In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel’s behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God’s people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ’s work to the world. Empowered by God’s Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. Repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God’s judgment and live joyfully in God’s presence for all eternity. God’s message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>God’s Good World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>God’s Good People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Sin and God’s Good News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Sin and God’s Grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Sin and God’s Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Suffering and God’s Presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>God Makes a Promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>God Foreshadows His Promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>God Provides for His Promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 4</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>God Renews His Promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 11</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>God’s Mercy to a Deceiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>God’s Gift of Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>God’s New Name for Jacob</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For a story to be great, it must include a great beginning. The story of the Bible, which tells the true story of our world, is no exception.

In the Book of Genesis, we see God the Creator in all His majesty and goodness as He spins the world into motion and lavishes His image bearers with love. We have an “inciting incident” that introduces conflict into this good world, as the first humans raise their fists in defiance toward their loving Father and bring havoc into this peaceful paradise. But even here, we have a promise—God will make things right again. God will cover His people’s sins and crush their adversary. The rest of Genesis shows how even though sin spread throughout the world, God remained faithful to His promise to Eve, His promise to Noah, and His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Book of Genesis is a glorious and earthy tale of rebellion and redemption, of sin and salvation, of failings and faith. Here is a book that shows us who we are in our sin and who God is in His grace. May this study lead you to express gratitude for God’s love toward you and then extend His love to everyone who inhabits this world He has promised to restore.
J.D. Greear (unit 1, sessions 1,3-5) is pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, which Outreach Magazine has ranked as one of the fastest-growing churches in the United States. Greear has a PhD in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of many books, including Not God Enough, Gaining by Losing, Jesus Continued…, and Gospel. J.D. lives in Raleigh with his wife, Veronica, and their four children.

Philip Nation (unit 1, session 6) is the pastor of First Baptist Church of Bradenton, Florida. He is the author of the Bible study Pursuing Holiness and the book Habits for Our Holiness. He serves as an assistant professor of leadership at Houston Baptist University. He and his wife, Angie, have two sons. Find out more about Philip at philipnation.net.

John Onwuchekwa (unit 1, session 2; unit 2, sessions 1-3) is the lead pastor of Cornerstone Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He studied at Dallas Theological Seminary and is now completing a doctorate of education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Shawndra, have been married since 2007 and have one daughter.

Chris Pappalardo (unit 1, sessions 1,3-5), PhD (SEBTS), is a researcher, editor, and writer at The Summit Church. He is also the co-author of One Nation Under God: A Christian Hope for American Politics (2015). Chris has the joy of being married to the love of his life, Jenn, and being the father of two eminently adorable littles—Lottie and Teddy.

Mary Jo Sharp (unit 2, session 4; unit 3, sessions 1-3) is an assistant professor of apologetics at Houston Baptist University and the founder and director of Confident Christianity, a non-profit apologetics ministry. She is an itinerant speaker on apologetics throughout North America and has engaged in formal debates on Islam.
**Unit 1, Session 1**

**God’s Good World**

**Summary and Goal**
We start our journey through the story of Scripture at its beginning, where we will see that God created everything by the power of His spoken word and brought order out of chaos. We will also see that God created everything good, but while the universe was good, it was not complete. Yes, God’s creative work was complete, but He positioned humans to take the raw materials He had created and to cultivate, modify, and grow them for His glory. Finally, we will move from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Colossians and see that all of creation is about Jesus, the Word. Jesus is at the center of creation holding it all together, and one day, He will return and restore what sin has destroyed.

**Session Outline**
2. God created everything good (Gen. 1:3-13).
3. God created everything for His Son (Col. 1:15-18).

**Session in a Sentence**
God created everything out of nothing by the Son, through the Son, and for the Son.

**Christ Connection**
Everything was created by the Son, through the Son, and for the Son.

**Missional Application**
Because we have been given new life through the Son of God, we honor Him in our stewardship of His creation as we help others see their purpose in Him.
**Group Time**

**Introduction**

**SAY:** A great beginning of a story or movie is important because it sets the stage for everything else that follows. But good beginnings don’t just get your attention; they should also establish something important for the story, such as introducing key characters or the plot.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members to share briefly some of their answers to the opening question on page 11 in their Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG).

