on what it cost Jesus to pay our sin debt



# REPENTANCE: OUR RESPONSE TO GRACE

Purpose:

- To help produce godly sorrow and transformation as a response to God's grace

## WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

### Acts 3:19

- Repentance is a transformation of heart and mind—changing the way we think and the way we act.
- Repentance brings times of refreshing and is a key step to receiving salvation

## WHAT IS THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE?

### 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

- God's love should compel us to live for him

### Titus 2:11-14

- Grace teaches us to say 'No' to sin (to repent!)
- Grace should impact our hearts, our actions, our work, our attitude, and our lifestyle.
- Understanding grace is the key to overcoming our sin and repenting.

## WHAT DOES REPENTANCE LOOK LIKE?

### 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

- There are two types of 'sorrow': Godly and Worldly
- Godly sorrow produces life, while worldly sorrow brings death
- Godly sorrow is characterized by eagerness to change, alarm at our sin, concern for our righteousness and a desire to transform evidenced by our action
- Worldly sorrow is feeling bad without change, it is self-pity, it is guilt with no action.

### 2 Timothy 2:22

- Repentance is a measurable, obvious lifestyle change
- It means that we "flee" from our evil desires and instead pursue righteousness

### Matthew 5:29-30

- Repentance often requires radical action
- Share personally about a time when you took radical action to repent in your life

## AT A GLANCE

### SCRIPTURES:

- Acts 3:19
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
- Titus 2:11-14
- 2 Corinthians 7:8-11
- 2 Timothy 2:22
- Matthew 5:29-30

### END OF STUDY

### CONVERSATION:

- Take some time and talk specifically about the core sins they have previously identified
- Are they willing to make effort to repent of those sins?
- Do they have a plan for their repentance?
- Identify specific scriptures that apply to their core sin and areas of needed change

Godly Sorrow	Worldly Sorrow
produces life, eagerness to change, alarm at sin, concern for righteousness, desire to transform with action.	brings death, feeling bad without change, self-pity, guilt with no action



# DISCIPLESHIP

Purpose:

- To make clear what it means for us to surrender to Jesus's Lordship and live as authentic followers of Jesus

## Acts 11:25

Do you think there is a difference between a "christian" and a "disciple?"

- There is no distinction between a disciple or a Christian in the Bible

## Matthew 22:34-37

- The most important thing in life is to love God with everything you have.
- To become a disciple, we must first learn to love God with all our heart

What do you think it means to love God like this?

## John 13:34-35

- The primary quality other people should notice about us is the way we love one another.
- To love one another means we think of them before ourselves, it means we sacrifice for them, care for them, are kind and encouraging to them, but also that we are honest with them- even when it hurts.

What will it look like for you to love others like this?

## Luke 14:25-27

- If we are to become disciples, we must love God more than anything in our lives.
  - We love many things, people, possessions, ideas...we can only know how much we love something by considering how much we prioritize that thing.
    - Love is not a feeling, it is a choice
  - Everything has a place on our "love scale," and it is all about priorities

Up to this point in your life- where is God on your "love scale?"

## AT A GLANCE

### SCRIPTURES:

- Acts 11:25
- Matthew 22:34-37
- John 13:34-35
- Luke 14:25-27
- Luke 14:28-33
- Mark 10:17-31
- Matthew 24:31-46
- Mark 1:16-20
- Matthew 28:18-20

### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

- Do they understand what a disciple of Jesus is?
- Upon reflection- do they believe they are a disciple of Jesus?
- If not, do they want to become one?





## DISCIPLESHIP

Purpose:

- To make clear what it means for us to surrender to Jesus's Lordship and live as authentic followers of Jesus

### Luke 14:28-33

- We must consider what it will cost us to surrender to Jesus
- We must be willing to surrender anything, to pay any cost to follow Jesus

What might it cost you to follow Jesus?

### Mark 10:17-31

- Though we are called to give up everything, God tells us that he will give us one hundred times as much.
- God gives us family in the church, meaning and purpose, eternal life, an answer to the deepest questions in life and more.

