


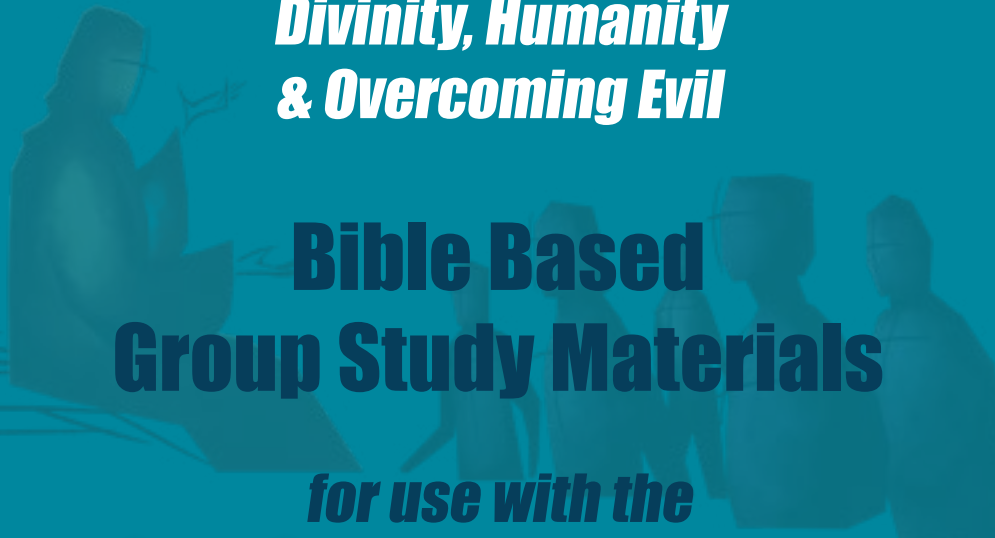
getting equ-pped



Volume 2

*Divinity, Humanity
& Overcoming Evil*

**Bible Based
Group Study Materials**



for use with the



BibleProject

getting

equipped

Volume 2
Divinity, Humanity
& Overcoming Evil

Bible Based Group Study Materials

Getting Equipped, Volume 2

Divinity, Humanity and Overcoming Evil

Bible-Based Group Study Materials

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Getting Equipped, Volume 2

Bible-Based Group Study Materials

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This discipleship series has been designed for use with BibleProject videos which are available online at: <https://YouTube.com/BibleProject> and at <https://BibleProject.com>

For more complementary resources for the “Getting Equipped” series, go to: <https://equippers.in/resources>



Introduction to the Series

Getting Equipped, Volume 2 is the second in a series of discipleship curriculum from Equippers. It is specially designed for use in India for those who have decided to follow Jesus and are looking to grow in knowledge, understanding and faithfulness. To accomplish these multi-faceted goals, we have designed this curriculum with many distinctive features: character dialogues that introduce the lesson topics, group worship songs, videos from the Bible Project, discussion questions, and a variety of learning activities.

This learning is rooted in biblical teaching, the most reliable source of divine knowledge. While the sessions are intended to be informative, the focus is not on presenting a lot of information. Rather, these sessions utilize learning tactics designed for participants to learn as a group, to explore the deeper meanings of the Bible, and to consider how God's people are called to live.

Getting Equipped uses participatory learning methods which contrasts with lecture methods that are so common in India. It is intended that the leader using these lessons be a facilitator of learning, not the expert who has all the answers. In the learning process to discern God's will, understanding is developed through a process of examining scripture and then discussing open-ended questions with other learners. One of the goals is to consider how to put biblical principles into practice in everyday life. The target audience for *Getting Equipped* are Christians aged 15 and above.

As you go through these lessons, you will notice they follow a consistent pattern. In the margin, you will notice a variety of icons. These make it easier to identify when to sing, perform a dialogue, or play a video. The first one you will encounter is the music icon shown in the corner below. This indicates time for a group worship song. You may choose to sing one of the recommended songs or select other songs, in any language, that fit the theme of the lesson.



The next graphic in these lessons features a thumbnail from the playlist of Introductory Dialogues for Volume 2 of *Getting Equipped*. These dialogues introduce the topic of each lesson. Scanning the QR code will link to the playlist of Introductory Dialogues for all of Volume 2. From there, you may select the video for your particular lesson.



The most notable feature in *Getting Equipped* are the videos from the BibleProject. These brief but information-packed animated videos represent the main ideas and lesson content for most of the sessions.

The entire collection of English BibleProject videos are available at:

<https://YouTube.com/BibleProject>



The BibleProject has many learning resources available on their website. You may download your own copy of the videos, posters, video notes, find links to related podcasts, and more at:

<https://BibleProject.com>

We hope that *Getting Equipped* will be part of a life changing experience as you gather together with like minded individuals who want to deepen their understanding of the Bible and grow in their knowledge of God. May these lessons help you develop your character so that you live a life worthy of the Lord, bearing fruit in love and good works.

Divinity

Session 1 – The Mystery of God

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will explore some of the mysteries and seemingly contradictory ideas about God. We will examine biblical references to God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son of God to get a sense for what unifies them and what distinguishes them.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “The Mystery of God”. The Bible says there is one God. But, in other parts of the Bible, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all regarded as divine. The complexity of this logic has mystified people for thousands of years. In this lesson, we will explore the mystery of God by looking at some biblical passages that introduce this topic and frame some basic understandings.

The Bible claims God is transcendent, a divine being through whom we live, move, and have our being. When God appears, however, we are often conflicted between the abstract ideas of divinity and what is described in human encounters with God. When we look deeper at things like the attributes and the identities of God, the categories that frame our understanding are broken.

For example, the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son may look like three distinct gods. But those categories of existence transcend our view of reality. These three beings are also one. Later followers of Jesus called this “the Trinity”. This is not something that we can fully understand. But, as we will discover, the God of the Bible isn’t a being that you understand. The point is to know and be known by this God so that we can participate in his love.

Group Sing: “El Shaddai”, “Revelation Song” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“The Mystery of God”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- How comfortable are you with exploring questions that don't have simple answers, like questions about God?

Bridge:

Complex questions require careful consideration. While we don't expect to address all of the issues related to understanding the reality of God, we can at least advance our journey of learning. In this session, we will look at a variety of Bible passages that give us different perspectives on some of these mind bending concepts about the nature of God.

Read: Genesis 1:1-2, John 1:1-3

Discussion Questions:

- How was God present and involved in the creation of the world?

- What do you imagine about God before the world began?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: "[Biblical Themes: God](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Group Discussion:

- What do you think about how this video deals with and illustrates the complexity of God?
- What questions does it answer? What new questions does it create for you?

Read: John 14:6-7, 15-17

Discussion Questions:

- Jesus prayed to his Father in heaven, but then he told his disciples that if they have seen him, they have seen the Father. How do you make sense of this?
- In verses 15-17, Jesus refers to himself, the Father and the Holy Spirit. How are these three distinct yet unified?

Read: Revelation 1:8

Discussion Question:

- Can you imagine what it means to have no beginning or end?

Read: Exodus 3:14, John 8:58

Discussion Question:

- What do you think is God's perspective on time, including eternity?

Read: Daniel 7:13-14

Discussion Questions:

- Who is Daniel referring to as the "Ancient of Days"?
- Who is the one Daniel refers to as one like a "Son of Man"?
- In Daniel's vision, who was given authority over all nations?

Activity: Attributes of God

Identify the attributes of God described in the following passages:

Genesis 31:50 _____ Leviticus 19:2 _____

Deut. 4:24 _____ Deut. 4:31 _____

Deut. 7:9 _____ Deut. 33:27 _____

2 Sam. 22:2-3 _____ 2 Chron. 13:12 _____

2 Chron. 30:9 _____ Job 36:22 _____

Psalms 7:11 _____ Psalm 54:4 _____

Psalms 68:20 _____ Psalm 99:9 _____

Psalms 111:5 _____ Daniel 2:47 _____

John 3:33 _____ John 4:24 _____

2 Thess. 1:6 _____ 1 John 4:8 _____

Group Discussion:

- What is the difference between an attribute of God and an identity of God?
- How are the attributes of God both distinct from God and part of God's identity?

Summary: In this session, we have explored some of the mysteries and seemingly contradictory ideas about God. We examined biblical references to God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son of God which we hope gives you a sense for what unifies them and what distinguishes them.