**EXPLAIN:** The story of the Bible begins with these four words—“In the beginning God.” This phrase introduces the main Character and sets the stage for all that follows with these two ideas:

- **God preceded everything and everyone—all of creation owes its existence to Him.** Everything in the universe came from somewhere. If you go back far enough, you reach a time when everything and everyone in existence recedes into nothingness, that is, except God.

  Every story has a beginning. And the story of the Bible begins with four astounding words: “In the beginning God.” God wasn’t just there at the beginning; He was there before the beginning. What this means is that everything and everyone has an origin, that is, except God.

- **God existed before the beginning—even time is one of His creations.** Before the first four words of Genesis 1, before the explosion of stars filled the night sky, before God breathed life into the dust and made man, God alone was there. “In the beginning God…” is really just another way of saying, “Before the beginning, God was there.”

  The depiction of God we see in the Bible takes our simple ideas of religion and blasts them to pieces. It shows us a God who is so fundamental to all of life that even time itself must bow to His will as one of His creations. Here is a God whom we cannot control, cannot contain, and often cannot predict.

**SUMMARIZE:** In this session about the beginning of the story of the Bible, we will see that God created everything, that He created everything good, and that all of creation is about Jesus.
**Point 1: God created everything (Gen. 1:1-2).**

**READ** Genesis 1:1-2 (DDG p. 12).

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

**EXPLAIN:** The creation account in Genesis 1 differs drastically from other ancient creation accounts because God created the world **out of nothing** (refer to this first paragraph in the DDG).

Every world religion (and for that matter, every individual in the world) has an idea of how the universe came to be. In ancient times, creation accounts like the one we find in Genesis 1 were quite common. But this particular creation account is unique in one major way: God created everything **out of nothing**.

**Commentary:** *Creation out of nothing* means God didn’t start with any raw materials when He created. In other ancient creation accounts, the universe comes from something. Often the human race appears to be an accident formed by larger divine forces that couldn’t care less about our creation or our destiny:

- Humankind came from the fleas on a deity’s body, but only after he died.
- A god was sacrificed by other gods, and his dead body transformed into the creation.
- When one god found two lost gods, he shed tears of joy, which became the first men.
- Two deities built the world with their thoughts but took three tries to create satisfying human beings.  

Yet in Genesis, everything starts with one God who alone creates everything out of nothing. He creates with intentionality and ease. The prophet Isaiah records this declaration of God, “I am the LORD, who made everything; who stretched out the heavens by myself; who alone spread out the earth” (Isa. 44:24). God took counsel from no one, not even the angels, whom He also created out of nothing.

**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 12), emphasizing this important implication of the doctrine “creation out of nothing.”

**Creation out of Nothing:** Because God created out of nothing, creation has **meaning** and **purpose** and points us to the Creator.

**Essential Doctrine “Creation out of Nothing”:** The Bible teaches that God created the universe—everything both visible and invisible—out of nothing (sometimes expressed in the Latin phrase, “creation *ex nihilo*”). This means that before God created anything, nothing else existed except God Himself. God alone is eternal; every created thing has a beginning. Therefore, the eternal God rules over all of His creation and He alone is worthy of worship. Denial of this doctrine has implications for God’s sovereignty over and providence in creation. Because God created out of nothing, creation has **meaning** and **purpose** and points us to the Creator.
INTERACT: Ask this question to help group members consider the implications of God creating out of nothing.

How should knowing God as Creator impact how we understand who He is, who we are, and why we should obey Him? (He is sovereign over all He has created, including us; He is all-powerful; we are not God, nor are we self-made people; we should obey God out of fear, respect, and gratitude)

EXPLAIN: Ask a group member to read this second paragraph in the DDG. Then emphasize the surprising nature of how God began and went about His creative work along with its meaning.

