

# **GOSPEL 101**

## GROUP BIBLE STUDY



**CAMPUS OUTREACH COLUMBUS**

## Week ONE

### God's Glory = My Happiness

*"Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slums because he cannot imagine what is meant by a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." – CS Lewis*

#### Man's Chief End...

"Chief End" is another way of saying the reason we exist. What are different ways you've heard people answer the question: "Why do we exist?" or "What is your ultimate purpose?"

#### Man's Chief End is to glorify God...

What do the following verses tell us about the reason God created man and what God desires from all men?

1. Isaiah 43:6-7 – *I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth— <sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*
2. Isaiah 48:11 – *For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.*
3. 1 Corinthians 10:31 – *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

What comes to your mind when you hear the word "glory"? What does it mean to "glorify" something?

#### Man's Chief End is to glorify God BY enjoying Him forever!

We glorify most what we enjoy most. Because this is true, the Bible teaches that the best way to fulfill our purpose and glorify God is to enjoy Him more than anything else. Our desire to be happy and God's desire to be glorified are not at odds. God is most glorified in US when we are most satisfied in HIM! To enjoy or live for something else more than God not only goes against God's *design*, it goes against your *desires*.

Read the following verses and discuss what they tell us about enjoying God.

1. Psalm 16:11 – *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*
2. Psalm 63:1 – *"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water."*
3. John 15:9-11 – *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

#### Personal Application Questions:

1. What do you consider your life's purpose to be?
2. What questions did this study answer or raise?

## Week TWO

### God...Who is He?

AW Tozer said, "Whatever comes to your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you." Everything begins and ends with God and, as we saw last week, God created us to glorify Him by enjoying Him. Therefore it is very important that we take a closer look at Him. Although God cannot be completely defined, the Scriptures give great understanding as to the character and nature of the one and only true God.

#### God is Ultimate and Powerful over us

Read the following verses and discuss what they tell us about God.

1. Psalm 90:2 – *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*
2. Psalm 145:3 – *Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.*
3. Nehemiah 9:6 – *You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.*
4. Isaiah 45:7 – *I for the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.*
5. Acts 17:25 – *And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.*

How would somebody relate to God if he was ONLY ultimate and powerful over us?

#### God is Intimate and Personal with us

Read the following verses and discuss what they tell us about God.

1. Exodus 34:6 – *The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness*
2. Psalm 16:11 – *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*
3. Psalm 103:13 – *As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him*
4. Psalm 145:17 – *The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.*

How would somebody relate to God if he was ONLY intimate and personal with us?

Every problem in life can ultimately be traced back to an inadequate or inappropriate view of who God is. Our temptation is to allow our experiences or circumstances to determine our view of God, rather than allow our view of God from the Bible to determine how we view our experiences and circumstances. By understanding a little bit more about who God is according to Scripture we are able to understand who we are and what is wrong in us and in the world around us.

#### Personal Application Questions:

1. How do you tend to view God and why?
2. What questions did this study answer or raise?

## Week THREE

# If God is Good...Then Shouldn't He be Trusted?

## The God of YES

Read Genesis 2:15-17 and discuss the following questions.

*Gen. 2:15-17 – The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*

1. What did God say to Adam regarding what he could and couldn't eat in the Garden?
2. What did God say was the result of not trusting Him, and ultimately, disobeying Him?
3. How does this perspective help you understand the purpose of God's commands – are they to keep you from life or protect you for it?

## The People of NO

We tend to think that God is only of God of rules and that Christianity is a religion of do's and don'ts. We see him as a God of NO rather than YES, but in all reality we are the people of NO. We said NO to God. Read Genesis 3:1-7 and discuss the following questions (get somebody with a Bible to read it out loud).

1. In what ways does the serpent cause the woman to question God and what did she do as a result?
2. In what ways do we tend to question God's goodness to us as well?