Group Sing: "El Shaddai", "Revelation Song" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 8:1-9, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 2 – The Name of God

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will explore the meanings of the Hebrew words for God, how they are used, and how they provide us with deeper insight into God’s identity.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “The Name of God”. As such, we are going to examine the meaning of the personal name of Israel’s God and how that meaning provides greater insight to the very nature and identity of God.

In the book of Genesis, God interacts with humans on several occasions. Only once, however, do any of those people ask to know God’s name. That was with Jacob. Later, during the time of Moses, God appears in a burning bush and commissions Moses to liberate the Israelites from slavery. Moses wonders, what if people ask the name of the god who has sent me?

God responds, “Tell them *EHYEH* has sent me to you.” The Hebrew word *EHYEH* means “I will be.” In other words, God’s name means that he is the one who is and who will be. God’s existence doesn’t depend on anyone or anything else. But it would sound strange for Moses to go say to the Israelites, “‘I will be’ has sent me to you.” So God tells Moses the version of his name he should say aloud: *Yahweh*, the god of our ancestors, he has sent me to you.

Over the centuries, Israelites wanted to honor the sacred nature of this divine name. As they read the Hebrew Bible aloud and they came to this name, they stopped saying *Yahweh*. Instead, they started saying the Hebrew word for “Lord” which is *Adonai*. This word can refer to people like kings, the master of a servant, or even a shepherd. Sometimes biblical authors use this word to refer to God, like in the phrases “the Lord of all the earth” or “the Lord of lords”.

But behind all of these words, *Yahweh*, *Jehovah*, Lord, and *Adonai*, stands the original divine name of the God of Israel. It refers to the one who was, who is, and who forever will be.

Group Sing: “Names of God”, “Here I Am to Worship” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
"Choosing a Name"



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- What are the reasons for choosing most people's names?
- How often does a person's name reveal something about their character or their identity?

Bridge:

While most contemporary names may reveal something about a person's cultural background or family identity, rarely do people's names reveal something profound about themselves. This is not the case with God. As we will see in this session, the names we use to address or refer to God have significant meaning and can help us better understand who he is.

Read: Genesis 32:24-30

Discovery Questions:

- What was the purpose for changing Jacob's name to Israel?
- How did God respond to Jacob's request to know his name?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: "[Word Study: YHWH/Lord](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Group Discussion:

- Which version of God's name are you most familiar with?
- What does God's name mean to you?

Read: Exodus 3:13-15

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think Moses presumed he would need to tell the Israelites God's name, even though they had never known it?

Read: Psalm 110:1

Discussion Question:

- What is the difference between the two Lords mentioned in this verse?

Read: Mark 14:61-62, John 8:58

Discussion Question:

- What do you think was the special significance of Jesus using the phrase, "I am" in these situations?

Read: John 20:25-28

Discussion Questions:

- What was the significance of Thomas calling Jesus "My Lord" and "My God"?
- How was Jesus' identity as Israel's Messiah connected to his being called "Lord"?

Activity:

Identify some the names and titles by which God is called:

Genesis 14:18 _____ Genesis 21:33 _____

Genesis 35:11 _____ Exodus 15:26 _____

Exodus 17:15 _____ Exodus 34:14 _____

Psalms 24:7-10 _____ Psalm 42:2 _____

Psalms 78:35 _____ Psalm 115:15 _____

Psalms 136:3 _____ Daniel 7:9 _____

Matthew 6:9 _____ Revelation 1:8 _____

Isaiah 9:6 (4 names) _____

Group Discussion:

- What do these names and titles say about the nature, character and purposes of God?

Summary: In this session, we have examined the names by which God is called. Some of these names differentiate him from other gods that people have worshipped, but for the most part, these names reveal the very essence of who God is and how he is set apart from all else.

Group Sing: "Names of God", "Here I Am to Worship" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 9:7-10, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 3 – Spiritual Beings

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will become familiar with the scope of spiritual beings mentioned in the Bible. In particular, we will look at those referred to in the Hebrew Bible as *elohim* and will consider how *elohim* represent both a category of spiritual beings and God himself.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Spiritual Beings”. In the Bible, spiritual beings inhabit the heavenly realm which is parallel to and overlaps with our earthly reality. All spiritual beings have their own unique characteristics but the biblical authors have one word that can refer to all the inhabitants of the spiritual realm. In Old Testament Hebrew, the word is *elohim*. In New Testament Greek it is *theos*. This word gets translated in lots of different ways, depending on which spiritual being is referred to: angels, god or even God.

The word *elohim* is a category title, not a name. It can designate any spiritual being that belongs to the heavenly realm. This is the biblical view: one *elohim*, *Yahweh*, is above all *elohim*, the other spiritual beings. In this session we will learn about who these other *elohim* are, how they fit into the biblical story, and how they help shape our view of reality. The Bible says that God is the Lord of heaven and earth. That means that there are created beings under his authority in both domains.

Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video: “Overlapping Spaces”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- How do you deal with sharing space with someone else, either at home, in public spaces, an office, or elsewhere?

Bridge:

We all share space with other people. It's not so surprising when that space overlaps and we are more aware of the other's presence. Today, we are going to look at another set of overlapping spaces: the earthly realm where humans reside and the heavenly realm where spiritual beings reside. Sometimes, these spaces overlap and cause us to want to know more about the other. While spiritual beings are largely a mystery to human beings, the Bible does tell us some things about them, which can help us navigate our overlapping worlds.

Read: Psalm 82:1, 5-7

Discussion Questions:

- Who are the gods that are referred to as rendering judgments with God?
- How can it be that gods walk about in darkness and will die like mere mortals?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: "[Introduction to Spiritual Beings](#)"

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Group Discussion:

- Which spiritual beings in the Bible do you find to be the most mysterious?
- Why do you think there are so many misunderstandings about spiritual beings?

Read: Psalm 89:5-8

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think verse 5 is referring to when it talks about the assembly of the holy ones?

- Who do you think are the heavenly beings mentioned in verse 7?

Read: John 3:5-8

Discussion Question:

- What do you think Jesus means by “flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit”?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: “[Spiritual Beings: Elohim](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.



Group Discussion:

- What do you think it means for God to be a spiritual being?

- If the *elohim* reside in the heavenly realm, why is it they are sometimes in contact with humans?

Read: Exodus 15:11, Deuteronomy 10:17

Discovery Question:

- Which Hebrew word would “gods” refer to in these verses?

Read: Exodus 20:3

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think it was a temptation for people to worship one of the lesser *elohim*, rather than the Almighty *Elohim*?

Read: Matthew 28:18

Discussion Question:

- Why is it significant that Jesus was given authority over both spaces, the earthly realm and the heavenly realm?

Activity:

Identify the kind of spiritual being who appears in each of the following passages:

Genesis 1:2 _____

Genesis 3:24 _____

Genesis 6:3 _____

Genesis 16:7-10 _____

Job 1:6-7 _____

Isaiah 6:2 _____

Matthew 4:1-3 _____

Matthew 8:28-33 _____

Luke 2:9-10 _____

Group Discussion:

- Have you ever wondered if you were in the presence of a spiritual being? What kind?
- Why do you think it is valuable to be aware of different kinds of spiritual beings?

Summary: In this session, we have become familiar with the scope of spiritual beings mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. We took a closer look at those referred to as *elohim* and learned how *elohim* represent both a category of spiritual beings and God himself.

Group Sing: “Great is Thy Faithfulness”, “How Great is Our God” (Joshua Aaron), or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 24, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 4 – Mysterious Servants

Lesson Objectives: Participants will learn about the spiritual beings in the Bible who help God carry out his work. In this session, we will look at three categories of these spiritual beings: the divine council, angels and cherubim and the roles they have in mediating between God’s space and human space.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Mysterious Servants”. In the heavenly realms are many kinds of spiritual beings, called *elohim*. All the *elohim* were created by God and reside in the spiritual realm where God resides. The Bible refers to God’s space as the sky or the heavens. When the biblical authors looked up, the stars gave them a way to talk and think about spiritual beings. In the Bible, they are called the “sons of God,” “rulers and authorities,” or the “divine council”.