It is important that we know God created everything out of nothing, but it also matters that we see how God created everything. When God created everything, He did it by starting with a formless void and then shaping it with His Word. In the same way, our lives are formless and void until God’s Word comes in to bring life and peace, beauty and order.

Commentary: Many are familiar with Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” What comes next in verse 2, however, is a bit of a surprise. God intentionally begins His creation by making a dark, empty mess, and this is significant. By starting with chaos and darkness, God gives us a template for how He works in the world. He’s powerful enough to create in an instant, but more often than not, He uses a process.

INSTRUCT: Ask group members to plot the shape of their life with the scale in their DDG (p. 12) and to consider why they chose their response.

Where would you put the shape of your life on this scale?

Formless and Void

Beautiful and Orderly

SAY: As with all of God’s creation, coming to God and submitting to His Word in faith changes us profoundly and eternally. In many ways, we are changed immediately (status as children of God, alive in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, etc.). But if we expect our relationship with God to transform everything about us all at once, we are at odds with the way God often works.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

God created the universe, including people, for a purpose. Why is this important for us to know and remember? (our lives have meaning; our purpose is discovered only in Him; we should steward His creation well because there is purpose behind it all)
**Point 2: God created everything good (Gen. 1:3-13).**

**READ** Genesis 1:3-13, asking the group to highlight each time God refers to His creation as “good” (DDG p. 13).

3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water.” 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. 8 God called the expanse “sky.” Evening came and then morning: the second day.

9 Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. 12 The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 Evening came and then morning: the third day.

**EXPLAIN:** The author of Genesis wanted his readers to see the goodness of God’s creation (see “good” in vv. 4, 10, 12) because it reflects the goodness of its Creator (refer to this first paragraph in the DDG).

The author of Genesis 1 doesn’t just want us to see the greatness of God’s creation; he wants us to see the goodness of it. The goodness of creation is really just an overflow of God’s goodness because He made it. We see that in the phrase repeated throughout Genesis 1: “God saw that it was good.”

**Commentary:** Though God is great enough that He could stand apart from His creation, He is good enough (in other words, perfectly good) that He does not want to. He is intimately involved with His creation, always seeing what happens in His world and never dismissing it.

**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 13). If needed, address the reality of sin and evil in the world as a corruption of God’s good creation.

**The Goodness of Creation:** Creation is good, in God’s judgment, because He created it for a purpose that it fulfilled—to reflect and display the good character of the Creator. God’s people should affirm and seek to preserve the goodness of God’s creation.
Essential Doctrine “The Goodness of Creation”: In Genesis 1, God repeatedly affirmed that all of His creation was good, even “very good” (1:31). It is good, in God’s judgment, because He created it for a purpose that it fulfilled—to reflect and display the good character of the Creator. Therefore, sin and evil should not be seen as a foundational part of the creation but rather as a corruption of it. While the creation has been marred and distorted as a result of sin, it is still good in the hands of God and serves His purpose of proclaiming His glory in the world. God’s people should affirm and seek to preserve the goodness of God’s creation (Gen. 2:15).

SAY: So in saying that creation is good, we are saying something about its Creator—that God is good. His good character is reflected and displayed in His creation. But we are also saying something more: We are declaring that we have an obligation toward God’s good creation.

EXPLAIN: The goodness of God’s creation means we should strive to preserve this goodness and seek to cultivate this goodness for the glory of God and the good of others.

Commentary: God created a good but incomplete world. Please don’t misinterpret this. The world He made was not wrong in any way. But even had humanity not fallen, God intended for creation to change, develop, and grow, and that at the caring, productive hands of human beings.

God created the world raw, in a good state, so that we could cultivate it for His glory and others’ good. Adam and Eve were only the first people whom God expected to take the raw materials of His creation and cultivate them. It’s a cultural mandate that we all share in.

• Contractors take the raw materials of sand and cement and use them to create buildings.
• Artists take the raw materials of color and music and arrange them into works of art.
• Lawyers and politicians take the raw materials of jurisprudence and legal history and codify them into laws that benefit society.
• Parents take the raw materials of their children and shape them into people of character and integrity.

