

GROWTH GROUP
STUDY GUIDE

SOVEREIGN GOD

Creator
Sustainer
Saviour
Sovereignty and Suffering
Leader

NAME:

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INTRODUCTION

MY GOD IS SO BIG

A child can sing it. Every Christian life is built upon it.

*My God is so big, so strong and so mighty,
there's nothing my God cannot do.*

When we say 'my God is sovereign' it means nothing and nobody can stop any purpose that God intends to bring about. It is saying: He is big. He is mighty. He is strong. And He is *my God*—I am His child.

This means God's sovereignty is not a cold, mechanical control. It is the loving, wise and just rule of a heavenly Father whose plans are never hindered, never thwarted, and will one day reach their perfect goal: His people gathered around His Son in the new creation.

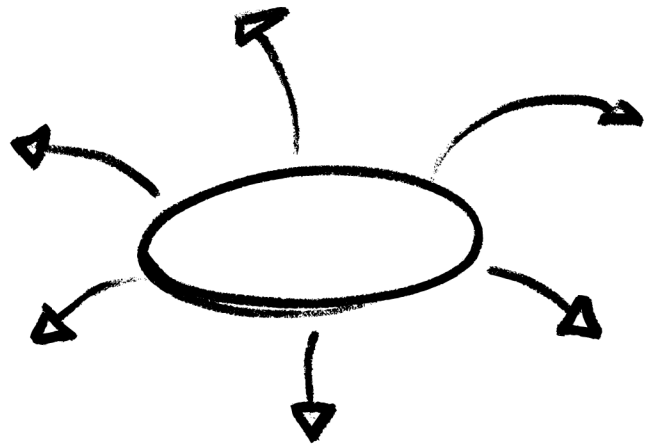
This is the foundation of our hope, the anchor of our comfort, and the fuel of our courage: our God is sovereign.

STUDY 1

SOVEREIGN CREATOR

*SHARE: WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN MOST STRUCK BY
GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER CREATION?*

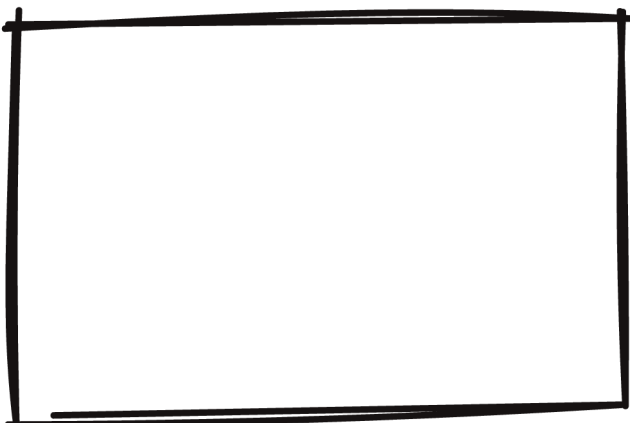
*What questions do you
have about God's sovereignty
over creation...?*



Acts 17:22-31

In this passage, Paul introduces the Athenians to the true creator God.

Rewrite vv. 24-27 in your own words:



*What do these verses teach
us about what God is like
and is not like?*

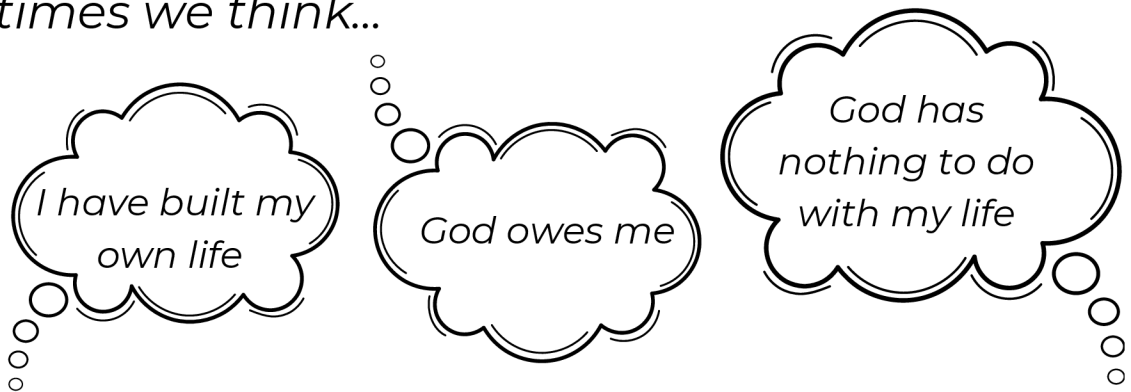


In v. 28, what does Paul emphasise about each person's relationship to God? (how does Jesus show this intimacy more fully?)