The God of the Bible wants to share authority with others. In the beginning, God shares his rule with human partners on earth and with spiritual partners, the divine council, in the heavenly realm. Yet, it all falls apart in a twin rebellion. There were members of the divine council who, like the humans, didn’t want to represent God’s authority anymore. They wanted to be God and they rebelled. So these created beings deceived humans into worshipping them instead of the Creator.

Other beings in the spiritual realm include the cherubim and the angels. Cherubim stand guard at the boundary between heaven and earth, such as outside the Garden of Eden, in the tabernacle, and in the Jerusalem temple. Their images remind the priests that they were working in God’s presence.

Angels are often mistaken for people because they look alike, just more impressive. But angels have a different purpose. Since humans cannot enter into God’s throne, God reaches out to them through these spiritual ambassadors. Angels play a supporting role in the Bible because God’s ultimate purpose is to bring humans back into his presence in a reunited heaven and earth. In the meantime, he uses angels to guide and to serve his people.

Group Sing: “God of Angel Armies”, “If I Could See (What Angels See)” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“A Team Effort”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- Do you prefer working alone or together with a group?
- What are the benefits of working with a group? What is more difficult about working with a team?

Bridge:

Team efforts are a different experience than things done alone. In this session, we are going to examine how God works through other beings. Even though God is capable of doing things alone, he has chosen to use created beings to carry out different tasks. We will look at three of the spiritual beings God created to help rule over the heavenly realm: the divine council, angels, and cherubim.

Read: Genesis 1:26

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think God used the plural “us” and “our”?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: “[Spiritual Beings: The Divine Council](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Group Discussion:

- What was God’s intended purpose for the divine council?

- What happened to the divine council after the rebellion in heaven?

Read: Colossians 1:16

Discussion Question:

- What are the similarities between earthly authorities and rulers in the heavenly realms?

Read: 1 Kings 22:19-23

Discussion Question:

- How did God use the “host of heaven” to deal with King Ahab?

Read: Job 2:1-2

Discovery Questions:

- Who were the “sons of God” who presented themselves before the Lord?

- What was Satan doing prior to coming before the Lord?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: “[Spiritual Beings: Angels and Cherubim](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.



Group Discussion:

- What is the main purpose of angels?

- Are you surprised to learn that angels do not have wings?

- What is the main purpose of cherubim?

- Why do cherubim have the physical features of animals?

Read: Genesis 19:1

Discovery Question:

- Why were these two angels visiting Lot in Sodom? (*You may want to read Genesis 18 for background.*)

Read: Genesis 28:12

Discovery Question:

- How does Jacob's dream represent the role angels have in connecting the heavenly realm with the human realm?

Read: Psalm 91:10-11

Discovery Question:

- How do angels serve to protect God's people?

Read: 1 Kings 19:5-7

Discovery Question:

- Why do you think God sent an angel to Elijah at this time?

Read: Luke 1:11-13

Discovery Question:

- What was Zecharias' reaction when the angel appeared?

Summary: In this session, we have learned about the spiritual beings in the Bible who help God carry out his work. We looked at three categories of these spiritual beings: the divine council, angels and cherubim and the roles they have in mediating between God's space and human space. These beings are necessary, especially since humans cannot enter into God's presence and hope to live.

Group Sing: "God of Angel Armies", "If I Could See (What Angels See)" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together, reciting Romans 8:38-39:

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 5 – The Son of God

Lesson Objectives: Participants will explore the identity and Old Testament background of Jesus, the Son of God. We will look at the early appearances of the Angel of the Lord and how those reflect the identity of Jesus. We will also explore Jesus' favorite way to refer to himself, "The Son of Man", which also has its roots in an Old Testament prophet.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is "The Son of God". It is obvious that Jesus is the central character of the New Testament. Though his identity is more hidden in the Old Testament, he is nonetheless central throughout. As the story of Jesus overlaps between the two testaments, Jesus himself overlaps with and is a bridge between two realms of reality: the heavens and the earth. In the Old Testament, we see many references to a character called the "Angel of the Lord". Each time he appears, he is described in a way that is purposefully puzzling, leaving the reader wondering whether the angel is sent by Yahweh, or Yahweh himself.

In the New Testament, people most commonly refer to Jesus by his title, the "Christ", or Messiah. But Jesus' most frequently referred to himself as the "Son of Man". This identity is also rooted in the Old Testament and is a character who crosses over between God's space and human space. In this lesson, we will look at both of these identities and will explore what these titles can tell us about the nature of Jesus and his mission in heaven and on earth.

The Gospels portray Jesus as human and also as Yahweh, the God of Israel. Jesus said and did things that only Yahweh can do, like forgiving people's sins or calming the chaotic waters. We can conclude that Jesus is a human distinct from God and also divine. That can sound contradictory, unless you have been reading the Hebrew Scriptures, which prepares you for it.

Group Sing: "Because He Lives", "This is Amazing Grace" or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“The Bridge”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- Have you ever been a place where you could see another side, but there was no way to get across?

Bridge:

In this section on Divinity, we have been exploring concepts of God’s space and human space. Because of human rebellion against God, the overlap, or bridge, between these two spaces is complicated. Humans cannot simply enter into the presence of God, so God has reached out in different ways to connect with humanity. The most important of these ways is through his Son, Jesus.

Read: Matthew 26:62-64

Discovery Questions:

- Did the high priest assume that the Messiah would be the Son of God?
- How did Jesus respond to the high priest’s demand to explain his identity?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: [“Spiritual Beings: The Angel of the Lord”](#)



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the distinction between the Angel of Yahweh and Yahweh himself?
- Why is it dangerous for God to appear directly to humans?

Read: Genesis 16:7-8, 13

Discovery Questions:

- Who called out to Hagar (vs. 7-8)?
- To whom did she respond (vs. 13)?

Read: Exodus 3:2, 13:21

Discovery Question:

- What were the similarities between the Angel of the Lord's appearance at the bush (3:2) and the pillar that led the people of Israel (13:21)?

Read: Exodus 19:20-21

Discovery Question:

- Why were the people of Israel warned not to force their way to see the Lord?

Read: Judges 6:20-23

Discovery Question:

- How do you think Gideon realized he had seen the angel of the Lord?

Read: Daniel 3:24-25

Discovery Question:

- Who do you think was the fourth person in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: "[Biblical Themes: The Son of Man](#)"

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus called himself the "Son of Man"?
- How does the Son of Man fulfill God's intended role for Adam?

Read: Daniel 7:13-14

Discussion Question:

- Why would it have surprised Daniel to see someone in his vision as being like a "son of man"?

Read: Isaiah 7:14

Discovery Question:

- How does the name "Immanuel" represent a bridge between heaven and earth?

Read: Ezekiel 3:1-4, 27

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think the Lord addresses Ezekiel as, "son of man"?

Read: John 1:14

Discussion Question:

- What do you think it means for the Word to become flesh and dwell among us?

Summary: In this fifth and final session on Divinity, we have explored the identity and Old Testament background of Jesus, the Son of God. We looked at the early appearances of the Angel of the Lord and how those compare with the later appearance of Jesus. We will also examined the meaning of the "Son of Man" and its implications for bridging heaven and earth.



Group Sing: "Because He Lives", "This is Amazing Grace" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together, reciting Psalm 80:14-19, then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Humanity

Session 6 – The Mission of Humanity

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will consider what it means to be human, separating us from animals as well as from spiritual beings. While some might look at the unique physical and mental characteristics as what distinguishes humanity from other creatures, the Bible presents an even more significant feature: humanity has a different purpose, or mission, revealed in the concept of being made in the “image of God”.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “The Mission of Humanity”. At the time of creation, the Bible says that God made humans in his own image. That description is often referred to, but is not well understood. In ancient days, most people lived under the authority of a king. Many of these kings claimed that they were gods. They would even call themselves the “image of God”. This implied they had authority to tell other people what to do. They defined what was good and what was evil. These kings would often make statues of themselves.

But Israel didn’t view their kings as the god. In fact, they were not supposed to even make images of God, which was strange to their neighboring nations. However, Israel had been taught you cannot reduce the creator God down to any one thing in creation. But there was another reason. People are not to make images of God because God has already made images of himself: humans.

God told humans to subdue the earth and to rule it. This task was not just for kings, but for all people. God also gives humans a choice of how they are going to rule. They can choose to use their authority for the benefit of others, which is God’s definition of good, or they can define good and evil for themselves and use their authority for self advantage.