Everything was created with a specific design, just as the sky, earth, and sea were. But unlike those created things, we human beings are given the charge to cultivate, modify, and grow. Wherever we are, we should ask how we can glorify God by using the good raw materials of His creation for His purposes.

INTERACT: Read the “Voices from the Church” quote, and then ask group members the following question.

Voices from the Church

“Nothing comes from the hand of God that is not intrinsically good. He is the good God who does all things for good.”

—Barnabe Assohoto and Samuel Ngewa

© 2018 LifeWay Christian Resources
Point 3: God created everything for His Son (Col. 1:15-18).

**SAY:** If we read to the end of our Bibles, we see a picture of Jesus as Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end—the Lamb destined to be slaughtered and simultaneously the King of kings and Lord of lords. This Jesus is the center, Lord, and goal of all of creation from the very beginning, an idea Paul conveyed in Colossians 1.

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Colossians 1:15-18, and ask group members to highlight each phrase of this passage that signifies Jesus’ importance with respect to creation (DDG p. 14).

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and by him all things hold together. 18 He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

**EXPLAIN:** From the text, help the group see the centrality of Jesus in creation: firstborn over all creation (v. 15); everything created by Him (v. 16); all things created through Him and for Him (v. 16); He is before all things (v. 17); He holds all things together (v. 17). Then communicate why Jesus should be at the center of our lives:

- **Since all of creation has Jesus as its center, Lord, and goal, we should submit control of our lives to Him.**

  Creation has always been about Jesus. It has only ever been about Jesus. He is the center of it all. He is the Word with God in the beginning, spinning galaxies into existence. And He will be the center when all is said and done. Since Jesus is the center, Lord, and goal of all creation, it only follows that life works best when He controls it.

- **Living contrary to Jesus’ authority in the world carries with it severe consequences.**

  Illustration: Jump off of a building in an attempt to defy the law of gravity and gravity will win. Jump away from the arms of Christ in an attempt to defy His law and the consequences are no less dire.

**INSTRUCT:** Ask groups of 3-4 to list in their DDG (p. 14) some people, places, things, or ideas people potentially put at the center of our lives.

What people, places, things, or ideas might we put at the center of our lives?
EXPLAIN: By virtue of His divinity on display in the creation of all things, Jesus, the true Word of God, is the only force in the universe that keeps creation from unraveling (v. 17).

Commentary: We see an example of this, for instance, in the plagues that God sent to Egypt to pave the way for the exodus (the subject of a future session). Moses brought a word from God directly for Pharaoh, and when Pharaoh rejected it, the plagues began. If we’re not reading closely, we might think of the plagues as random cosmic punishments. But they follow a pattern of creation unraveling (see Ex. 7–10):

• The Nile turns to blood, which destroys the ecosystem.
• Out of the Nile come frogs.
• From the dead frogs come gnats, and then flies.
• From the gnats and flies come disease on both livestock and human beings.
• Then comes de-creation from the heavens: hail, locusts, and darkness.

When God’s Word is rejected, order becomes disorder, light becomes darkness, and goodness becomes terror. Had God simply wanted to flex His muscles for Pharaoh, He could have. He could have ended the stalemate before it even began, but God wasn’t merely demonstrating His power. He was also illustrating what sin and rebellion do. Sin tears creation apart at the seams. For the person, people, and nation, when God is rejected on His throne, chaos rushes back in.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question, which will draw on the personal experiences of those in the group to illustrate the negative effects of sin, which is centering life on anything other than Jesus.

How have you seen sin—centering life on anything other than Jesus—de-create and destroy? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

EXPLAIN: After the discussion from the question, affirm that sin de-creates. Every time. Without exception. And the same is true in our lives. Sin unravels our families, puts darkness into our hearts, and places us in bondage to addictions. But there is hope.

SAY: Before God even created time, He had a plan to put everything back together and to make everything right again through the Son. The Word of God creates, and the Word of God re-creates and restores. This is the story of the Bible: Creation—Fall—Redemption—Restoration. This is the story of Jesus, God’s Son. This is the story that begins with “In the beginning God…”

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 14).

