



Essentials

God. Gospel. Church. Mission.

Rediscovering the essentials of our faith and how they impact our daily lives.





Essentials

This book belongs to

**How to Get
the Most
Out of
this Guide**





Open with Your Bible

We believe that the Bible is the ultimate guide to knowing God. The Bible can be difficult to read and study at the same time. Where do you begin? How do we understand difficult passages? Are these verses literal or figurative? These are all questions we've asked when reading the Bible. Our goal in creating this study guide is to provide a tool that helps us read the Bible well. Open your Bible as you use this guide. Read and re-read the suggested verses. And follow along in your Bible as we preach through this series to keep us accountable from teaching heresy!



Be Engaged in Church

Every week, we gather together and open our Bibles because the Bible is ALL ABOUT JESUS. The Bible is about Jesus, AND it's living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12)! In other words, when the Bible speaks, God speaks! And don't you want to write it down if God is speaking? This study guide is divided into four sections based on the four essentials of the faith that we'll be looking at: God, Gospel, Church, & Mission. Each section has a space for Sermon Notes. We encourage you to bring this guide and a pen to church and write down what sticks out!



Discuss in Community

Community is essential in following Jesus. At the end of each section is a "Digging Deeper" page that we encourage you to fill out and discuss with other people from the church. Build your own small group, open up your journal, grab a Bible, and journey through this together. There's no formal way to do it! You can meet at your house, the church, a coffee shop, a restaurant, the beach, or wherever you like to hang out. The important thing is that we're doing this with others.



God



“The advantage of believing in the Trinity is not that we get an A from God for knowing the right answer. The advantage of believing in the Trinity is that we then live as if the Trinity is real, as if the cosmos around us is actually beyond all else a community of unspeakably magnificent personal beings of boundless love, knowledge, and power.”

Dallas Willard



Diving Deeper



Read *John 1:1-16*

Pastor Sam & Tyler defined who God is and who God isn't. What was helpful from this? Did you learn anything new?

If God is Father, Spirit, and Son, then why do we spend so much time talking about Jesus?

The Bible shows us that God is eternally relational. What does this mean for us in times when we feel alone?

2 Peter 3:18, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" How are you growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus?

Additional Reading

Exodus 34:6-7, Hebrews 1:1-4

Colossians 1:15-17

Additional Resources

Arguments for the Existence of God
and Trinitarian Heresies



The Cosmological Argument



Scan the QR code to watch geophysicist, Stephen Meyer, talk about the origin of the universe to prove God exists.

The Argument

Everything that has a beginning has a cause and effect. The universe has a beginning therefore the universe has a cause. This argument focuses on God's power.

Support for the Cosmological Argument

Did you know that only a few decades ago the atheistic worldview taught that matter was eternal and that there was no beginning? Yet science has proven that there is a beginning known as the Big Bang. The mathematical probability of a Big Bang turning non-life to the simplest form of life has been tested by mathematicians and physicists and shows that even given the theory of billions of years, the probability is still not there.

Apologist Dr. Frank Turek says this, *"If current Big Bang cosmology is correct (and the evidence is very good that it is) then the entire space-time universe exploded into being out of nothing. Therefore, the Cause of the universe would seem to have these attributes:*

- *spaceless because it created space*
- *timeless because it created time*
- *immaterial because it created matter*
- *powerful because it created out of nothing*
- *intelligent because the creation event and the universe was precisely designed*
- *personal because it made a choice to convert a state of nothing into something (impersonal forces don't make choices).*

All of these attributes are the same attributes of the God of the Bible."

Allan Sandage was a leading astronomer at the turn of the century who discovered the Hubble constant and the age of the universe. Sandage claims:

"I don't know what to call myself. If you believe anything of the hard science of cosmology, there was an event that happened that can be age-dated back in the past.. Just the very fact that science [can make] that statement, that cosmology can understand the universe at a much earlier state and it did not emerge from a state that was fundamentally different. Now that's an act of creation. Within the realm of science one cannot say any more detail about that creation than the First Book of Genesis."