What are the implications of vv. 27-31 for all people?

According to vv. 30-31, what changed when Jesus rose from the dead?

Sometimes we think...



How does this passage challenge these ideas?
(Split in pairs, pick one and discuss)

LETTING IT SINK IN...

If God really has determined your life and place so that you might seek and live in relationship with him how might that change your daily decisions?

Fill in the blanks. If God is the sovereign creator then...

- God was sovereign when _____ happened in my life
- God will still be sovereign if _____ happens in my life.

PRAY:

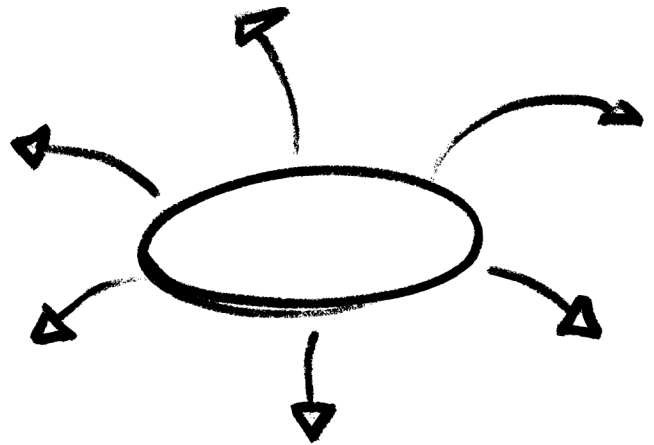
Thank God for his care. Repent of living independently of him.

STUDY 2

SOVEREIGN SUSTAINER

SHARE: WHEN HAVE YOU SEEN GOD ANSWER PRAYERS IN A BIG WAY?

What questions do you have about how God's sovereignty fits with our prayers...?



LUKE 12:13-40

In this passage, a man approaches Jesus with a question about inheritance. Jesus responds with a deeper question - do you trust God to provide? *Read the passage.*

Jot down repeated words in 13-40:

In 16-21, what words/phrases show the man is seeking 'soul-security' without God?

What is Jesus teaching through the birds and flowers in vv. 22-34?



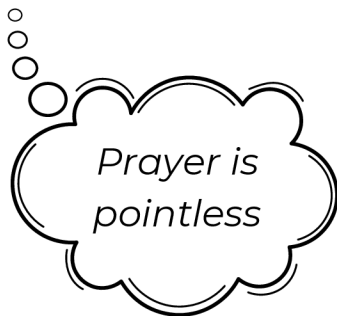
What should disciples seek? What should they not seek?

How does Jesus' promise of the kingdom point forward to his death and resurrection?

How are 13-21 and 22-34 connected? Pick a verse from each that shows this link.

Flick back to Luke 11:1-13. How does this prayer model 'seeking God's kingdom'? Does God want to answer our prayers?

Sometimes we think...



How does this passage challenge these ideas?

LETTING IT SINK IN...

How would your prayer life change if you truly trusted God as sustainer?

Fill in the blanks. If God is the sovereign sustainer then...

- God was sovereign when _____ happened in the world
- God is sovereign over _____ happening the world.

PRAY:

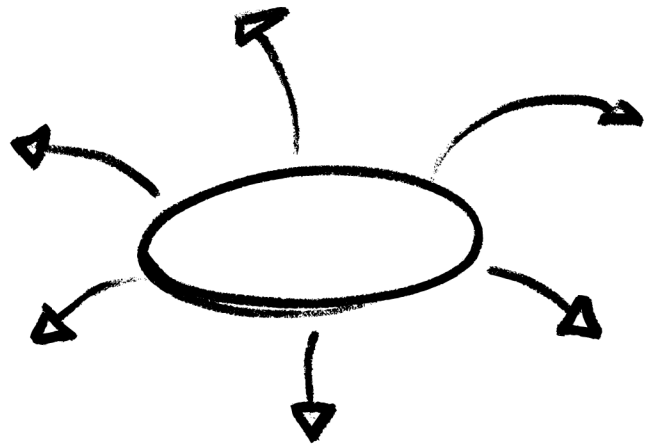
Ask God to help you seek his kingdom. Thank him for providing all we need to get safe to heaven.