This is the Bible’s depiction of the human condition. Sometimes humans act faithfully and bring blessing to the earth. Other times, humans act selfishly and create evil in the world.

Group Sing: “Micah 6:8 Song”, “I Have Given You Authority” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“The Gardener”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- Why do you think it is so satisfying to nurture the growth of plants, animals, and children?

Bridge:

As humans, we are designed to watch over the earth. No other creatures have the same kind of skills to communicate, imagine or create technology or manage other parts of creation. In this session, we will examine why this is and how it reflects God’s design.

Read: Genesis 1:26-30

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think are some of humanity’s characteristics that reflect the image of God?
- How do you think God’s command for humanity to “fill the earth and subdue it” reflects his purposes?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: “[The Image of God](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Discussion Questions:

- How is the biblical view of the image of God different than those who lived in the ancient world?

- Is the task of humanity ruling over God's creation reserved only for kings and people from the ruling class, or it is universal? How does that take shape in families, businesses, and other parts of society?

Read: Genesis 6:5-6

Discovery Question:

- What do you think caused things to get so bad that God regretted he had made human beings?

Read: Daniel 3:4-5

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar would command people to worship his image?

Read: Genesis 41:33-36

Discussion Question:

- How does Joseph's plan for storing excess grain during years of abundance reflect God's intentions for humanity to rule over his creation?

Read: Matthew 25:14-30

Discussion Questions:

- How does this parable convey the theme of humans, being made in the image of God, having responsibility for managing some part of God's creation?

- What is expected of the faithful manager when they are entrusted with some measure of responsibility?

Activity

Look up these passages featuring implications of being made in the image of God. Identify how faithful servants reflect the image of God.

Genesis 2:15 _____

Genesis 2:19-20 _____

Genesis 5:1-3 _____

Genesis 9:6 _____

John 13:34-35 _____

Acts 17:28-29 _____

Colossians 3:9-10 _____

Ephesians 4:22-24 _____

Group Discussion:

- How have your ideas of the image of God been affected by what we have learned in this session?

Summary: In this session, participants have looked at the essence of what it means to be human by examining our purpose or mission. Being made in the image of God brings great privileges as well as temptations to use those special abilities for selfish gain. Those humans who live faithfully use their abilities to partner with God to steward his creation and to bless others.

Group Sing: “Micah 6:8 Song”, “I Have Given You Authority” or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together, reciting Psalm 67, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 7 – Human Heart & Soul

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will look at the physical, mental and emotional aspects of humanity. In particular, we will examine the Hebrew words *lev*, meaning “heart,” and *nephesh*, meaning “soul”. Studying these words gives us insight into the language and worldview of the ancient Israelites as well as a more biblical view of humanity.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Human Heart and Soul”. We are attempting to construct a biblical view of humanity which is not limited to a narrow set of categories. In this lesson, we will examine the biblical words for “heart” and “soul”.

The Hebrew word for “heart” is *lev*. The ancient Israelites knew that the heart was an organ in the chest that sustains life. But they had no word or concept for the brain. They imagined that all of a human’s intellectual activity takes place in the heart. We “know” with our heart. The heart is where we understand and make connections. It is where wisdom dwells and is what you use to discern between truth and error. In essence, the heart is where you think and make sense of the world.

In the Bible, the heart is also where you feel emotions, such as fear, depression, and joy. In biblical Hebrew, to be happy is to have a “heart of joy”. The heart is the generator of physical life. It is where you make choices motivated by your desires and where your affections are centered.

The Hebrew word for “soul” is *nephesh*. Regrettably, the English word “soul” comes with meaning rooted in ancient Greek philosophy where the soul is a non-physical, immortal essence of a person that is trapped in their body to be released at death. This is not at all what *nephesh* means in biblical Hebrew where the most basic meaning is “throat”. Since your whole life and body depend on what comes in and out of your throat, *nephesh* refers to the whole person. In the Bible, people don’t have a *nephesh*. Rather, they are a *nephesh*, a living, breathing physical being.

Group Sing: “Create in Me a Clean Heart” (Keith Green),
“As the Deer” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“The Broken Heart”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think people talk about their heart being broken?
- What are people referring to when they talk about matters of the heart?

Bridge: It is common for people to talk about the heart being at the core of each person. Today we are going to take a closer look at what we mean when we refer to the heart and soul of a person.

Read: Proverbs 4:23

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think it is so important to guard your heart?

Read: 1 Chronicles 22:19

Discussion Question:

- What does it mean to you to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: “[Word Study: Lev/Heart](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions.

Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions

- What does the heart represent in the Bible?
- Why do you think biblical authors would represent so many human functions with one part of the body?

Read: 1 Kings 10:24

Discovery Question:

- How do you think wisdom can reside in the heart?

Read: Isaiah 65:14

Discovery Question:

- What is the range of affections this passage describes as flowing from the heart?

Read: Psalm 51:10

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think King David asks God to create in him a pure heart?

Group Sing: Meditate on the message of Psalm 51 as you sing "Create in Me a Clean Heart" or other similar song

Read: Jeremiah 17:9

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think Jeremiah warns readers about the heart?



Read: Ezekiel 11:19-20

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think are the outcomes of a divided heart?
- Why do you think Ezekiel's vision talks about God giving his people a new heart?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: [“Word Study: Nephesh/Soul”](#)

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Discussion Questions:

- How does your cultural view of the human soul compare with the biblical concept of *nephesh*?
- What is the difference between “having” a *nephesh* and “being” a *nephesh*?

Read: 1 Samuel 1 :13-16

Discussion Question:

- What did it mean for Hannah to be “pouring out her soul” to the Lord?

Read: Psalm 42:1-2, Proverbs 25:25

Discussion Question:

- How does the thirst of the throat compare with the complete desire of a person?

Read: Psalm 23:1-3

Discussion Question:

- In the metaphor of this poem, how does the Lord refresh the soul?

Summary: In this session, participants have considered physical, mental and emotional aspects of humanity. In particular, we examined the Hebrew words *lev*, meaning “heart,” and *nephesh*, meaning “soul”. Studying these words gives us insight into the language and worldview of the ancient Israelites as well as a more biblical view of humanity.



Group Sing: “Create in Me a Clean Heart”, “As the Deer” or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 108:1-5, then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 8 – Human Brokenness

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will learn about some of the ways humanity has failed to live according to God's ways. In particular, we will look at the biblical concepts of sin and transgression and see what God has done to make a way to heal what has been broken.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is "Human Brokenness." We read in the Bible that when God observed his creation, he declared it to be "good" and "very good". But when humanity rejected God's authority and rebelled against him, the order that God had created was broken. The innocence of the human heart was lost and was replaced by a knowledge of good and evil. Sin corrupted humanity and introduced death. No longer could humans enter into God's presence. Humanity's transgressions destroyed the trust and peace that allows people to live in harmony with God and with one another.

The Bible's perspective on the human condition offers us a profound diagnosis of human nature. To better understand human brokenness, we will look at the meaning of the words that are often associated with rebellion against God: sin, transgression and iniquity.

Sin refers to moral failure but it is also a powerful force that must be resisted. While God tells us that sin may be conquered, no human was successful in doing so until Jesus appeared. Transgression refers to ways that people violate the trust of others. The Hebrew word *pasha* describes the betrayal of a relationship. Since there are many kinds of relationships, a lot of different behaviors can break trust and destroy relationships. Collective trust is like when two nations who have made a treaty break their agreement. Personal trust is lost when someone breaks a promise or a vow. That is how the Greek word, *paraptoma*, is used to develop a portrait of humans as "trust breakers".

God's response to humanity's sin and transgression was to send a leader in whom humans can trust. By sending his Son, Jesus, God took responsibility for our betrayal so that he could open up a new future and a new way to be human: the way of faithfulness, trustworthiness and integrity.

Group Sing: "Open the Eyes of My Heart", "Create in Me a Clean Heart" or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“The Archer”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- Why do think we prefer to avoid negative words like failure?
- On the other end, we may hold a concept of perfection that renders it unattainable. Is there a word other than “perfect” that means, “hitting the target” or meeting your goal?

Bridge:

Living in a world where humans have defined good and evil according to their own terms, it should not be surprising when the words used to distinguish between good and evil are compromised. In this session, we will study the biblical terms for sin and transgression, seeking to find contemporary meaning that is faithful to the biblical meanings.