The cosmological argument is an indication of God's Power.



Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

The Teleological Argument



Scan the QR code to watch Dr. John Lennox use both the teleological and cosmological argument to prove God exists.

The Argument

The logic of the Teleological Argument goes like this: Design implies a designer. The universe manifests a design; therefore, the universe has a designer. The conclusion of this argument points us to an intelligent God.

Support for the Teleological Argument

The word telos in Greek means end, goal, or purpose. It's a concept that suggests everything in our universe is intricately designed with a specific purpose and function. The fine-tuning of the universe, a phenomenon that even secular scientists' discoveries and conclusions support, is a testament to this. It's a marvel that should inspire awe and wonder in all of us.

Stephen Hawking, the famous atheist, wrote in his book *A Brief History of Time* that: *"If the overall density of the universe were changed by even .000000000001 percent, no stars or galaxies could be formed. If the rate of the expansion one second after the Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million million, the universe would have collapsed before it reached its present size."*

In his book *Is Atheism Dead*, Metaxas zooms in from the fine-tuning of the universe to the fine-tuning of the planet. Metaxas argues, *"So seawater absorbs almost all of the energy from the sun, except for that impossibly tiny part of the spectrum we call sunlight. That it lets pass through. And that sunlight hits the cyanobacteria in the water, and those cyanobacteria just happen to be able to convert that sunlight via photosynthesis into food. What scientists marvel at more than we can properly express, however, is that these two bizarre "peaks" in sunlight and seawater have no scientific reason whatsoever to match up. They have nothing to do with each other. They are each absurdly small points in the spectrum - tinier than we can possibly imagine- and yet for no reason at all that makes the lightest sense, they happen to coincide perfectly."*

The discoveries are incredible as you zoom in even further, from the universe to the planet to the fine-tuning of the body. Nanochemist James Tour, named the Top Scientist of the Year in 2013, writes a lot about the complexities of even the most basic living cells.

Dr. Tour, the renowned nanochemist, sheds light on the mind-boggling complexity of even the most basic living cells. He reveals that the protein interactions in a single yeast cell are beyond our comprehension, with a staggering 10 to the 79 billion combinations. These are not just numbers, but a testament to the unfathomable intricacies of life that should inspire profound admiration.



Psalm 138:14

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

The Moral Argument



Scan the QR code to watch the late pastor and theologian, R. C. Sproul, give an explanation for the moral argument.

The Argument

The logic for this argument goes like this: Every human culture has some moral standard. Moral standards or laws imply a moral lawgiver. If there is a moral law, then there is a moral lawgiver.

Support for the Moral Argument

This argument focuses on the Conscience of man, an inner awareness of good vs evil. Theologians are joined by historians, psychologists, and sociologists in observing this global phenomenon. According to the Bible, we are made in the image of God. Romans 2:15 claims that God has written His law on man's heart. As a result, no one is blameless before God. Woven into the fabric of our being is a basic idea of right and wrong.

In Rebecca McLaughlin's book, *10 Questions Every Teen needs to Answer*, her chapter titled, "Can't We Just be Good without God," says: *"The basic moral standards by which most of us judge right and wrong today - whether Christian or atheist - ultimately came from Christianity. If we take that foundation away, we are left with no right or wrong, no evil and no good. In the end, our lives and actions don't matter at all"*

Ellio Turiel and Charles Helwig, two secular psychology professors from UC Berkeley, came to the same conclusion, *"Some of the most important and fundamental moral principles seem to be universally held by all people in all cultures and do not change over time. It has been found that starting at about age 10, children in most cultures come to a belief about harm-based morality—that harming others, either physically or by violating their rights, is wrong (Helwig & Turiel, 2002)."*

C.S. Lewis used the moral argument throughout his essays and novels. Lewis states:

"But the most remarkable thing is this. Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining 'It's not fair' before you can say Jack Robinson. A nation may say treaties do not matter, but then, next minute, they spoil their case by saying that the particular treaty they want to break was an unfair one. But if treaties do not matter, and if there is no such thing as Right and Wrong—in other words, if there is no Law of Nature—what is the difference between a fair treaty and an unfair one? Have they not let the cat out of the bag and shown that, whatever they say, they really know the Law of Nature just like anyone else? It seems, then, we are forced to believe in a real Right and Wrong."