The story of the Bible:

Creation—Fall—Redemption—Restoration.

This is the story of Jesus.

This is the story that begins with “In the beginning God…”

© 2018 LifeWay Christian Resources
My Mission

**EXPLAIN:** God’s loving act of creation is the first big chapter in the story of the Bible, which centers on Jesus. But God’s work in redemption and restoration—the gospel—demonstrates a *crazy* kind of love: love from a good God toward His own creatures who have rejected Him, and this love changes us.

**Commentary:** Here at the beginning of the story of the Bible, we have seen God the Creator at work. All of God’s good creation testifies to its good Creator. But we know that the next big chapter of the story—the fall of humanity—is coming, in part because we live in it. Creation is not as it was meant to be, nor are we. We are sinners who put anything other than God on the throne of our hearts. He lovingly created us, but we don’t even love Him back.

Thankfully the story doesn’t end with the fall. Rather, God’s plan involves redemption and restoration—both accomplished through Jesus, specifically through His sacrificial death and resurrection to save sinners from their sin. Why would the Word of God, through whom all things were created, give His life for us, sinful creatures in His creation? This is a *crazy* kind of love, but that’s the Creator’s love. And those who have witnessed and experienced His love must respond to it.

**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 15), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

---

Because Christians have been given new life through faith in the Son of God, through whom and for whom all things were created, we honor Him in our stewardship of His creation as we help others see their purpose in Him.

- **If you believe God created the world through the Son and for the Son, how will you honor the Son this week?**
- **How can your group work together to steward God’s creation well for His glory and the good of others?**
- **What are some opportunities you have this week to show and tell about our good God and the good news of His Son, Jesus Christ, Creator, Sustainer, and Savior?**

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Father, the Maker of heaven and earth, You made all things good, and You made them through and for Your Son. Help us through Your Spirit to honor Jesus in the way we steward Your creation and proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior so others may find their purpose in Him. Amen.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 16-18), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use *Encourage One Another* (p. 19) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Daily Study devotions in the DDG (pp. 16-18) help group members get into God’s Word for themselves. Encourage One Another (p. 19) helps group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 16-18) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

• Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.

• Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 2 as a part of point 2 in the session: God spoke each and every one of the stars (an estimated two hundred sextillion) into existence with but a few words. And the prophet Isaiah reminds us that He knows the name of each one.

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

• Day 3: “Creation was designed to point us to the greatness of God and to elicit worship toward Him in our hearts and lives.”

• Day 5: “Your life may be a picture of chaos, but if Jesus can create everything good out of nothing, He can surely re-create everything in you.”

Visit www.GospelProject.com/blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the DDG (p. 19) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using The Gospel Project in their groups.

• Encourage group members to see this as a wise stewardship of time for God’s glory and the good of others.

• See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.
Additional Commentary

**Point 1: God created everything (Gen. 1:1-2).**

“[The] opening verse of the Bible, seven words in the Hebrew, establishes seven key truths upon which the rest of the Bible is based. First, God exists. The essential first step in pleasing God is acknowledging his existence (Heb. 11:6). Second, God existed before there was a universe and will exist after the universe perishes (Heb. 1:10-12). Third, God is the main character in the Bible. He is the subject of the first verb in the Bible (in fact, he is the subject of more verbs than any other character) and performs a wider variety of activities than any other being in the Bible. Fourth, as Creator, God has done what no human could ever do; in its active form the Hebrew verb *bara*, meaning ‘to create,’ never has a human subject. Thus *bara* signifies a work that is uniquely God’s. Fifth, God is mysterious; though this particular Hebrew word for God is plural, the verb form of which “God” is the subject is singular. This is perhaps a subtle allusion to God’s Trinitarian nature: He is three divine persons in one divine essence. Sixth, God is the Creator of heaven and earth. He does not just modify preexisting matter but calls matter into being out of nothing (Ps. 33:6,9; Heb. 11:3). Seventh, God is not dependent on the universe, but the universe is totally dependent on God (Heb. 11:3).”