STUDY 3

SOVEREIGN SAVIOUR

SHARE A TIME WHEN GOD USED HIS PEOPLE AND HIS WORD TO GROW YOUR FAITH.

What questions do you have about God's sovereignty over salvation...?



ROMANS 8:30-9:33

In Romans, we see humanity has utterly rejected God (ch 1-3). But God rescues his people through Christ's death, by grace, received by faith (ch 3-7).

In 8:30, Paul says:

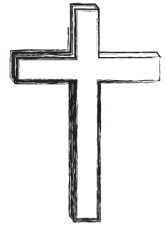
"Those whom he predestined, he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified, he also glorified"

From this verse what is the extent of God's involvement in our salvation?



Read Romans 8:31-9:5.

- Who is the 'us' in 8:31-39 ?
- Why can they be so confident they won't be condemned?
- How does Paul feel about Israel's unbelief in 9:1-5?

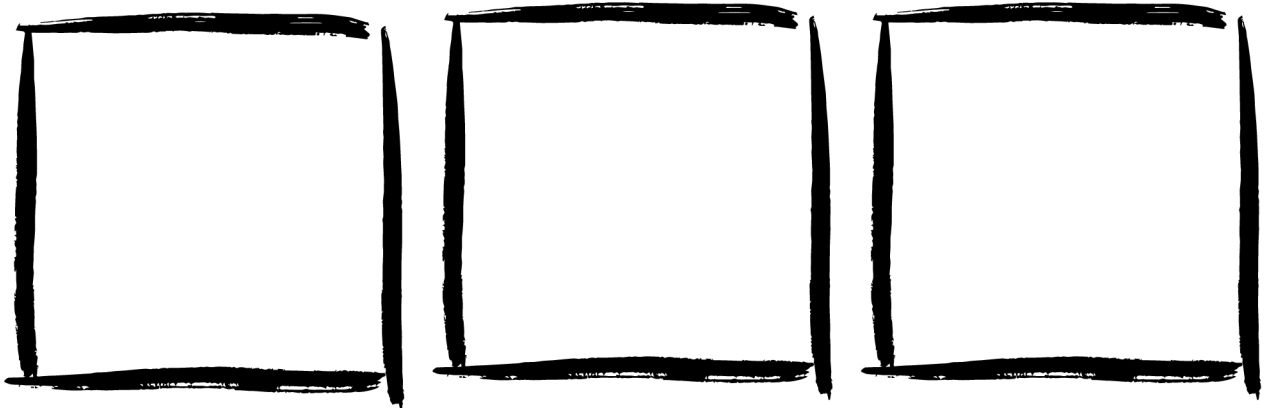


The rest of ch 9 explores questions about God's salvation. Split into groups and summarise what question is being addressed and what answer is given.

vv. 6-13:

vv. 14-18

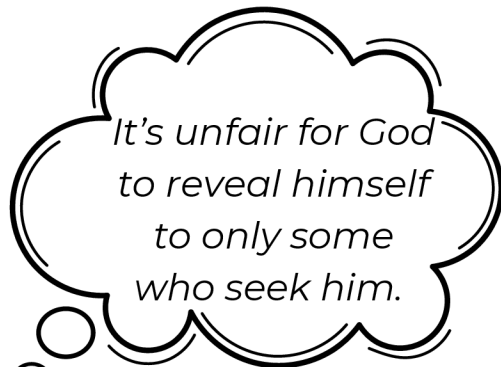
vv. 19-29



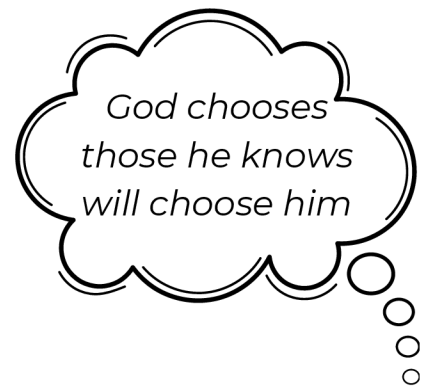
And what does God's sovereignty look like in human experience...