Read: Romans 3:23

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think it significant to recognize that all people have sinned?
- Why do you think is meant by “falling short of the glory of God”?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: "[Word Study: Khata/Sin](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions

- What is the basic meaning of the word “sin”?
- What is the “goal” of humanity?

Read: Genesis 4:6-7

Discovery Questions:

- How does God warn Cain about the danger of sin?
- How do you think people can rule over sin?

Read: Genesis 39:9

Discovery Question:

- Why do you think Joseph perceived adultery with his master’s wife would be a sin against God?

Read: Exodus 10:16-17

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think Pharaoh came to realize he had sinned against Moses and against God?
- Why do you think he asked Moses to forgive his sin?

Read: Exodus 32:30-34

Discussion Questions:

- What were the consequences of Israel’s sin?
- Why do you think Moses hoped that he might make atonement for their sin?

Read: Romans 8:10-11

Discussion Question:

- How does the Spirit provide the means to rule over sin?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: [“Word Study: “Peshah/Transgression”](#)

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Discussion Questions

- What is the difference between sin and transgression?
- How does the concept of transgression reflect God’s priority for humans to love him and love their neighbor?

Read: 2 Kings 1:1

Discussion Question:

- What happens when one nation breaks trust with another?

Read: Amos 8:3-6

Discovery Question:

- What were Israel’s transgressions in the time of Amos that caused the Lord to punish them?

Read: Micah 3:8

Discovery Question:

- What kind of deeds did the rulers of Israel commit for Micah to declare their transgression?

Read: Isaiah 53:5

Discussion Question:

- How does the Lord bear the burden for our transgressions?

Summary: In this session, participants have learned about some of the ways humanity has failed to live according to God’s ways. In particular, we studied the biblical concepts of sin and transgression. This has provided a glimpse at what God has done to make a way to heal what has been broken.

Group Sing: “Open the Eyes of My Heart”, “Create in Me a Clean Heart” or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 51:1-7, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 9 – Human Belonging

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will imagine what it means to live in exile. This experience contrasts being at home, in a place of peace where one is familiar with the people, the customs, the language, and the way of life. By looking at the biblical story of the Babylonian exile, we learn much of what makes us human and how God has designed us to live in community.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Human Belonging”. As such, we will examine the importance of home, the concept of belonging to a place and a people. As humans, we are social creatures who search for a people and place where we belong. The people of Israel were promised a land they would settle, rule and live at peace with one another. This became central to their hopes and aspirations as a nation.

But there were times when the people of Israel did not get to experience the peace and stability of home. There were events that forced them to leave their home and go live in a foreign land. We call this “going into exile”. In exile, everything is disorienting and unfamiliar. The ancient Israelites found themselves conquered by Babylon, living in exile far from their homeland. So they had to ask themselves, “How did we end up here?” and, “Is there any hope of going home?”

This story sets you up for Israel’s story. They were promised a land of their own where they could stay there on one condition: that they be faithful to the terms of their covenant relationship with God. When they didn’t, they were sent into exile. The devastation of that experience instilled in God’s people a longing for the peace of their homeland, and they day when they would live in the place where they belong.

What is more, Israel’s scriptures held out hope that one day God would send a king who would rescue the world from all of the Babylons. Jesus’ followers live with the hope of a future home. In the meantime, they remain exiles waiting for that day when Jesus returns to transform this world into a true home.

Group Sing: “The Rivers of Babylon”, “Where I Belong” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“Going Home”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- What is the meaning of “home” to you?

- Do you like living in a place where you know many people, or do you prefer getting to make new friends?

Bridge:

Home is important to most people. It provides an anchor of stability to help navigate the storms of life. But not everyone has a home or is at home in the place they are living. They can feel like they are in exile, which is a theme we will explore in this lesson.

Read: Mark 10:29-30

Discussion Questions:

- What kind of sacrifice would it be to you to leave your home in order to serve the Lord?

- How comforting would it be for you to have a place to come home to, if you had to leave for a time?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: "[Word Study: Exile](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- How is Babylon a recurring symbol of living in exile?
- How is the promise of a future home still part of the hope of God's people?

Read: Joshua 1:2-5

Discussion Question:

- What do you think it would have been like for the Israelites to finally enter the promised land, after 40 years of wandering?

Read: Isaiah 5:13-16

Discussion Question:

- Can you imagine the devastation the people of Israel must have felt to have their kingdom destroyed and be sent away in exile?

Read: Ezra 6:21-22

Discussion Question:

- Can you imagine how special it would be to celebrate your most important festival in Jerusalem, after so many years in exile?

Read: Luke 15:29-32

Discussion Question:

- Despite the younger brother wasting half of the family's wealth, why would they have such a celebration for him finally coming home?

Read: Philippians 3:19-20

Discussion Question:

- How did the early Christians view their citizenship?

Activity

Look up these passages where people had to leave their home. Identify the place they left and where they went.

Genesis 3:23 _____

Genesis 4:14 _____

Genesis 11:8 _____

Genesis 12:1 _____

Genesis 45:10 _____

Exodus 13:3 _____

Ruth 1:1 _____

2 Kings 17:23 _____

2 Kings 24:14 _____

Group Discussion:

- How has our discussion about home and exile caused you to think differently about your own home and identity?

Summary: In this session, participants have imagined what it means to live in exile. This experience contrasts being at home, in a place of peace where one is familiar with the people, the customs, the language, and the way of life. By looking at the biblical story of the Babylonian exile, we learned about what makes us human and how God has designed us to live in community.

Group Sing: “The Rivers of Babylon”, “Where I Belong” or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together, reciting Psalm 147:1-5, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 10 – The Hope of New Humanity

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will look at the concept of a new humanity brings changes both in this life and the life to come in the new creation. We will also study the biblical words for hope and they are related to God’s promise to make all things new, including humanity.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “The Hope of New Humanity”. Hope is a state of anticipation crucial for healthy human existence. In biblical Hebrew, hope is about waiting or expectation, in the period of Israel’s prophets, as the nation was sinking into self destruction. There are two main Hebrew words translated as “hope”. *Yakhal* which means simply “to wait for”. *Qavah* also means to wait. It is the feeling of tension and expectation while you wait for something to happen. The Greek word used to describe this anticipation is *elpis*.

Biblical hope is based on a trust in a person. This makes it different from optimism, which is choosing to see in any situation how circumstances could work out for the best. But biblical hope is focused on God’s past faithfulness which informs and motivates hope for the future. You look forward by looking backward, trusting in nothing other than God’s character.

When Jesus came, he announced that God’s heavenly rule was arriving here on earth through him. He went around confronting the power of sin and death in healing, exorcisms, and forgiveness, opening the way for God’s people to become new humans, to rule with God, and to have eternal life.

The earliest followers of Jesus believed that Jesus’ life, death and resurrection was God’s surprising response to human bondage to evil and death. They were then driven by the hope that emerged from the empty tomb, which they saw as giving them a foretaste of the new creation that God has promised.

Group Sing: “Living Hope”, “Our God” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“The New Bike”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- How do you feel when you get something brand new, like Kumar’s bike?

- Why do people trust some brands more than others?

Bridge:

It is exciting to buy or receive new items, especially when we have been forced to endure an old, faulty item. In today’s session, we are going to look at the hope of new humanity, something promised by God that is central to Christian faith.

Read: Psalm 130:5

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think hope is associated with waiting?

- Why would someone put their hope in God’s word?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: "[Word Study: Yakhel/Hope](#)"



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- What is the basic meaning of the word “hope”?
- What do the different words translated as “hope” tell us about the promises of God and his faithfulness to fulfill those promises?

Read: Psalm 33:18

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think the Lord gives special attention to people who hope in his unfailing love?

Read: Ezra 10:2

Discussion Question:

- Can people who have been unfaithful to God still have hope? Why?

Read: Psalm 26:3

Discussion Question:

- How is the hope of God’s people dependent upon the faithfulness of God himself?

Read: Acts 24:14-15

Discussion Question:

- How was Paul’s hope related to the resurrection of the dead?

Read: 1 Peter 1:3

Discussion Question:

- How does Jesus’ resurrection give us a living hope?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: [“The New Humanity”](#)

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the key differences between the old (or present) humanity and the new humanity?
- How did Jesus prepare the way for the renewed humanity?