How do you feel about this promise?

### Matthew 25:31-46

- A part of being a disciple is about loving the poor
- When we love the poor, we love God

Has this been a part of your life?  
How do you feel about this mission?

### Mark 1:16-20

- Being a disciple is all about helping other people follow Jesus.
- We become "fishers of men" when we become disciples.
- Being a "fisher of men" is all about learning to "Fish for people." This is all about spreading the gospel of Jesus.
- Practically speaking, it means loving people into belief- befriending people, talking about faith, not arguing people into the faith- but loving them, letting them into your life, caring for them and eventually inviting them to learn more about the gospel of Jesus

### Matthew 28:18-20

- There is a very practical aspect to spreading the gospel- it is called evangelism- sharing our faith.
- We need to be in the habit of inviting people to church and into our lives

Has this been a part of your life?  
How do you feel about this mission?

### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

- Do they understand what a disciple of Jesus is?
- Upon reflection- do they believe they are a disciple of Jesus?
- If not, do they want to become one?



## NEW CREATION

Purpose:

- To understand how people move from dark to light, with an emphasis on teaching about baptism

How can people be saved?

### 1 Peter 2:9-10

- This scripture illustrates that we are either in the dark or the light, there is no 'gray/ in between' when it comes to salvation.
- At some point, each person must move from the dark to the light- from unforgiven to forgiven, from not being a people to becoming the people of God.

At this point in your life, would you say that you are in the dark or the light spiritually? Why?

### Ephesians 2:8-9

- We are saved by the grace of God through the sacrifice of Jesus
- We are not saved because of what we do, we cannot earn our salvation

What is your understanding of baptism?

### Acts 2:36-41

- When the people asked what they needed to do- Peter was very clear, they needed to believe in Jesus, repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins and they would then receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

### John 3:1-7

- Jesus made clear to this teacher that no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and Spirit.
- The concept of ceremonial washing would have been very familiar to a Jewish teacher, as it was a significant part of the Jewish journey to God.
- The idea of being washed to purify our sins goes all the way back to the law of Moses.
- Jesus is tying in our spiritual 'rebirth' to our baptism

## AT A GLANCE

### SCRIPTURES:

- 1 Peter 2:9-10
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Acts 2:36-41
- John 3:1-7
- Romans 6:1-8
- 1 Peter 3:18-21

### ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

- Colossians 2:9-14
- Galatians 3:26-29
- Acts 8:26-40
- Acts 16:13-15
- Acts 22:1-16



## NEW CREATION

Purpose:

- To understand how people move from dark to light, with an emphasis on teaching about baptism

### Romans 6:1-8

- When we are baptized, we symbolically identify with Christ's death but literally die to our old lives
- We crucify our old lives and rise to live a new life.
- Just as Jesus died, was buried, and rose again- so we too in baptism die to ourselves, are buried under the water, and rise to live a new life.
- Baptism is just like a wedding.

### 1 Peter 3:18-21

- In the story of Noah, the wickedness of the earth is washed away by the flood waters sent from God.
- In our modern-day story, our sins and wickedness are washed away by the waters of baptism.
- Baptism is God's chosen vessel for us to accept God's grace and mark the beginning of our new life in Christ.
- Sometimes people need to be reminded that the act of baptism is only powerful because of our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus and God's mercy.

Do you want to be baptized?

### ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

#### Colossians 2:9-14

- Baptism is directly related to circumcision.
- In circumcision, flesh is cut away from the body; and in baptism, our sin (flesh) is cut away from our body

#### Galatians 3:26-29

- When we are baptized, we become part of the family of God

#### Acts 16:13-15

- Lydia, a worshipper of God, was baptized after hearing the gospel along with her whole household

#### Acts 8:26-40

- The story of the apostle Philip baptizing the Ethiopian official
- This story is especially relevant for helping people see their urgent need for salvation and the acceptance of God's grace through baptism

#### Acts 22:1-16

- Paul's retelling of his conversion story
- Ananias says to him "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."