1. from 9:30-33, why didn't Israel attain righteousness?
2. read Romans 10:9-15, how does God bring people to faith?

Sometimes we think...



How do the passages we've looked at challenge these ideas? (Split up, pick one and discuss)



LETTING IT SINK IN...

If God is the sovereign saviour then...

- God was sovereign when _____happened.
- God will still be sovereign if _____happens.

Imagine God were not sovereign in salvation. What difference would this make?

How does God's sovereignty fuel - not hinder - evangelism?

'When God sends us to evangelise, he sends us to act as vital links in the chain of his purpose for the salvation of his elect' J I Packer

”

PRAY:

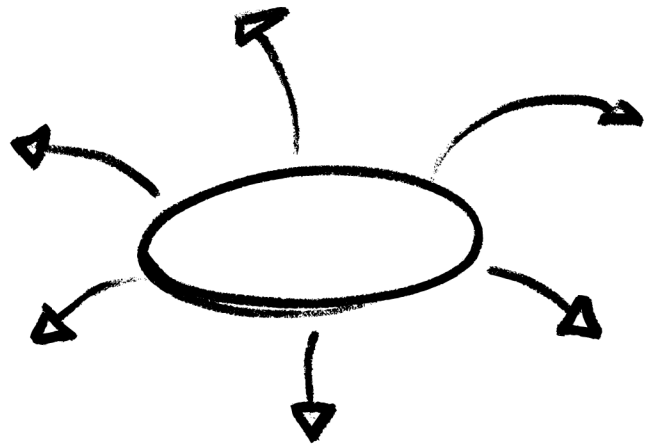
Thank God that he saves us, sustains us and uses us to share the gospel with others.

STUDY 4

SOVEREIGN SUFFERER

SHARE: WHEN HAVE YOU SEEN GOD BRING GOOD THROUGH SUFFERING?

What questions do you have about God's sovereignty over suffering...?



Romans 8:16-39

Read the passage and list all the verses which mention suffering....

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

What do vv. 17, 18, 28-29 & 37-39 teach about suffering?

How do vv. 23, 25 & 26 guide our response to suffering?

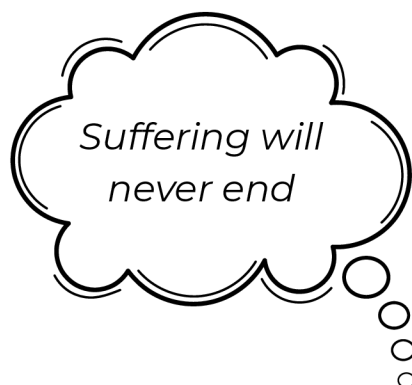
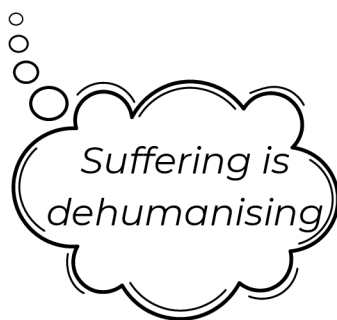
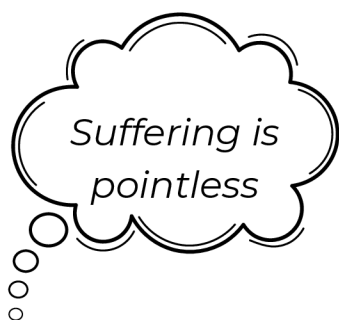


What is the 'good' purpose which vs 28 has in mind?

How does Jesus' suffering on the cross show God's sovereignty in suffering?

If you faced new suffering tomorrow, how would this passage prepare you to respond differently?

Sometimes we think...



How does this passage challenge these ideas?
(Split in pairs, pick one and discuss)

LETTING IT SINK IN...

Imagine if God was not sovereign over suffering. What difference would that make?

Fill in the blanks. If God is the sovereign over suffering then...

- God was sovereign when _____ happened in my life.
- God will still be sovereign if _____ happens in my life.

What comfort does this provide?

PRAY:

Pray for those you know who are suffering and the ways you may be suffering now. Ask God to enable us all to take refuge in him.