Read: Colossians 3:9-10

Discovery Question:

- What is happening to the new self?

Read: Galatians 5:19-23

Discovery Questions:

- What are some actions of the old life?
- What are some characteristics of the new life, led by the Spirit of God?

Read: Jeremiah 31:33-34

Discussion Question:

- What do you think it means to write the law on their hearts?

Read: Revelation 22:1-5

Discovery Question:

- In what ways will the new creation be like the original Eden?

Summary: In this session, participants have looked at the concept of a new humanity. In particular, we studied the biblical words for hope and looked at how the promise of a new humanity brings change both in this life and the life to come.

Group Sing: “Living Hope”, “Our God” or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 96:10-13, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Overcoming Evil

Session 11 – Evil in the World

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will explore different forms and sources of evil in the world. In particular, we will study the biblical meaning of the word “iniquity” and will then examine the biblical teaching of the Satan and demons.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Evil in the World”. We have already looked at some forms of evil in the world in Session 8, sin and transgression. Now, we will look at the concept of iniquity, a more systemic form of evil in the world.

The portrayal of spiritual evil in the Hebrew Scriptures is fascinating and complex. The biblical authors never express the mysterious nature of evil by describing it directly. Rather, they give readers a mosaic of stories and images, showing how evil manifests itself in and through human behavior.

The Bible also talks about spiritual beings interacting with humans to deceive them and to carry out evil plans. The satan and demons are created spiritual beings who rebelled against God’s authority and cause much wickedness, death and destruction in the world.

Throughout Jesus’ mission of announcing the arrival of God’s kingdom, he made perfectly clear that his adversary was not a human but rather the spiritual powers of evil who are represented by one particular being. This spiritual being has many titles such as the satan, the devil, Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, and the power of darkness. These titles refer to an enemy and an accuser. They are also used to refer to the function of a spiritual being in God’s heavenly throne room who accuses God’s people and slanders their reputation.

Demons are simply the rebellious spiritual beings who work with the satan to oppose God and to deceive the humans. Altogether, these forces are a formidable force whose power should cause God’s people to remain alert so that they can counter the efforts of God’s enemy.

Group Sing: “I Have Given You Authority”, “Mighty Warrior” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“The Call Centre”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- Do you think you could refuse if your boss asked you to do something you felt was a bit deceptive?

Bridge:

Lies and deceptions are the building blocks of larger scale evil in the world. In this lesson, we are going to consider how God’s people can stand against small and large bad deeds.

Read: Psalm 5:9, 12:1-2

Discussion Question:

- Do you ever feel like you are alone in trying to do what is right?

Read: Isaiah 5:20

Discussion Question:

- What do you think when people celebrate evil things and discourage those who seek to do what is right?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: [“Word Study: Avon/Iniquity”](#)



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- What is the basic meaning of the word “iniquity”?
- How does God deal with iniquity?

Read: Exodus 20:5 (Realize that some translations say “sin” instead of “iniquity” in many of the passages in this lesson.)

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think children are punished for the iniquities of the parents? Is this the effects of institutional practices?

Read: Micah 2:1

Discussion Question:

- What do you think is the difference between intentional iniquity and unintentional iniquity?

Read: Deuteronomy 9:5

Discovery Question:

- On what account did the Lord allow the Israelites to take possession of the promised land?

Read: 2 Chronicles 28:19

Discovery Question:

- Why did the Lord humble Judah?

Read: Proverbs 6:16-19

Discovery Question:

- What are the seven iniquities the Lord hates?

Read: Isaiah 53:4-6

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think Lord would bear our iniquities?

Overcoming Evil



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: "[The Satan and Demons](#)"

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Question:

- Why do you think God allowed the Satan and demons to rebel against him?

Read: Matthew 10:7-8

Discovery Question:

- What were the acts that demonstrated the kingdom of heaven has come near?

Read: Luke 10:17-20

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think the disciples were so surprised when they were able to exercise authority over the demons?

Read: John 8:44

Discovery Question:

- According to Jesus, who is the father of lies?

Read: Ephesians 6:10-12

Discussion Questions:

- According to verse 12, who are the influencers behind the struggles we face on earth?
- Why do you think we need to be fully equipped?

Summary: In this session, we have explored different forms and sources of evil in the world. In particular, we studied the biblical meaning of the word "iniquity" and examine the biblical teaching of the Satan and demons.

Group Sing: "I Have Given You Authority", "Mighty Warrior" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Ephesians 6:13-18, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 12 – Overcoming Social Conformity

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will explore the social dynamics of conformity and will consider how God’s people can balance social conformity with their loyalty to God.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Overcoming Social Conformity”. By looking at the experience of the nation of Israel in exile, we are able to see some principles that can guide us when we face issues of competing loyalties.

In the year 587 BC, thousands of Israelites became exiles in Babylon. Removed from their native place, they have become a minority community, surrounded by an unfamiliar culture with new gods. Some Israelites chose to resist Babylon by revolting or withdrawing. Others gave in, adopting the Babylonian way of life and accepting these new gods as their own.

But those weren’t their only options. God spoke to the people through the prophet Jeremiah to show them his way to become part of a society that did not share their values, convictions and ultimate loyalties. Jeremiah told them to work for the well-being, peace and prosperity of Babylon. Their success would be mutually dependent upon the success of Babylon.

Reading the story of Daniel illustrates what it can look like to become part of an ungodly society without compromising one’s faithfulness to God and his covenant commands. Daniel was loyal to a succession of rulers in Babylon at the same time he remained true to God.

Following Jesus requires similar loyalties, loving our neighbors and even our enemies. We can seek the peace and prosperity of the society around us without conforming to all of their traditions, customs and expectations.

Group Sing: “The Rivers of Babylon”, “Where I Belong”, “Zion” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video: “Brand Conformity”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- Why do you think we are influenced so much by others’ opinions of us?

- How do you deal with situations where you are expected to conform and act like the group you are with?

Bridge: Part of being created in God’s image means that we are social beings, created to be in relationship with others. As such we look to belong to some group or another who share our values and affirm our decisions. However, conformity can be both a force for good as well as for evil. In this session, we will examine the dynamics of conformity and how they relate to the will of God.

Read: Romans 12:2

Discussion Questions:

- What must be avoided if one is to know God’s will?

- How do you think it is possible to avoid conforming to the traditions and customs of the world around us?

Scan the QR Code on the right and watch the BibleProject Video: [“The Way of the Exile”](#)



Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- How is the way of the exile similar to the situation God’s people face today, even if they live in the nation of their ancestors?

- How can we seek the well-being of the people in our village, town or city without compromising our loyalty to God?

Read: Jeremiah 29:4-7

Discovery Questions:

- Initially, the Jewish people believed they had two ways they could respond to being exiled in Babylon: 1) adopt the Babylonian way of life and accept their gods as their own or 2) resist the rule of the Babylonians by revolting or withdrawing. The prophet Jeremiah offers a third choice. How does this differ with the first two choices?

- How was the success of the Hebrews connected to the success of the Babylonians?

Read: Daniel 1:6-8

Discovery Questions:

- In what way did Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah conform to the customs of the Babylonians?

- In what way did Daniel have to go against the Babylonian customs in order to remain loyal to the covenant laws of Israel?

Read: Daniel 3:15-18

Discovery Questions:

- How do you think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were willing to risk their lives and all the privileges of their positions to defy the king's order?
- Do you think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were truly committed to the peace and prosperity of Babylon?

Read: Matthew 22:17, 19-21

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus encouraged people to honor Caesar's authority by paying their taxes?
- How did Jesus draw a boundary line of loyalty between Caesar's authority and God's authority?

Application

Have each person think about a customs and traditions in their family or social circles that seem to conflict with how God would want you to live. In groups of 4-5 participants each, discuss ways you might be able to demonstrate commitment to the well-being of those people without conforming to their expectations. Have one or two people share their ideas with the larger group.

Summary: In this session, participants have explored the way of the exile, people who seek the well-being and prosperity of their society without conforming to expectations that are contrary to God's ways. By examining the story of the Babylonian exile, we have considered how God's people can balance social conformity with loyalty to God.

