

Appendix B

SESSION 0 | INTRODUCTION

1. In your own words, what does “theology” mean?
2. How do you feel about theology? Does it scare you? Why?
3. Have you ever seen an intense fight over something religious?
What was it about?
4. Why is theology important for following Jesus? How does what you believe about God effect the way you live?
(Ro. 10:2-3, Mt. 28:19-20, Ga. 1:6-9)
5. What are some common things people in your school and world say or think about God and religion?
6. What are some of the biggest theological questions you have or people you know have?

7. How can you do theology in a helpful, loving and worshipful way?

(1 Cor. 8:1, Deut. 29:29, Mk. 7:8)

Note: "Worship" is responding rightly to God's revealing of himself. So, "worshipful" theology would be theology that pauses to respond to God, acknowledging who God is and who we are.

8. What are some of your hopes and goals for this study?

This week: Make a list of areas in your life where you have theological questions that you want to explore.

For further study:

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 1

by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God

by Stanley Grenz & Roger E. Olson

Big Idea: Everyone already does theology. Any thought you have about God, anything you say about God, that's theology! The question is, are you doing good theology? Are you thinking and speaking true things about God?

SESSION 1 | HOW CAN I KNOW GOD?

What theological questions did you come up with after last week?

1. Have you ever wished God would speak?
Have you ever felt like you couldn't find God? What was that like?

2. If you had to find God on your own, where would you look?
How would you get started?

3. What does revelation mean?

4. How has God revealed himself to mankind?

5. How do we find and know Christ today?

6. What does hearing from and meeting with God look like in your daily life?

This week: Commit to spending time reading the Bible at least 5 days this week. Write down the answer to one simple question each day, "What did I learn about what God is like?" You may try reading Psalm 1, 19 or 119. You may also look at 2 Timothy chapters 2 and 3.

For Further Study:

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 1

by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

Big Idea: We can only know God if he makes himself known, and he has done this primarily through his Son Jesus and the Scriptures.

SESSION 2 | WHO IS GOD?

Last week's follow up:

What did you learn about God from your time in the Scriptures?

1. How do you recognize someone? What things do you notice in person? On the phone?
2. Do you know anyone who worships a god other than the biblical god? How do you know that you worship the true God?
3. If someone asked you, "What is the Trinity?" how would you answer? (This might be a good one for everyone to take a stab at).
4. What does it mean that there is one God? (Gen. 1:1-5; Deut. 4:39, 6:4)
5. Who are the three persons of the Trinity?
6. How do we know that each person is fully God? (Jn. 1:1-4, 18; Col. 2:9-10; Heb. 1:1; Ac. 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:17-18)

7. How do we know they're not all just the same person showing up in different forms? (Mark 1:9-11)

8. If the one true God is Trinity, how should that truth effect how you worship?

9. How is daily life changed by knowing God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

This Week: Spend time writing out why it matters to know and worship each person of the Trinity. Pray, thanking God for the work of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in your life.

For Further Study:

What is the Trinity?

by R.C. Sproul (free download at <http://www.ligonier.org/store/what-is-the-trinity-paperback/>)

Christian Beliefs

by Wayne Grudem, ch. 3.

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 1

by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

Big Idea: The one true God who created the world is the Triune God of the Bible, one God in three persons: Father, Son and Spirit.

SESSION 3 | WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Last week's follow up:

Can you explain what it means that God is Trinity?

1. When you picture or imagine God, what do imagine God is like? Are there images or ideas that come to mind? Where did those ideas come from?
2. Of the attributes of God discussed, which ones seem most amazing or mind-boggling to you?
3. How does knowing that God is eternal and not bound by time help you to trust him for your future?
4. Is knowing that God is everywhere and with you always encouraging to you or a little scary? Why?
5. We said that God is all-powerful and not limited by anything outside of himself. Where do you doubt this? Where is it difficult to believe this?

6. Have you ever doubted the goodness of God? When and why?

7. What do we do when we want to trust God's power and goodness, but we're having a hard time seeing how our circumstances can work out for good?

8. What questions are still lingering about what God is like?

This Week: Choose one attribute of God discussed and choose a way to worship him for that. Perhaps by journaling about it or an act of obedience and trust.

For Further Study:

The Knowledge of the Holy
by A. W. Tozer

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 1
by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

SESSION 4 | WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD AND ME?

Last week's follow up:

Can you talk about one attribute of God we discussed and how it affects your life?

1. What are some of the biggest problems you see in our world?
Where do you think they come from?
2. Read Romans 1:18-23. What does the word "wrath" mean?
(Leader Note: The word "wrath" means "anger towards wrongdoing.")
3. What brings God's wrath? Does the idea of God being angry bother you? Why or why not?
4. Why is it actually good news that God is angry towards wickedness?
What would it say about God if he were not?
5. What is sin? (Leader Note: Sin describes what we are, what we believe and what we do. Sin is separation from God, lack of trust in God and disobedience to God.)
6. Read James 1:13-15. Where does sin come from?
Where does sin lead?

7. How would you respond to a friend who said their actions had to be right because they felt so right inside?

8. Read Ephesians 4:17-19. What does it mean to be “darkened in understanding,” “separated from the life of God,” and “having lost all sensitivity?”