“‘In the beginning’…marks inauguration…but it also anticipates the ‘end’ of the universe and human history. ’Beginning’…is often paired in the Old Testament with its antonym ‘end’…indicating an inclusive period of time (e.g., Job 8:7; 42:12; Eccl. 7:8; Isa. 46:10). The occurrence of ‘beginning’…in 1:1 suggests that it has been selected because of its association with ‘end’…If so, the author has at the outset shown that creation’s ‘beginnings’ were initiated with a future goal intended, an eschatological purpose. Thus the prophets and the apostles could speak of the end in terms of the beginnings, ‘new heavens and new earth’ (Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:1). At the commencement of the creation story the passage declares that God as Sovereign knows and controls the ‘end from the beginning’ (Isa. 46:10).”

**Point 2: God created everything good (Gen. 1:3-13).**

“The Tsanguis people of the Republic of Congo say, *Makinu ma mbuli, uba luata milimbala a matsotsove*, meaning, ‘An authentic dance is done wearing raffia, not weeds.’ Leaves from the raffia palm are the longest in the plant kingdom and are woven into beautiful dancer suits. Only the best will do! Genesis says that the heavens and the earth and all that is in them were created by God. And at every stage of creation, God, seeing what he had done, was pleased with it. At the end of six days of intense work, he ‘looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!’ (Genesis 1:31). God’s work of creation was the best of the best. As his children, we are called to imitate him in our lives, giving the very best of who we are and what we have to God and to his service.”
“The term for God in Genesis (Elohim) is analyzed as a plural noun. It can be translated ‘gods’ as it is in a number of instances (e.g., Gen. 35:2,4; Ex. 18:11; 20:3). The plural is usually described as a plural of majesty to denote totality and majesty but not multiplicity in keeping with the monotheistic view of God for the Israelites (Deut. 6:4). However, the word can also be taken as a term that signifies a plurality (i.e., a Trinity) within a unity of one God. This view is possible from Genesis 1:2,26 and Isaiah 6:8. Other scriptural evidences for the Trinity found in the Old Testament include Psalms 2:7; 45:7; 110:1; Isaiah 48:16. But it is in the New Testament that God most clearly reveals that not only is the Father to be regarded as God (Eph. 1:3) but so also the Son (John 5:18) and the Spirit (John 15:26). Formal proof of the Trinity is not found in Genesis, although the ‘seed’ of the doctrine can be seen here. God does not move from falsehood to truth in the progression of revelation but from what is incomplete to what is more complete.”

**Point 3:** God created everything for His Son (Col. 1:15-18).

“Right after telling the believers that God has redeemed them from their sins, Paul launches into a magnificent passage that is often spoken of as a hymn to Christ (1:15-20). In this hymn he explains who Christ is and what he has done. He presents Christ as the image-bearer of God. God is invisible, but Jesus has made him known… What Paul is trying to do here is make it clear why Christ has the right to be Lord and reign over all creation. It is because in his person and work he reveals the very nature and being of God. He makes God known to us (John 1:18). Verse 17 both reaffirms what is said in 1:15-16 and sets the stage for the next couple of verses in which Paul states that by being the first to be raised from the dead, Christ has established his lordship over the church. By his resurrection, Christ founded the church. He is the head and the church is his body (1:18). With these words, Paul establishes Christ’s superiority over not only the vastness of creation, but also over every small community of believers. Christ is the head, and the only head, of his church.”

“Christ is supreme over creation because he is the Creator. Paul’s mention of ‘thrones… dominions…rulers,’ and ‘authorities’ may refer to four classes of angelic beings (possibly directing human affairs). This may be a corrective against the false teaching promoting the worship of angels (2:18). Thus Paul asserted the supremacy of Christ over all creation because all things were created through him and for him.”