Group Sing: "The Rivers of Babylon", "Where I Belong", "Zion" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 16:5-8, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 13 – The Spirit of Love

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will explore ways to overcome the power of sin and live the life of love. By studying the Greek word for love, *agape*, and reading what the Bible says about how to overcome our selfish nature, we will see the vital role the Holy Spirit has in helping us achieve a victorious life.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “The Spirit of Love”. In earlier lessons, we have explored humanity’s sinful nature and the power of evil spirits in the world that lead humans astray and keep us from keeping God’s commands and living faithfully before him. When Jesus was asked which commands were most important, he narrowed it down to two: love God with all of your heart, all of your soul, and all of your strength, and love your neighbors as you love yourself. So, understanding love is central to understanding God as a person and understanding his commands. But Jesus’ followers did not learn the meaning of love by studying the words the Bible uses for love. Rather, they learned about love by looking at Jesus’ life and teachings, which redefined the very concept of love.

The love that Jesus taught is a self-giving love, looking out for the needs of others. Though loving God is the most important command, the primary way that God wants humans to demonstrate their love for him is by loving others. In his words, “You shall love your enemy and do good to them, expecting nothing in return.” For Jesus, this kind of enemy-embracing love imitates the very character of God himself. But Jesus didn’t just come to be a role model and give deeper insight into the commands that God had already given to the nation of Israel. After all, as the apostle Paul noted, the law of God was powerless to help humans overcome their selfish desires. So, Jesus sent God’s Holy Spirit to help his people carry out the life of sacrificial love. The Spirit gives more than just wisdom about love, he affects the desires of our hearts and guides God’s people to exercise generous love, serving friends, neighbors and enemies alike.

Group Sing: “Micah 6:8 Song”, “Sometimes by Step” or other selection.

Overcoming Evil



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“Too Big of a Job”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following questions:

- Have you ever known what you want to do, but when you tried doing it, found you couldn't succeed?
- Have you ever set a goal that you later learned was not within your reach? How do you feel when something like this happens?

Bridge:

Sometimes we have good intentions and a relevant objective, but later discover that we don't have the ability or resources needed to achieve what we have in mind. When it comes to love, we may find it easy to love our friends, but difficult to love strangers. Loving our enemies might even seem impossible. But with God's help, all these things are possible. We will explore that journey.

Read: Matthew 26:41

Discussion Question:

- What is like when your spirit wants to do something, but you find your body doesn't share the same desire?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: “[Word Study: Agape/Love](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the fundamental differences between agape love and romantic love?

- How did Jesus' apostles learn about Jesus' concept of love?

Read: Galatians 5:13-18

Discovery Questions:

- How should our freedom be exercised? (vs. 13)

- In which one command is the entire law fulfilled? (vs. 14)

- How can we overcome the desires of our flesh? (vs. 16-18)

Read: Matthew 5:43-44

Discussion Question:

- How can God's people actually show love toward their enemies and care about people who persecute them?

Read: John 14:15-17

Discovery Questions:

- To whom did Jesus promise to ask the Father to send the Spirit of truth?

- How can God's people know the Spirit of truth?

Read: Jeremiah 31:33-34

Discovery Questions:

- When will this promise of God writing his law on his people's hearts be fulfilled?

- How can it be that God's people will no longer need to teach their neighbor or tells others about God?

Activity

Look up these passages that talk about sacrificial love. Identify the kind of sacrifice to which they refer.

Mark 10:45 _____

Luke 9:23-24 _____

John 15:13 _____

Romans 5:8 _____

Romans 12:1 _____

Philippians 2:6-8 _____

Ephesians 5:1-2 _____

1 John 3:16 _____

Group Discussion:

- What are some of the common patterns you see in these passages that talk about sacrificial love?

Application

Sometimes loving actions are a pure pleasure for the person showing love. Other times, however, they require overcoming obstacles and sacrificing in some way or another. In groups of 4-5 participants each, think and pray about something each of you may do, with the Spirit's help, to demonstrate sacrificial love. The sacrifice could come in forms such as time, money, or even one's pride.

Summary: In this session, participants have explored ways to overcome the power of sin and live the life of love. By studying the Greek word for love, *agape*, and reading what the Bible says about how to overcome our selfish nature, we will see the vital role the Holy Spirit has in helping us achieve a victorious life.

Group Sing: "Micah 6:8 Song", "Sometimes by Step" or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting 1 John 4:7-13, then have someone offer a closing prayer.



Session 14 – Atonement & Forgiveness

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will learn about the biblical concepts of atonement and forgiveness by looking at the ancient practice of blood sacrifice in the temple and Jesus death on the cross.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this session is “Atonement & Forgiveness”. In this section on overcoming evil, we have examined the consequences of evil in the world. The destruction caused by our sin makes us owe something to make it right. When we consider that God is good and wants to rid the world of evil, we conclude that he must get rid of us as well. This is what is so remarkable about the story of the Bible. God is so good that not only is he going to rid the world of evil, he is going to do it without destroying humanity.

Early in the story of the Bible, we read about the practice of animal sacrifice. For the Israelites, it was a very powerful symbol of God’s justice and grace. God allows an animal’s life to be a substitute for humans, symbolically dying in their place. This ritual sacrifice makes things right between Israel and God. Through these symbols, the Israelites experience God’s love and grace.

Being forgiven might compel them to become people of love and grace, too. But, that didn’t always happen. The continual sacrifices of the Israelites became meaningless when they allowed great evil in their midst, ignoring the poor and the oppressed and distorting justice. So, God’s prophets reminded his people that sacrifice was only meaningful when accompanied by obedience.

When Jesus came, he offered his life as a sacrifice of atonement for many. Jesus’ death covered the debt that humans owe God for contributing to all of the evil and death in His world. Jesus’ blood becomes a symbol of his life washing away the vandalism that evil has caused in and around us. When Jesus rose from the dead, he broke the power of death and evil, offering forgiveness of sin. Now, we celebrate another ritual of atonement: the Lord’s Supper so his followers can remember his atoning sacrifice and participate in the power of his death and his life.

Group Sing: “To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice”, “Take My Life and Let It Be” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video: “Forgiveness”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- What do you do when you find yourself in Sneha’s situation, where someone who has done wrong wants to be forgiven?

Bridge:

Wrongdoing seems to be part of life. The question, though, is not “How do we tolerate it?” but, “How do we bring healing when it occurs?” In this session, we are exploring pathways for healing, first by looking at the ancient practice of animal sacrifice and secondly by the timeless practice of forgiveness.

Read: Luke 17:3-4

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think it is so important to forgive those who repent?
- Does forgiveness require us to restore trust?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: “[Sacrifice and Atonement](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- Why do our evil deeds need to be dealt with? Why does that put humans in danger?
- How did the ancient practice of animal sacrifice serve as a symbol of God's justice and grace?

Read: Leviticus 4:13-14

Discovery Questions:

- When were the people of Israel supposed to offer the Lord a sin offering with the blood of a bull ?
- How can someone sin unintentionally?

Read: Leviticus 16:20-22

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think God instructed Israel's priests to send a goat into the wilderness?

Read: Micah 6:6-8

Discovery Question:

- What do think happened between the time when God instructed Israel to offer animal sacrifices and the time of Micah, when he basically tells them that sacrifices are meaningless if they aren't accompanied by obedience?

Read: Luke 22:19-20

Discussion Question:

- How does Jesus memorial supper with his disciples reflect Israel's ancient traditions of making atonement?

Read: 1 John 1:8-9

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think confession is necessary for forgiveness?

Read: Matthew 6:14-15

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think it is so important to God that you forgive other people of their wrongdoing against you?

Activity

Look up these passages that recount incidents where sacrifices were made to God. Identify the characters involved and the type of sacrifice offered.

Genesis 4:3-5 _____

Genesis 8:20 _____

Genesis 22:2 _____

Genesis 46:1 _____

Exodus 8:25-29 _____

Exodus 12:3 _____

Exodus 24:5 _____

Leviticus 9:7 _____

Group Discussion:

- What are some of the patterns you see in these stories about sacrificial offerings?

Summary: In this session, we have learned about the biblical concepts of atonement and forgiveness, looking at the ancient practice of blood sacrifice in the temple and Jesus death on the cross. We have also examined portions of the Bible that discuss our need for confession, repentance, and forgiveness.



Group Sing: “To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice”, “Take My Life and Let It Be” or other selection.