## Trying to be our own gods

At the heart of the serpent's temptation was the idea of man becoming his own god (“you will be like God”) – to stop trusting that God knew what was best and had their good at heart, and to start trying to control their own lives.

Read the following verses and discuss the result of saying NO to God.

*Genesis 3:8 – Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

*Isaiah 59:2 – But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*

*Ephesians 2:1-3 – As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

Everything God does for us and says to us is to provide us *with* life or to protect us *for* life, not to prevent us *from* life. But we have sinned by disobeying God. As a result we have died, spiritually speaking. In this life we experience this through a lack of purpose, security and fulfillment and in the next life we will experience death under God's eternal punishment apart from Him... unless we trust God's solution for our sin.

## Personal Application Questions:

1. Do you tend to view God as a God of NO or as a God of YES?
2. What questions did this study answer or raise?

## Week FOUR

### The Third Way

Many people believe that religions are all like different paths to the top of the same mountain...it doesn't matter which one you're on, just that you're on one. Some people, on the other hand, are fed up with religion in general and believe that the best way to be happy is to do whatever makes you happy. The Bible teaches something totally different and unexpected. According to the Bible, neither *religion* nor *irreligion* ever satisfies. The Bible also offers a "Third Way" called the *Gospel*.

#### **Religion: Man's Attempt to Reach God...How good is good enough?**

What do the following verses say about God's standard and how we measure up?

1. Matthew 5:48 – *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*
2. James 2:10 – *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*
3. Isaiah 64:6 – *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*

Theoretically, how good would man have to be, if he is to reach God by his own works or efforts? Can anyone do this?

#### **Irreligion: Man's Attempt to find life apart from God...temporary satisfaction.**

Jeremiah 2:13 says, "*My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*" Discuss the following questions:

1. How does this verse define sin?
2. Compare and contrast a spring of living water and a cistern. What are the differences? What does this tell us about God?
3. Broken cisterns are anything in this world we look to for life, purpose and satisfaction apart from God. In what ways will they ultimately disappoint us?

#### **Gospel: God's Solution for Man's Sin...Christ our *Savior* AND *Satisfaction*!**

Read the following verses and discuss how Jesus is God's solution for man's sin problem.

1. 1 Peter 3:18 – *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit*
2. John 10:10 – *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

The Gospel says that Jesus Christ has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. *He had to die for us* because we are more sinful than we can ever dare to imagine, but *He was glad to die for us* because we are more loved than we could ever dare to hope. Nothing else in this world can save us from our sin and satisfy us forever!

#### Personal Application Questions:

1. Which of these three options most describes your life?
2. What questions did this study answer or raise?

## Week FIVE

### Dying to Live

Jesus Christ offers eternal life as a free gift to all who would believe in Him. He invites us to receive this incredible gift by faith and thus surrender the control of our lives over to him as Lord of our lives. In New Testament language, "believing in Christ" is always accompanied by a surrendering of the will. In other words, the ONLY way to truly *live* is to completely *die*! This study takes a closer look at what this means.

#### We Must Believe

Read the following verses. Discuss what happens when someone believes in Jesus and what the consequences are for not believing.

1. John 1:12 – *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God*
2. John 3:36 – *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*
3. Romans 10:9 – *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

How does James 2:19 help us understand what the word "believe in your heart" actually means?

#### Dying to Live

Read the following verses and discuss the relationship between dying and living.

1. Luke 9:23-24 – *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it."*
2. Galatians 2:20 – *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
3. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 – *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

To believe in Christ is more than intellectual assent (a matter of the head), but of a surrender of the will (a matter of the heart). It could be pictured as a man claiming to believe a chair can hold him up as opposed to him actually sitting down in the chair and trusting it to hold him up. When somebody trusts in Christ to save them from their sins and to follow Him as Lord of their life they *die* to their old life and are actually born again to *live* a new life in fellowship with Christ and for His glory.

#### Personal Application Questions:

1. What kind of belief do you have in Jesus – intellectual assent or personal surrender?
2. What questions did this study answer or raise?