**References**
5. *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International Ltd, 2016), 5.
WHAT’S NEXT?

Fall 2018  In the Beginning
Creation and the Fall (Genesis; Job)
God Establishes a Covenant People (Genesis)
God Grows His Covenant People (Genesis)

Winter 2018-19  Out of Egypt
God Redeems His People (Genesis; Exodus)
God Provides for His People (Exodus)
God Receives Worship from His People (Exodus; Leviticus)

Spring 2019  Into the Promised Land
God Guides His People (Numbers; Deuteronomy)
God Gives His People a Home (Joshua)
God Delivers His People (Judges; Ruth)

Summer 2019  A Kingdom Provided
God Provides a King (1 Samuel)
God Provides a Godly King (1–2 Samuel; Psalms)
God Provides a Wise King (1 Kings; Ecclesiastes)

Fall 2019  A Nation Divided
God Speaks to His People (1–2 Kings)
God Judges the Sin of His People (2 Kings; Prophets)
God Shows Mercy to His People (2 Chronicles; Prophets)

Winter 2019-20  A People Restored
God Sustains His People (Daniel)
God Restores His People (Ezra; Prophets)
God Prepares His People (Nehemiah; Esther; Malachi)

Spring 2020  Jesus the Messiah
Jesus Comes into the World (Luke)
Jesus Begins His Ministry (Gospels)
Jesus Among the People (Gospels)

Summer 2020  Jesus the Servant
Jesus the Healer (Gospels)
Jesus the Teacher (Gospels)
Jesus the Miracle-Worker (Gospels)

Fall 2020  Jesus the Savior
Jesus and the Kingdom (Gospels)
Jesus the Savior (Gospels)
Jesus the Risen King (Gospels)

Winter 2020-21  The Mission Begins
The Holy Spirit Comes (Acts; Epistles)
Fundamentals of the Faith (Acts; Epistles)
New Life in Christ (Acts; Epistles)

Spring 2021  The Church United
Living Like Jesus (Acts; Hebrews)
The Sent Church (Acts; Epistles)
Don’t Forget (Acts; Epistles)

Summer 2021  All Things New
Paul in Prison (Acts; Epistles)
Facing Adversity (Acts; Epistles)
Jesus Will Come Again (Revelation)
Want to go deeper in your study?

As you lead your group in studying *The Gospel Project*, we recommend reading *Read the Bible for Life*. This book will help you guide your group to understand how all of the Bible fits together as one story.

**Pick up this resource at your local LifeWay store or visit LifeWay.com**

---

*$10 off* your $30 purchase including sale and clearance

Bibles, Books, Gifts, Music & More

**Valid July 1-Nov. 30, 2018, only**

$10 pre-tax. One coupon per customer. Coupon must be presented and relinquished at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other discounts, including coupons and LifeWay Rewards. Available on in-stock items only. Cannot be applied to the following: price-matched items, eBooks, myMedia BurnBar CDs, gift cards, church supplies, Bible studies/curriculums, LifeWay-branded products, Living Proof Ministries, Bargain Bags, prior purchases, Willow Tree® products, Specialty Imprints, textbooks, robes, clergy wear, and pre-sell offers. LifeWay’s 800# is not available on Saturdays and Sundays. Valid July 1-Nov. 30, 2018, only.

Valid at LifeWay.com • Stores Nationwide • 800.233.1123

---

Read the Bible for Life
George H. Guthrie
$14.99
PB 031042570

---

© 2018 LifeWay Christian Resources
Coming Up Next
New Studies for Winter 2018-19


CHECK OUT THESE ADDITIONAL STUDY OPTIONS FOR ANY OTHER TIME YOU NEED A BIBLE STUDY.

**The Full Picture of Christmas**
by Cliff Lea

**Engaging Culture in an Ever-Changing World**
by Grant Ethridge

Scripture:
*Genesis 25–50*

General Editor: Chuck Kelley

Create your own Bible studies in minutes. Choose from 1,200+ text-based and video-enhanced studies on more than 400 topics from all 66 books of the Bible. Visit the website for a free trial.

SmallGroup.com

© 2018 LifeWay Christian Resources