Prayer: Pray together as a group, reciting Psalm 78:8-9, then have someone offer a closing prayer.

Session 15 – Judgment Day

Lesson Objectives: In this session, participants will explore the biblical theme of the Day of the Lord and see how that corresponds with the final judgment. Participants will also consider how God’s people might anticipate and prepare for this day, which prepares the way for the New Creation.

Opening Introduction: The theme of this final session is “Judgment Day”. The Day of the Lord is a theme in the Bible used to describe how God is at work in history to confront collective human evil, liberate his people from oppression, and assert his rule over all creation. When the Israelites were delivered from bondage in Egypt, they remembered the event as “the Day”. When prophets talked about coming destruction and judgment, they called it the “Day of the Lord”. Some of these prophecies refer to historical events. Others point toward a future day.

As Israel grows, it becomes wealthy, apathetic, unjust, and idolatrous. They abused the poor and neglected the covenant laws of the Torah, becoming like Babylon and Egypt. So, they become the target of the Day of the Lord. This is where we read the prophets’ battlefield images of smoke, fire, carnage, and earthquakes that are poetically enhanced. But, like the Exodus story, the prophets know that God will deliver those who cry out to him in humility and repentance.

Jesus believed a war was on and that he was a king on the offensive. He believed there were powerful forces of evil at work in the world—spiritual and human—that corrupted people and resulted in violence. This shaped his understanding of his mission and his identity. In Revelation, the Day of the Lord is described with more battle images describing how Jesus’ victory came not through military means, but through his loving announcement of the kingdom. The final battle ends as God’s gloriously renewed creation is ushered in.

The theme of the Day of the Lord describes how God is at work in history to confront collective human evil, liberate his people from oppression, and assert his rule over all creation.

Group Sing: “Days of Elijah”, “Lion and the Lamb” or other selection.



Scan the QR Code and watch the Introductory Dialogue video:
“Day in Court”



Group Discussion: Ask participants to reflect on the dialogue then discuss the following question:

- Why do you think it is so important to have a good judge in order to receive a just ruling?

Bridge:

Many legal matters are complicated and require a wise judge to issue a fair settlement. In small matters, we can recover from a ruling against us. However, when our life or eternity is at stake, it becomes most serious. Today, we will consider that day when all people will stand before the Lord and be judged. We call that the “Day of the Lord”.

Read: Revelation 19:11

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think the judge in this vision is also described as a warrior?
- Why would judgment correspond with war activities?



Scan the QR Code on the left and watch the BibleProject Video: “[The Day of the Lord](#)”

Video Review: Ask participants to share their reactions to the video. Replay any parts of the video they would like to see again.

Video Discussion Questions:

- How does the imagery of the Day of the Lord contrast with the more peaceful associations people have with Jesus?
- How do you think God's mercy is evident in the way that he plans to deal with the problem of evil?

Read: Exodus 14:30

Discussion Question:

- Why do you think this event would be referred to as simply, "the Day"?

Read: Isaiah 13:6-13

Discovery Question:

- What kind of day does Isaiah describe, a day of rejoicing or a day of destruction?

Read: Zechariah 14

Discovery Questions:

- Is this chapter describing the destruction of Jerusalem at the time of their exile, a future day of judgment, or both?
- According to this vision, in the day when all the nations fight against Jerusalem, who will be king over all the earth?

Read: Matthew 25:31-46

Discussion Question:

- Upon what basis will people separated and judged with eternal consequences?

Read: Revelation 19:6-8

Discovery Questions:

- Who is the bride in this metaphor?
- How has the bride prepared herself for this day?

Appendices

BibleProject Videos

The lesson content in *Getting Equipped* are designed around themes from the series of animated videos created by Bible Project. Equippers collaborates with BibleProject to localize these videos into Indian languages. Below is a chart that identifies the lesson topics and the videos that correspond with those lessons.

Lesson Topics and Corresponding Bible Project Videos		
Divinity	Humanity	Overcoming Evil
“The Mystery of God” Video: God	“The Mission of Humanity” Video: The Image of God	“Evil in the World” Videos: Avon/Iniquity The Satan & Demons
“The Name of God” Video: YHWH/Lord	“Human Heart & Soul” Videos: Lev/Heart Nephesh/Soul	“Overcoming Social Conformity” Video: The Way of the Exile
“Spiritual Beings” Videos: Introduction to Spiritual Beings Elohim	“Human Brokenness” Videos: Khata/Sin Peshah/Transgression	“The Spirit of Love” Video: Agape/Love
“Mysterious Servants” Videos: The Divine Council Angels and Cherubim	“Human Belonging” Video: Exile	“Atonement & Forgiveness” Video: Sacrifice and Atonement
“The Son of God” Videos: The Angel of the Lord The Son of Man	“The Hope of New Humanity” Videos: Yakhah/Hope The New Humanity	“Judgment Day” Video: The Day of the Lord



BibleProject

Group Singing

We recommend groups to sing worship songs together, to usher in a spirit of attentiveness, listening and learning. While styles and preferences will vary and you may choose to sing in other languages, we have selected a sampling of English songs whose lyrics fit the themes of the lessons. All these songs can be found by searching on YouTube. We recommend versions that display the lyrics.

Session 1: El Shaddai, Revelation Song

Session 2: Names of God, Here I Am to Worship

Session 3: Great is Thy Faithfulness, How Great is Our God (Joshua Aaron)

Session 4: God of Angel Armies, If I Could See (What Angels See)

Session 5: Because He Lives, This is Amazing Grace

Session 6: Micah 6:8 Song, I Have Given You Authority

Session 7: Create in Me a Clean Heart, As the Deer

Session 8: Open the Eyes of My Heart, Create in Me a Clean Heart

Session 9: The Rivers of Babylon, Where I Belong, Zion

Session 10: Living Hope, Our God

Session 11: I Have Given You Authority, Mighty Warrior

Session 12: The Rivers of Babylon, Where I Belong, Zion

Session 13: Micah 6:8 Song, Step by Step

Session 14: To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice, Take My Life and Let It Be

Session 15: Days of Elijah, Lion and the Lamb

Getting Equipped

Bible Based Group Study Materials

Volume 1

Understanding God

1. The Good News of God's Kingdom
2. The Holiness of God
3. The Lordship of God
4. The Holy Spirit of God
5. The Covenant Faithfulness of God

Understanding the Bible

6. Learning What the Bible Is
7. The Story of the Bible
8. The Literature of the Bible
9. The Timeline of the Bible
10. The Public Reading of Scripture

Building Christian Character

11. Listening to and Obeying God
12. The Beginning of Wisdom
13. Loving God and Loving Others
14. Seeking Justice
15. Becoming Peacemakers

Volume 3

Jesus

1. The Gospel of Jesus
2. The Royal Birth
3. Announcing the Kingdom
4. Teaching the Followers
5. The Journey to Jerusalem
6. The Suffering Servant
7. Surprised by the Resurrection
8. All Authority

The Church

9. The New Temple
10. The Gospel to Judea & Samaria
11. To the Ends of the Earth
12. Faith on Trial

New Creation

13. Previews of the Kingdom
14. Signposts of Eternity
15. The New Creation

Volume 2

Divinity

1. The Mystery of God
2. The Name of God
3. Spiritual Beings
4. Mysterious Servants
5. The Son of God

Humanity

6. The Mission of Humanity
7. Human Heart and Soul
8. Human Brokenness
9. Human Belonging
10. The Hope of New Humanity

Overcoming Evil

11. Evil in the World
12. Overcoming Social Conformity
13. The Spirit of Love
14. Atonement & Forgiveness
15. Judgment Day



Getting Equipped, Volume 2

is the second in a series of discipleship curriculum from Equippers. It is specially designed for use in India for those who have decided to follow Jesus and are looking to grow in knowledge, understanding and faithfulness.

This group study curriculum is designed with many distinctive features: dialogues that introduce the lesson topics, group singing, videos from the Bible Project, discussion questions, and a variety of learning activities.

Learners who are eager to break from lecture style teaching will appreciate the way *Getting Equipped* uses participatory learning methods and draws from a variety of teaching resources. Leaders will value how these tactics grab and keep the attention of your group. More importantly, these lessons are a gateway to opening up deeper meanings of the Bible and finding a path that guides your group toward a collective identity and sense of purpose.

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