

COMMUNITIES OF

HOPE

Christians Starting
New Congregations

A Christian Worldview



The Kingdom of God

A Christian Worldview

This study is designed for unbelievers and young believers who may not be familiar with Jesus' commands regarding our responsibilities to others in His kingdom. The studies are arranged in an easy-to-follow order and are designed to last approximately eight weeks.

The studies start in the Old Testament and assume little to no understanding of the Bible or its authority. We trust that additional follow up will be provided by those in the new church who are more mature and can help these new believers overcome the barriers to love.

The studies can be used in several ways:

1. We recommend that you use the questions in these studies as a guide to discuss the corresponding passages. You should prepare by praying that the Lord would speak to the new believer through His Word. Continue in prayer during the discussion time. Using this method, the new believer needs no preparation, although you might ask him or her to read the passage in advance. Remember: The questions in the study are to be used to start discussion rather than be seen as a rigid study to which you should adhere. Flexibility is encouraged.
2. A second way this can be used is for you to give the study to the new believer. He or she is asked to answer the questions in preparation for the time when you will be together to study the relevant portion. Once again, when you get together be flexible and willing to dig. This approach may be preferred with an older believer.
3. The least preferred way is for you to give the new believer the study to work through on his or her own with no help or follow up.

We hope that these studies will be helpful to those desiring to obey our Lord's command to "make disciples of all nations."

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Study 1: God, Man, & Creation

In this series of studies we will try to gain an understanding of the plan of God for mankind. This first study will look at God the Creator, and man, His ultimate creation. We will see how God loved and provided for Adam and Eve. We can get a glimpse from the garden experience of the plan God had before man rejected that plan in Genesis 3.

A. Creation

Read Genesis 1:24-31, and 2:7-9, 15-17.

1. How is mankind distinct from the other animals God created?
What does it mean that they are created in the image of God?
What are some of the ways in which man is like God?
2. How did God relate to Adam and Eve?
3. How did God provide for Adam and Eve?
4. What restrictions did He place on Adam and Eve?

B. The First Marriage

Read Genesis 2:18-25.

1. What insights does this detailed account of God's creation of Eve give as to God's plan for the relationship between a man and woman in marriage?
2. What are some of the purposes of uniting man and woman?
3. What was the relationship between Adam and Eve?

Conclusion

1. What was God's summary of His creation (His kingdom in the garden)? (Genesis 1:31)
2. What was good about creation as He intended it?
3. What is God's desire for mankind? (Matthew 22:37-39)
4. Are you experiencing the blessings of God's kingdom?

Study 2: The Fall

In Genesis 3 tragedy strikes as man rejects the provisions of God and chooses to go his own way with horrific consequences.

A. The Temptation and Fall of Man

Read Genesis 3:1-24.

1. Who was the serpent? (Also see Revelation 12:9 and John 8:44.)
2. What was the temptation?
3. Why was it wrong to eat of the fruit?
4. How did Adam and Eve's disobedience affect their relationship with each other?
5. How did their disobedience affect their relationship with God?
6. What were the consequences of their disobedience?
7. Did God give them any hope?

B. Disobedience, Jealousy, and Murder

Read Genesis 4:1-8.

1. What was the consequence of the fall of man in the next generation?
2. What motivates such a horrible activity of a man against his brother? (James 4:1-2)

Conclusion

1. How does the story of Adam and Eve help explain the problems in our world today?
2. Do you think God is pleased with what we have done with His creation? Why?
3. God pursues you as He did Adam and Eve. Where are you? (Genesis 3:8-9) In what ways have you sensed God pursuing you?

Study 3: God Pursues Man (Old Testament)

The rest of the Bible is a story of God's rescue for man and the reestablishment of His kingdom in the Old Testament through Israel, and in the New Testament through local, visible communities living out His love for one another. This study will focus on God's pursuit of reestablishing His kingdom in the Old Testament. Use your table of contents in your Bible to find the different books.

A. God's Promises

Read Genesis 12:1-4; 15:1-7, 18; and 17:1-8.

1. What were some of the covenant promises to Abraham?
2. What did Abraham have to do?
3. What was God's purpose in choosing Abraham and his offspring (the nation of Israel) to be His people? (12:3)

B. God's Plans

Read Exodus 2:23-3:12.

The rest of the Old Testament needs to be understood as God keeping his promises and further revealing His plan to gain for Himself a covenant people.

1. How did Israel respond to bondage?
2. Why did God respond to Israel?
3. What was His plan for Moses?
4. What did He desire from His people? (Deuteronomy 10:12-11:1)

C. God's Faithfulness

Read Psalm 106.

Psalm 106 recounts God's faithfulness to Israel throughout several events in Israel's history.

1. How did God provide for His people?
2. In what ways did God's people fail to live up to the covenant?
3. What did they do when they encountered problems due to their disobedience?
4. How did God respond to their repentance?

Conclusion

What has been your response to God seeking you?

Study 4: God's Solution to the Sin Problem

Man's sin is a problem if we are going to be in relationship to a holy God. This week we will look at how God dealt with this problem in the Old Testament. We will see how this points to Jesus as the sole and final solution for the problem of sin. Use your table of contents in your Bible to find the different books.

