



# THE STORY



## Welcome and Prayer

*Have someone open the group with prayer, and pray that God would lead your time and speak to you through one another.*

## Opening Question

*The goal of our groups is to study the Bible while making meaningful personal relationships. As we learn more about each other, we build trust and can strengthen each other through the discussion.*

*"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Proverbs 27:17*

**What is a small or simple thing you want to be more grateful for?**

Watch the video - "Session 22: The Birth of the King" (14 minutes)

[Session 22. The Birth of the King](#)

## Discuss

1. How does page 309, or John 1:1-14, 18, help clarify the relationship between God and Jesus? Why is this so important?
2. "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (page 309, John 1:4). Look up John 5:21-29, 6:47-58, 10:10, 11:25, 14:6, 17:3, and 20:31. What does it mean that in Him was life?
3. List some of the names of Jesus and their meaning or significance (see also Isaiah 9:6-7).
4. The text tells us "all who heard [about Jesus] were amazed" (page 313, Luke 2:18). What do you think it was that surprised them?
5. If you could ask Jesus any question, what would it be?
6. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

## Prayer

*The goal of the ending prayer time is to be intentional based on the reading/sermon/discussion.*

- How can we pray for each other based on what we've talked about?
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**If you could use only 3 words to describe your family, what would they be?**

Watch the video - "Session 23: Jesus' Ministry Begins" (13 minutes)

[Session 23. Jesus' Ministry Begins](#)

## Discuss

1. What does Jesus' example (pages 322-323, Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13) teach us about how to resist temptation? (See Ephesians 6:10-17 for further insight.)
2. Jesus was constantly interacting with different types of people: curious Jews, antagonistic Pharisees, tax collectors, and society's castoffs. What can we learn about how to respond to different types of people from observing Jesus?
3. John the Baptist who had earlier proclaimed, "Look, the Lamb of God," was now stuck in prison where he began to wonder about Jesus (pages 333-334, Matthew 11:2-6, Luke 7:18-23). Look up Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1. Why did Jesus answer John the way He did?
4. John has his moment of doubt. Can doubts and faith co-exist? Do our circumstances today affect our view of Jesus' credibility, as it did with John? (Read Mark 9:24, Jude 22)
5. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**When was the last time you changed your mind about something?**

## Watch the video - "Session 24: No Ordinary Man" (12 minutes)

[Session 24. No Ordinary Man](#)

## Discuss

1. We might think that Jesus spoke in parables so everyone could understand, but the disciples as well as the crowds had a hard time understanding his meaning. Why did Jesus say he spoke in parables (pages 335-336, Matthew 13:10-17, Mark 4:10-13, Luke 8:9-18)? Why was this so?
2. Based on the parables, what is the Kingdom of God? What should be our response to the Kingdom of God? (Mark 1:15)
3. From the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), what do we learn about what the Father values? Do we share his values?
4. The Sermon on the Mount opens with nine statements called "the Beatitudes," from the Latin word for blessings (Matthew 3:5-12, Luke 6:20-23). How does someone gain these blessed qualities? (Romans 3:21-23.)
5. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**If you could research one topic for your full-time job, what would you choose?**

Watch the video - "Session 25: Jesus, the Son of God" (12 minutes)

[Session 25. Jesus, the Son of God](#)

## Discuss

1. Jesus said we must "deny ourselves" and "take up our cross;" and if we seek to save our lives we will lose them (pages 353-354, Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23). What are the implications of these commands for our lives?
2. Look up 1 John 1:5-7 and 2:8-11. What did Jesus mean when He said that "whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (page 357, John 8:12, 12:46)? What does this look like for the Christian living a typical daily life?
3. Why did Jesus' opponents try to stone Him (page 358, John 8:58)? How might you answer the skeptic who says that Jesus never claimed to be God?
4. Three times Jesus foretold His death and resurrection (pages 353, 354, and 362; Mark 8:31, 9:30-31, 10:32-34) and followed each with a lesson on discipleship (Mark 8:34-38, Mark 9:33-37, Mark 10:35-45). What principles of discipleship did Jesus teach and why would He relate them to His Passion?
5. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**What would you title this chapter of your life story?**

Watch the video - "Session 26: The Hour of Darkness" (12 minutes)

[Session 26. The Hour of Darkness](#)

## Discuss

1. In what ways does Jesus' preparation and celebration of his final Passover meal parallel the original Passover? What does this teach us about the purpose of Jesus' death? (Review Exodus 12:1-13 and 21-27, John 1:29, and 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.)
2. What was Jesus trying to teach the disciples when he washed their feet? What are some ways we can wash each others' feet?
3. Review Jeremiah 31:34 and Ezekiel 36:26-28, where the prophets describe the new covenant. What are some of the characteristics of the new covenant listed in these verses? How does Jesus fulfill these promises?
4. Compare Judas (Matthew 27:3-10) with Peter (Matthew 26:75) after each betrayed Jesus (page 375). How can you tell the difference between remorse and repentance?
5. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**What book, other than the Bible, do you think every person needs to read?**