Romans 2:15

They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

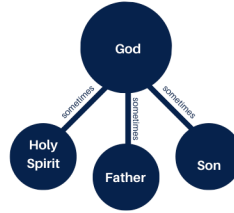
Heresies & The Trinity



Scan the QR code to watch a video on the Trinity.

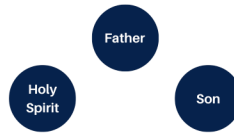
Modulism

Modulism claims God is one, who appears in three modes. A common example of modulism is comparing God to water. When we describe water as sometimes liquid, sometimes solid (ice), and sometimes gas (vapor), many suggest that God is sometimes the Father, sometimes the Son, and sometimes the Holy Spirit. This is heretical.



Tritheism

Tritheism claims that the Trinity is three separate gods. Tritheists believe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three independent gods who are individually self-existing. This is heretical.



Arianism

Arianism denies the divinity of Jesus and believes that Jesus was created by the Father. Therefore, Jesus is not co-eternal or self-existing. Forms of Arianism continue today and are prevalent in cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism. Another form is expressed in the teachings that Jesus became God during his earthly ministry. These are all heresy.



Partialism

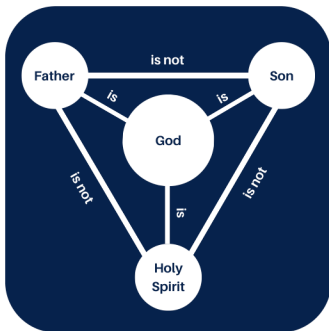
Partialism divides God into three parts: the Father is 1/3 God, the Spirit is 1/3 God, and the Son is 1/3 God. This heresy requires each person of the Trinity to come together to form God.



Orthodox View of the Trinity

The Bible reveals a trinitarian view of God. The Trinity is a doctrine of who God is. God is Triune or three in one. The Bible presents God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Dr. James White defines the doctrine of the Trinity this way: *"Within one Being that is God, there exist eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."*

One of the most helpful ways to understand the Trinity is to distinguish between a being and a person. A being is that which makes you *what* you are. While a person is that which makes you *who* you are. White clarifies, *"When speaking about the Trinity, we are talking about one what and three who's. The one what is the Being or essence of God; the three who's are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."*





God is

Gracious

Abounding in Faithfulness

Abounding in Steadfast Love

Merciful

Slow to Anger

Forgiving iniquity



Exodus 34:6-7

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."



Gospel



“The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us.”

C.S. Lewis



Diving Deeper



Read

1 Cor 15:1-26

If someone asked you, "What is the Gospel?" what would you say?

Pastor Sam explained that the Gospel is good news NOT good advice. What's the difference? Why is this important?

Oftentimes the Gospel is such good news that it can be hard to believe. Are there moments in your life where you have doubted the Gospel? Why?

Tim Keller said, "the gospel is not just the ABCs of Christianity, but it is the A-Z." What does this mean? How does the Gospel impact your day to day life?

Additional Reading

Romans 1:16-17, John 3:16-21

Ephesians 2:1-10

the Gospel is the story of the Bible



Additional Resources

Gospel Terms & Defintions



Gospel Terms



There are many different aspects of our salvation. Each one is like knowing a different antidote for the various issues of life; each word unfolds the beautiful reality of what Jesus offers us.

Salvation → *Deliverance, Preservation, Peace*

The root word means safe. Depending on the context of the verse, the idea of salvation carries the connotation of: deliverance, preservation, salvation, peace. The word "saved" alone is found 57 times in the New Testament. We are saved *from* sin, death, and hell, and saved *to* God!