1. How does God see man? (Psalm 14:1-3)
What evidence do you see of this?
2. What are the consequences of man's sin? (Isaiah 24:4-6)
3. Do you see evidence of this?
4. What are the consequences of man's sin with respect to God? (Isaiah 59:1-2)
5. What is man's problem? How bad is it?
6. What is the consequence of sin according to Deuteronomy 24:16?
7. What is God's solution for sin under the old covenant? (Leviticus 16:15-19, 29-34; 17:11)
8. Are the sacrifices under the old covenant really effective at solving the sin problem? (Hebrews 10:1-4)

Conclusion

1. What is the solution to the sin problem? (Hebrews 9:26-28)
2. How was Abraham in the Old Testament made right with God? (Romans 4:3)
3. Have you been made right with God through forgiveness of your sin?

Study 5: The Messiah and the New Covenant

This week we will look at the new covenant, whereby forgiveness and relationship with God are established through Jesus Christ and His shed blood.

A. The Promised Messiah

Read Isaiah 53:1-12 and Acts 8:29-35.

1. Who is this passage talking about?
2. What did men do to Him?
3. What evidence can you find in this passage that God received Him as a sacrifice?
4. What was the consequence for those who would rely on that sacrifice for their sin?

B. The Messiah's Birth

Read Matthew 1:18-25.

1. What supernatural events surrounded the birth of Jesus?
2. What was special about His name?

C. The Messiah's Purpose

Read Matthew 20:28.

1. What was the purpose of Jesus' life?

D. The Death and Resurrection of the Messiah

Read Matthew 27:45-54.

1. What supernatural events surrounded the death of Jesus?
2. Why did He have to die?
3. What was the purpose of His life? (John 10:10-18)

Conclusion

1. The prophet Isaiah foretold about Jesus' life and death in chapter 53, which was written 700 years before Jesus was born. The details of Isaiah 53 are now historical facts. But Jesus is more than a historical figure because God knew that you would need a life-giving Savior before you were born. Have you placed your faith in this Savior, Jesus, and received eternal life? Read John 5:24.
2. If you have, write down the things you now have according to John 5:24. If you have not, why not?

Study 6: Two Kingdoms

In this study we will look at the two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the world system (kingdom of darkness).

A. Entering the Kingdom of God

Read Matthew 7:13-27.

1. How many gates are there and how many ways? (v. 13-14)
What is the end of each?
2. There are many voices in the world system today. These are not the voices of God.
How are you able to recognize what they are about? (v. 15-20)
3. What might the storms symbolize? (v. 24-27)
Which house stands?
What is the difference between the two?

B. The Good Shepherd Leads His Flock

Read John 10:1-16, 25-30.

1. How does Jesus describe Himself?
2. How are we described?
3. What does the thief offer the sheep?
4. What does the Good Shepherd offer the sheep?
5. What is the distinguishing mark of Jesus' sheep? (John 10:27)

Conclusion

1. Have you heard the voice of the Shepherd? Describe how you are following.
2. There are false teachers in our culture today. These have hurt many people and caused them to go away from God. Pray daily in agreement with the Lord's prayer, "Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil."
3. How will your house stand up against the storms of life?

Study 7: Kingdom Communities

As in the Old Testament, God's plan is that salvation should result in a kingdom, a people that exist for His name. This study will look at the new communities of the kingdom of God.

A. Ambassadors for Christ

Read 2 Corinthians 5:10-21 and 12:9-10.

1. What motivated Paul to preach the gospel?
2. Who was Paul living for?
3. How did this affect him?
4. What does this mean that God "reconciled us to Himself through Christ"?
5. What impact did this have on Paul?
How has it had an impact on you?

B. Caring for One Another

Read Acts 4:32-37.

1. Describe what life in this kingdom community was like.
2. How is this different from what you see in the world?
3. What is necessary to have this kind of community?
4. Is this God's desire? Read John 13:34-35.

C. Partakers of Christ

Read Hebrews 3:12-14 and 10:23-25.

1. Is there danger to those who are in Christ? What is it?
2. What has God provided to offset the danger?
3. How can others help you in this way?
4. How can you help others?

Conclusion

1. Are you growing in your salvation? How are you able to share this with others?
2. How does God want you to participate in His community of faith?
3. How have you recently overcome temptations? Were you able to share this with someone else?

Study 8: The End of All Things

This week we will look at where all of history is headed and see how this should affect the way we live.

A. Life in the Last Days

Read 2 Peter 3:3-18.

1. Describe the end of the world. (v. 10)
2. What do unbelievers think about this? (v. 3-5)
3. Why do they think this?
4. What should Christians think? Why?
5. How should Christians' lives reflect this thinking?

B. The New Heaven and New Earth

Read Revelation 22:1-21.

1. What happened to the curse of Genesis 3 after the fall of man? (v. 3)
What about the restriction on eating of the Tree of Life? (v. 14)
2. What attracts you about this picture?
3. What are we who are in the kingdom of God to be doing until He (Jesus) comes? (v. 17)

Conclusion

1. Are you living for the hope of God's kingdom, crying out daily, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"? (Matthew 6:10)
2. How do the activities of your life reflect this hope?
3. Who are you asking to join you in this hope?
4. When others want to tell you about a different way to God, is there any other way? (John 14:6)

