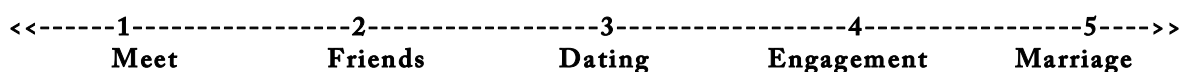


IBD Four/Five Week Study (Expandable into 6-8 weeks)

Purpose: To help us understand the basic truths of the Bible concerning God, Us, Jesus, God's purpose in creating us, eternal life, and how to be right with God.

Begin by getting acquainted with one another. This will loosen the tensions and bring each person into the group as a participant (you might want to have each person share about their background, where they're from, etc.)

1) Start out by sharing that you are going to give everyone the 5 keys to finding the man/woman of their dreams...that this is a fullproof method! (make it playful & interactive...ask which of them are at each stage and what it looks like to move forward, etc)



Definitions of Stages:

- **Meet:** first introductions – don't know anything about them, but are being exposed for first time...maybe even form first impressions
- **Friends:** getting to know one another, what they are about and what their character/purpose is, etc.
- **Dating:** trying to get to know deeper and figure out if this is a person that you would want to be committed to—perhaps for the rest of your life.
- **Engagement:** You know that you want to be committed to this person, you are ready for the commitment and to have your lives joined, but you have not actually made the commitment just yet.
- **Marriage:** The point of commitment when you truly enter into this relationship...in essence, you are saying YES to this person and NO to every other person in the world.

2) Illustrate that obviously marriage is not the end, but in many ways, the beginning of this relationship. Now draw out the parallels between this relationship process and how a relationship with God is very similar. The ultimate goal is to be in a committed relationship with God.

3) We are all on a Spiritual journey: (think through which of the above stages you are with a girl/guy. Think of which stage you are with God? The Goal of this study is to help you move forward from wherever we are----->>

i.e. if you are just meeting God, I hope that you will leave here friends with him or dating him...if you are dating God, I hope that you will get to see that he is worth committing your life to and that you will enter into this "marriage" to him.

Help each person evaluate where they are on the journey

Possibly Share your personal testimony (be brief).(probably only have time to do this if doing the 5 week study.

If doing a 5 week study, you can Pass out blank sheets of paper or index cards and have them write down questions they would like to discuss about spiritual things (no question is unacceptable) as well as their name and which stage they would say that they are at.

Week 1 -- The Character of God

Questions:

Purpose: To break down false stereotypes of God and to create a biblically accurate view of God the Father and his attributes.

Discussion: Tonight we want to think of what God is like.

- Q) What are some views of God (probably inaccurate) which are portrayed in life, TV, church, etc.
- Q) What are some additional characteristics that you think of when you think of God?

Let's see how God describes Himself in the Bible.

- Q) What are some of His characteristics?

#1) Genesis 1:1 – What you want to emphasize: He is Creator, we are creation; He has all rights, and for Him are all things
Illustrate with my car: Mazda knows it best and know how the car should be run.

#2) Exodus 34:6-7 – Lord, Lord –
Compassionate –
Gracious –
Slow to anger –
Abounding in love and faithfulness –

Forgiving wickedness rebellion and sin –
Does not leave the guilty unpunished – (Just) Deut 32:4

Make it a point to recognize (but not to reconcile) the tension among these characteristics. E.G. God's forgiveness and graciousness and that He does not let the guilty go unpunished
The main thing here is to show that God is *Holy & Just but he is also Loving & Gracious.*

Optional additional verses

#3) Isaiah 6:3 – Holy – Separate, unparalleled, different that all, above all, unique
(X3) illustrates the superlative sense of Holy, Holy, Holy.

#4) Romans 6:23 – Cannot and will not tolerate sin

#5) John 3:16 – took drastic measures to demonstrate His love and redeem us yet to maintain His character. (shown in week Three)

Definitely cover this one: Show God's commitment to our best and his wisdom for us!