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 2:21

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

Ephesians 2:8

Redemption → *To Pay a Ransom*

A ransom is paying a price as a release from captivity. Jesus' blood is a ransom given to redeem us from the bondage of sin and death. The book of Ruth is a powerful Old Testament picture of this reality. Boaz acts as a kinsman redeemer, purchasing Ruth as a bride.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Ephesians 1:7

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:14

Regeneration → *Rebirth*

This isn't just a fresh start; it's a complete transformation! Being born again is the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We cannot force ourselves to be born spiritually, just as babies cannot force themselves to be born physically.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Titus 3:5

Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

1 Peter 1:23

Reconciliation → *To Bring Together*

The Bible story shows us that we were separated from the Father. Through Jesus, we are restored in relationship with Him! We weren't saved from sin to figure out the rest on our own. We belong to Him. Not only has He reconciled us to the Father, but He is also reconciling the world to Himself.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

2 Corinthians 5:18

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Romans 5:10

Justification → Declared righteous

There are many debates regarding the extent of our justification in Jesus. At the very least, everyone agrees that to be justified is to be freed from the penalty of sin. Past, present, and future sin is forgiven and forgotten as we are declared righteous by the blood of Jesus.



For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Romans 3:28

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

Sanctification → To be set apart

Although we have been saved from the penalty of sin, every follower of Jesus struggles with the power of sin. The process of Jesus' sanctification is the continual process of Jesus saving us from the power of sin in our daily lives. Through this process of sanctification, we are set apart from sin to Jesus.

And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

John 17:9

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Hebrews 10:14

Glorification → Fully & Finally Saved

Glorification is the moment when we are fully saved from the presence of sin. This happens when we meet Jesus face to face in heaven.

And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:17

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:30

Propitiation

A propitiation is a sacrifice given to remove wrath. God's wrath toward sin was appeased through the sacrifice of Jesus as He became a substitute for our sin.

And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2

Atonement

The penal substitutionary view of the atonement holds that the most fundamental event of the atonement is that Jesus Christ took the full punishment that we deserved for our sins as a substitute in our place, and that all other benefits or results of the atonement find their anchor in this truth.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21



Church



“Our relationship with each other is the criterion the world uses to judge whether our message is truthful - Christian community is the final apologetic.”

Francis Schaeffer



Diving Deeper



Read

1 Cor 12:12-30

The Church isn't a building but a people. Why is the Church gathering so essential?

Pastor Sam showed us how the Church is referred to as a body with many members. Why is this? How do you find your place in the body of Christ?

Hebrews 10:25 says, "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another." Reflect on a time where you've been encouraged by the Church.

The Church is the most diverse people group in the world. What is the unity that we share? Take a moment to pray for your local Church and the global Church.

Additional Reading

Acts 2:42-47, 1 Peter 2:4-5

Ephesians 4:1-16



the Church is Essential because

The Church is where...



People Meet God



For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

2 Corinthians 6:16

People Find Truth



If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:15

People Find Grace



There is therefore now no condemnation for those [the Church] who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

People Find Hope



And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25



Mission



*"Let everything we say and do
bring glory to God and good
to this Coast."*

-Us



Diving Deeper



Read *Matthew 28:16-20*

To make disciples we need to be disciples. What makes someone a disciple?

Jesus summarizes all of the commandments in the Bible by calling us to love God and love others. Why is this so difficult?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in living a life on mission?

What changes need to be made in your life to further God's mission to live for His glory and the good of the Coast?

Additional Reading

Acts 1:8, Matthew 22:36-40

Galatians 5:22-23

Share Your Story!

Your story is a Jesus story. An easy way to share Jesus is to share our story with others. Don't know where to start? Fill out this guide and share Jesus!

My Background | What did you believe? What were you living for? Highlight the place where Jesus found you!

How you met Jesus | Did a friend share a Bible verse with you? Did you meet Jesus at Church? How did Jesus reveal Himself to you?

Who is Jesus to you now? | When we share our story, we want the focus to be on how great Jesus is!

Explain who you are now as a result of Jesus in your life! | A Jesus story is always a transformation story. When we meet Jesus, He begins to do a work in us. Share about this!





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