Watch the video - "Session 27: The Resurrection" (10 minutes)

[Session 27. The Resurrection](#)

## Discuss

1. People have always had difficulty believing that Jesus was God in the flesh. (Read 1 John 1:1, 2:22 and 4:2-3.) What details did John include in the crucifixion story for his readers to know for certain that Jesus, fully human, had truly died? How does knowing that God came to live among us affect our daily lives?
2. List everything we've learned about Jesus' resurrection body from this chapter. Why is Jesus' literal, physical resurrection a non-negotiable teaching of the Christian faith? (See Romans 1:4, 4:25 and 1 Corinthians 15:17.)
3. What parallels can we find between Peter's denial story (John 18:17-27) and his restoration story (pages 387-388, John 21:15-23)? What does Peter's restoration reveal about Jesus' heart and how does it apply to us personally?
4. What does Jesus' Great Commission require of all His disciples, and what is involved in making disciples? (page 388, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:44-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8)?
5. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**What is a place that holds significant meaning for you, and why is it so special?**

Watch the video - "Session 28: New Beginnings" (12 minutes)

[Session 28. New Beginnings](#)

## Discuss

1. According to Peter's Pentecost sermon (pages 391-392 or Acts 2:22-24, 36), who was responsible for Jesus' death? What is the tension we experience between God's sovereignty and people's free will?
2. The church grew rapidly from the beginning even in spite of growing opposition and persecution. What factors might account for such growth?
3. God the Father was the most visible person of the Trinity in the Old Testament. Jesus, God the Son, was most visible in the gospels, and now God the Holy Spirit becomes prominent in Acts. For most Christians, the Holy Spirit is the least understood person of the Trinity. What did we learn about the Holy Spirit from this chapter? What did we learn about the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for our own lives?
4. God intended to teach Peter something even more profound than a lesson about foods through the vision of unclean animals (pages 402-403, Acts 10:9-16, 10:28). What was it and why was Cornelius' conversion such a big turning point in the life of the early church? (See Acts 11:1-3, 15-18, Romans 10:12-13 and Ephesians 2:11-13 for more)
5. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**What was the last moment that caused you to experience awe or wonder?**

## Watch the video - "Session 29: Paul's Mission" (12 minutes)

[Session 29. Paul's Mission](#)

## Discuss

1. What differences do we find in Paul's message to the Jews in the synagogue (Acts 13:16-41) as compared to his message to the Gentiles (Acts 14:11-15, 17:22-31)? Discuss applications we might make today for reaching different people groups with the same gospel.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:3-8, and Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16. Why is the human body a good metaphor for the church and how does it relate to spiritual gifts?
3. Paul's letter to the Romans clearly outlines a pattern we can follow to lead a person to Jesus. This collection of verses has often been called "the Romans Road to salvation." Trace the following verses, maybe even marking them in your Bible. Romans 3:23, 3:10-11, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-13, 5:1, 8:1, 8:38-39. As concise as possible, what are the essentials of the gospel? How do we think Romans Road could help us share our faith in the future?
4. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**What is one of your proudest accomplishments, big or small?**

## Watch the video - "Session 30: Paul's Final Days" (12 minutes)

[Session 30. Paul's Final Days](#)

## Discuss

1. In 1 Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1 and 1 Thessalonians 1:6, how was Paul an imitator of Christ throughout his ordeals and what are the implications for believers today?
2. Ephesians 1:1-10 (page 452) teaches that as Christians we are "in Christ." What benefits and blessings does this status bring us?
3. Paul urged the believers in Ephesus to "live a life worthy of the calling" that they had received (page 455, Ephesians 4:1). According to Paul's letter, what does that mean?
4. Paul reminded Timothy of his need to persevere in the work of preparing a future generation of Christian servants using the three illustrations of a soldier, athlete, and farmer (page 457, 2 Timothy 2:1-7). How does each one help Timothy fulfill his call while facing hardships? Which of these traits do all believers need to fulfill their service to the Lord, even today?
5. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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**If you could have God respond to one question today, what would it be?**

## Watch the video - "Session 31: The End of Time" (12 minutes)

[Session 31. The End of Time](#)

## Discuss

1. Why might Christians resist studying this book? According to this chapter, what are the benefits connected to studying Revelation? (pages 459, 469; Revelation 1:3, 22:7)
2. What four-fold reason makes the Lamb worthy to open the scroll and receive praise (page 464, Revelation 5:6-14)?
3. Read Matthew 24:29-44, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, and Titus 2:11-14. How should we live in anticipation of Jesus' return?
4. From what we have learned in this chapter about the great white throne, judgment, and the lake of fire, how should we respond to the person who does not believe that a loving God could ever sentence anyone to hell? (pages 466-467; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8)
5. Find at least three similarities between the original creation (Genesis 1-2) and the new heaven and new earth (pages 466-469; Revelation 21-22). How do these sections of Scripture contribute to our understanding of God's Upper Story and what would we be missing without them?
6. Ask the group "What else?" (*This simple question might present an opportunity for unresolved questions to thoughtfully be discussed by the group.*)

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