#6) Jeremiah 29:11 – Plans to prosper and not to harm; Hope and a future

Optional verses:

#7) Zephaniah 3:17 – takes great delight in us

#8) Luke 15:11-32 -- Transcendent view of God is as a loving father

Focus: The Character of the Father. His Joy in the returning of His son. The longing demonstrated as He runs to the son, gives the ring and robe, throws a party. That which was lost is found.

Holy, just, loving, intentional, joyful and relational

Set the stage for future weeks for what you are going to talk about.

If doing a 4 week study, you can Pass out blank sheets of paper or index cards and have them write down questions they would like to discuss about spiritual things (no question is unacceptable) as well as their name and which stage they would say that they are at.

Week 2 – The Nature of Man

Questions:

Review: The Character of God from Week 1's Study as well as the 5 relationship stages...jog their memory

Purpose: To understand the sinfulness of man universally and to see that we are radically corrupt.
(Totally Depraved spiritually)

Discussion:

Last week we talked about God...this week we are going to see what God says about us..let's begin with a question:

Q) Is Man inherently good or evil? What is in our nature? Nature VS Nurture.

Illustrate: Do you have to teach an infant to manipulate? To Lie? To show anger? Etc.

Pick up a newspaper any day...it's everywhere. (collect newspaper articles from previous week and read through them)

Before we look at our present state of fallen humanity, How did God create us?

See in creation of Man in Genesis 1:26-27. What does it mean that we were created in God's image? Define image and the mirror reflection that we are meant to be.

But Man fell. Thus:

#1) Genesis 6:5—Man described as wicked, with “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Also, 8:21

Q) Is this a drastic statement? Why would God say something as harsh as this?

#2) Jeremiah 17:9—The description of the heart, “deceitful above all, and beyond cure.”

Q) Again, this is a pretty bold statement...that our hearts are deceptive and beyond cure” let’s examine our lives and see if these are reasonable statements:

To do this, let’s think of some measure or goodness or some standard by which to assess our “goodness” or lack thereof. What could be a possible measuring stick that God could use to make such a determination?

Hint: regardless of what measuring stick they come up with, help them see that they will never meet any standard. For example, if they say “the golden rule” ask them if they live up to it?

Ultimately, you want to get them to say the 10 commandments. See if anyone can list them by memory...make it fun.

PROVE IT

Ask them if this was a 10 question test, what they would think that their score would be? Expect most people to say between 40-70%. But then say let’s look at a couple of them to see how we will be graded.

#3) Take the Ten Commandment test: How do you do with each of them? Exodus 20:1-17

How doing? How about when Jesus elaborates the meaning of each in Matthew 5:17-48

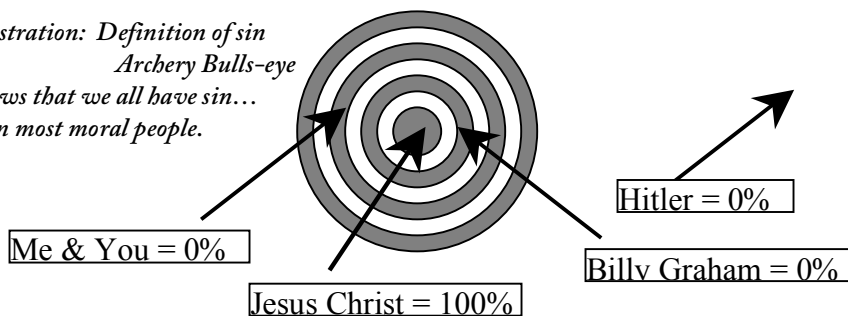
- Look at Adultery? Think we are OK until we see Jesus’s standard.
- Murder? Think that we are OK until we see Jesus’s standard
- *Rest of the 10 commandments would result in the same thing...in reality we would scored a 0%*

Illustration: What if we (downloaded from your brain) showed a video with every thought, every action that you had ever done or dreamed (in public & private) before a crowd of all of your friends and family at the next ½time show of a football game with 50,000 people watching you on the jumbotron. What would you do? Probably never show your face in Manhattan again...why? BC you know what you have thought and done and you, if you are honest, know that deep down you are not really as good as you (and others) think that you are.