9. If sin is the biggest problem with the world, how are you part of that problem? Or, in other words, where do you see sin in your life?

10. How does recognizing the sin in your own life help you when dealing with others’ sins?

This Week: Choose one area of need in your life where you see sin at work. Commit to praying each day that God would give you strength and faith to love him more than that sin.

For Further Study:

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 2

by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

Romans 1-3

SESSION 5 | WHAT DID GOD DO ABOUT THE PROBLEM?

Last week's follow up:

Where did you see the effects of sin in your life and the world last week?

1. What was the best news you ever remember hearing?
2. The word "gospel" means good news. Take a moment and try to write down what the "good news" of the Christian faith is in just a few sentences, then share what you wrote with the group.
3. Read Romans 1:1-6. We talked about the words "Cradle, Cross and Crown" in the videos. Can you find those three ideas in this Romans passage that describes the gospel?
4. How does verse 3 describe Jesus as both God and man?
5. Jesus, the Son of God, is called Immanuel, meaning "God with us." Why is it important to you that God became a man and walked with us on earth?

6. Why did Jesus die?

(Leaders, you may have students look up and read the following verses: Mark 10:45; John 3:16; 15:13; Romans 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; 1 John 3:16; Colossians 2:15).

7. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-22. What does “resurrection” mean? According to this passage, why is the resurrection essential to Christian faith?

8. How much does God love you? Have you ever truly believed that Christ died for you? If that’s true, how does it change your life?

This Week: Spend some time responding to God in prayer. Consider reading Mark 8-16 to learn about Christ’s death for you. Pray or journal your thoughts about the “good news” of our faith.

For Further Study:

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 2

by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svingel

50 Reasons Jesus Came to Die

by John Piper

The Cross of Christ

by John Stott

SESSION 6 | HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Last week's follow up:

Take a second attempt at writing down the "good news" of the Christian faith in a few sentences.

1. What's your most memorable Christmas present? Tell the story.
2. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What does grace mean?
3. What do the words "faith" and "salvation" mean?
4. What roles do grace and faith play in your salvation?
5. Read Romans 4:4-5. In what ways have you tried to work and earn your salvation? How do you try to prove to God, others and yourself that you are good enough?
6. If salvation is by grace and not works, then how do you receive God's grace?

7. Have you ever personally responded to God's grace in faith?

8. If our salvation is a gift of grace through faith, then why does the way we live matter?

9. What are some of the benefits of our salvation? (John 3:3; Romans 5:1, 6:6-7; 8:1; 8:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

This Week: How can you receive grace and give grace this week? Share one response to grace with your group and commit to practice it this week.

For Further Study:

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 2

by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

SESSION 7 | HOW DO I LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Last week's follow up:

Did you see any examples of people offering grace this past week?

Did you have the chance to offer grace to someone?

Take a moment to share about it.

1. Think back to one year ago. How are you different now from a year ago?
2. Read Ephesians 4:20-24. What are some of the actions, thoughts and feelings of the "old self" that you need to put away from your life?
3. How can a desire be "deceitful?" Where have you seen your desires deceive you?
4. What would you look like if you "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness?" How would you be different from how you are now?
5. Verse 23 says that you must "be made new in the attitude of your minds." What attitudes or thoughts keep you from changing? What thoughts about God and yourself need to change?

6. Read Acts 2:42-47. What role does church play in your everyday life?

7. What kinds of things was this church in Acts doing? Which of those does your group do well? Which could you grow in?

8. What are you personally doing to help your group be stronger and healthier?

9. At the end of the passage, we are told that this healthy church saw new people coming to faith. Who has come to faith through your group? Who is in your world that could hear about Jesus through your group?

This Week: Identify one area to grow in your walk with Jesus this week. What “deceitful desires” and wrong beliefs hinder growing in this area. Commit to share this with another person and pray for growth.

For Further Study:

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 3
by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

You Can Change by Tim Chester

Life's Healing Choices by John Baker

Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

SESSION 8 | HOW WILL GOD FINISH HIS RESCUE PLAN?

Last week's follow up: How did your growth area go this week?
Would anyone want to share a story of how they sought to grow and how that went?

1. When you think about "the end times," what thoughts, feelings and images come to mind?
2. If you could dream up a perfect world, what would it look like?
3. Read Matthew 24:9-14. What kinds of things does Jesus promise will happen to his followers during this life?
4. What is our responsibility in spite of this persecution, according to verses 12-14?
5. Read Revelation 21:1-8. What does John see in verses 1-2? What is surprising about that?

6. What do the words “heavens,” “earth” and “city” mean? How is a city on earth different than you may have imagined eternity looking like?

7. What is taken away in verse 7?

8. How would you live differently if you truly believed that this was your inheritance, your destiny? How does hope of what Jesus will do in the future give you courage to do what he has given you to do today?

This Week: Spend some time doing some “theological day-dreaming.” Set aside 15 minutes to go somewhere you love being or to do something you really enjoy, and imagine being free to enjoy this forever, without temptation, sadness or death. Thank God that he will restore life on earth as it was meant to be.

For Further Study:

Exploring Christian Theology vol. 3

by Nathan Holsteen and Michael Svigel

Heaven by Randy Alcorn

Surprised by Hope by N. T. Wright