#4) Universality: Romans 3:23—All have sinned and fall short of Glory of God.

#5) Universality: Isaiah 53:6—We all have gone away.

*Illustration: Definition of sin
Archery Bulls-eye
Shows that we all have sin...
even most moral people.*



We define ethics by what everybody else does. If normal or common then it’s OK...but if everyone does it, does not make it right...judge good and evil by the law of God and not the law of common humanity.

#6) Consequence: Romans 6:23—Wages of sin is death.

OPTIONAL: #7) Consequence: Ezekiel 18:4—God owns souls and declares that the soul that sins will die.

#8) Consequence: Isaiah 59:2—Our sins have separated us from God.

OPTIONAL: *Is this morally conditional? Isaiah 64:6*

Luke 15: -- Look at Older Son as well as Younger Son...both alienated from father relationally.

Luke 18:18-23 – Religious leader, obeyed the commandments, not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven

OPTIONAL: *Sin = Lack of conformity unto and breaking of the Law of God. All equals an act of cosmic treason and a marring*

and disfiguring of the character of God. Thus we deserve the death penalty and we know it and we do it anyway and we mock at it and approve at those who do it. See Rom. 1. We find strength in numbers.

OPTIONAL: Brevity and Vanity of Life: James 4:13-14, Eccl. 12:8,13,14

Reality of Judgment: Hebrews 9:27

Set Stage For Next Week: Need good news.

Week 3 – Purpose of Jesus and the Cross

Questions:

Review: The character of God and the sinfulness of man's hearts and subsequent alienation towards God.

Once again bring up the tension which exists between God's Justice and His forgiveness, especially in the midst of our sinfulness which we saw last week.

Purpose: To see the purpose of the life and death of Jesus and God's genius in reconciling us to Himself and the manifesting of His full character at the cross of Christ.

Start with an illustration to Paint our Predicament/Condition out visually: Us and God separated by Sin Use 3 people, each one representing God, Man, & Sin. Put "Sin" in between God and Man showing the separation that this causes. Make this fun and engaging. We will come back to this illustration later.

1st Discussion question: Q) As you understand him, Who is Jesus? What was His purpose in life? Why did He Come?

Jesus speaks as to His purpose:

#1) Luke 19:10: To Seek and Save the lost.

#2) Mark 10:45: To serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

#3) Isaiah 53:4-6: Our sins were placed upon Him.

Optional: Read this quote: "Not one recognized religious leader, not Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc. has ever claimed to be God: that is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only leader who claimed He was the exclusive way to God and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is God."

The Work of the Cross and our Sins:

#4) I Peter 3:18: Ask this Q) According to this passage, What were the two things that Jesus died for?

1)

2)

Now come back to the 3 person illustration. Now bring in a 4th person, Jesus and physically illustrate how he #1) died for sins (physically remove the barrier) and #2) Brings us to God (Physically reconciles us and God back into relationship with each other)

So what Happened to our sins?

#5) I Peter 2:24: Did our sins just disappear? (we want them to see that the sins were definitely punished, thus, God is upholding his character that we saw week #1) "I will not leave the guilty unpunished..." God punishes sin—always!

What does it mean that we might die to sin and live for righteousness?

#6) II Corinthians 5:21: The Great Exchange: Illustrate with some item and your two hands—this shows How Jesus takes our sinfulness and we receive his perfection (explain that this is essentially what righteousness means)

What Do We Receive?

What Does Jesus Receive?

OPTIONAL: #5) Acts 4:12: Is there any other avenue to be right with God? Also John 14:6

Conclusion:

How does the Cross of Christ satisfy the Justice/Holiness of God and Love/Forgiveness of God?

Optional Illustration: Courtroom scenario:

Optional Illustration: Lord, Liar, Lunatic

Week 4: How Do We Respond To This Good News (Gospel)

Questions:

Review: The character of God; emphasizing the various attributes including their apparent lack of compatibility. Discuss the extent of our sinfulness and the subsequent alienation from God. Discuss the purpose of Jesus and His Work on the cross and how the fullness of God's character was displayed on the cross.

Purpose: To reason and persuade from the scriptures man's need to repent of their sin and to place their faith in Jesus alone as their Lord, that they might be saved.

Discussion: We have looked at the Nature of God, our Sinfulness and the work of Jesus on the Cross. This would be a good time to use the 3/4 person illustration to illustrate all of the Gospel points.

FACT: The Gospel demands a response. Just because Jesus Life and Death make this possible, this does not automatically make this happen. The bible teaches us that we have a response to make. This is our focus this last study.

Q) What kind of response do you think that God wants us to make? How do we enter into this? How do we enter into this salvation?

Expect answers including works, praying a prayer, faith, born again, etc.

Jesus describes a life of following Him to His disciples:

#1) Mark 8:35-38:

What are the elements to following Jesus: *Have them identify the different elements and explain what each of them actually mean.*

- In defining deny self—this is a good place to use the car-seat illustration and describe how god wants to be in the driver's seat of our life...not in the backseat, riding shotgun, etc. Show that this involves trust for him to have control of our lives.
- In losing one's life for Jesus's sake and the Gospel—use the monkey and the peanuts illustration: Ask me about this if you are not familiar with it—it can be referred to through the study as an example of what repentance and surrender and faith look like.

#2) Mark 1:15 Q) what are the 2 things that Jesus says we are to do?

Define Repent: *Illustrate that this is an English military term that means to do a 180, or an about face...illustrate this with someone marching and actually doing an about face.*

Define Believe: *Illustrate that this involves trust and action: Use the illustration of a bomb. If I put one in this room and it is going to explode in 1 minute, if you really believed me, what would happen? Of course if people really believed that this was true, they would run out of the room...thus their belief would result in a corresponding action to that belief. You cannot say that you believe me and still sit in this room...not a true belief.*

Illustrate a life of following Jesus of repenting and believing.

OPTIONAL: Ask what would be holding anyone back from turning from their sins and trusting in Jesus with their lives.

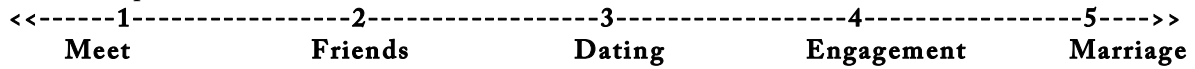
Common hesitations:

1. "I'm afraid I couldn't stick with it" *1 Cor. 5:17* - You can't stick with it, but God gives you the power to change when you step out on faith. (Redemption)
2. "I'm not ready yet" *Eph. 2:8-9* - You can never be good enough or clean enough to ask Christ to forgive you. It is a gift.
3. "I'm growing into it" *John 3:1-8* - The act of becoming a Christian is an event, not a process.

OPTIONAL: #3) Necessity of New Creation: 2 Corinthians 5:17 & Galatians 6:15

(OPTIONAL) Testimony: if not done week 1

Repeat the relationship illustration from week one!



- Parallel #5 and marriage to repenting and believing and solely surrendering one's life to relationship as one with the other. Saying "Yes" to that one and saying "No" to all the rest. Pray with them and give them a chance to respond.
- Also, Have them fill out 3x5 cards again, with their name, where they are in 1-5, and what is holding them back (If anything) from making that commitment to following (marry) Christ?
- Offer to meet with them individually to help them learn more. (This will give you a chance to share the bridge)
- Offer to continue IBD, if they are interested – hopefully they will be!!!