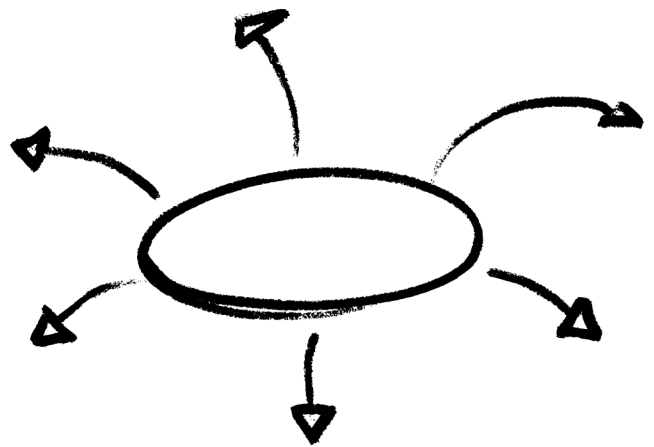
STUDY 5

SOVEREIGN LEADER

*SHARE: WHAT'S A DECISION WHERE YOU WANT GOD'S GUIDANCE?**

**Keep this decision in mind - we're going to workshop it later in the study.*

What questions do you have about God's leading and guidance...?



Read Psalm 119:97-104

How does the psalmist feel about God's word?

From these verses, what are the benefits of knowing the Scriptures deeply?

Thinking about the decision you shared, which of these benefits do you want at the moment?

From this passage, come up with a question to help you know and follow God's lead:

(e.g. from vs 1: 'What bible commands speak to this situation & how can I show that I love them?')

Read Romans 12:1-3

What do we do to know God's will?

How does God's mercy to us in Jesus change our approach to seeking God's guidance?

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17

How is Timothy equipped for 'every good work'?

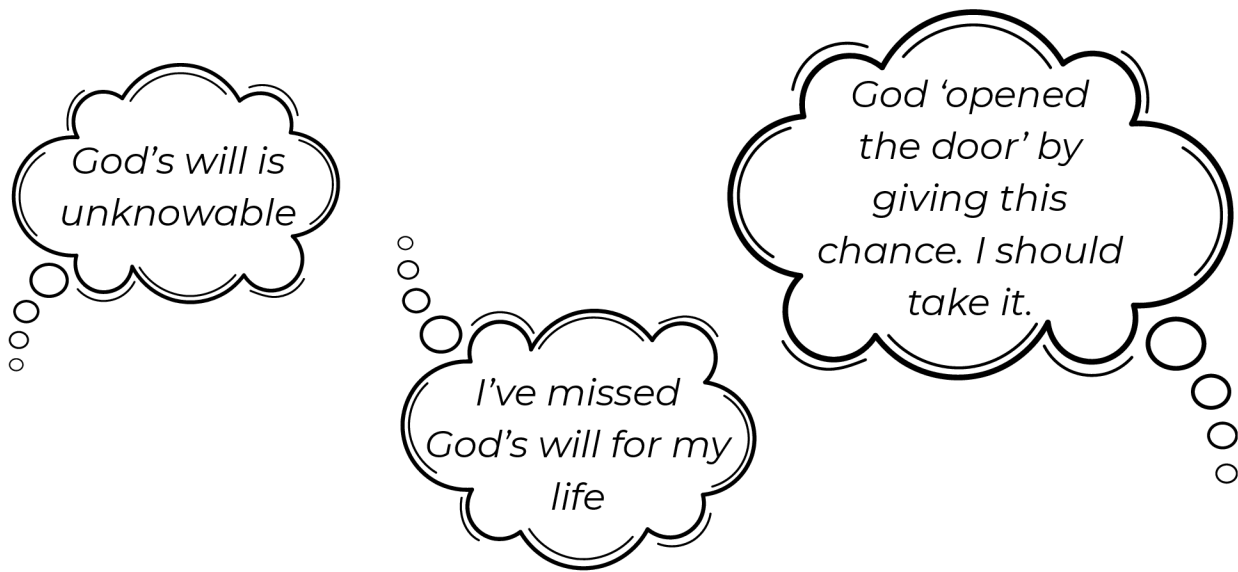
From each of these passages, come up with a question to help you know and follow God's lead:

(e.g. from Rom 12:2: 'What advice is the world giving me that I do not want to conform to?')

WORKSHOP IT!

In pairs, ask each other any/all of the questions in the green boxes above regarding the decision you shared at the start. Write your findings below:

Optional: How do the passages we've looked at challenge the ideas below? (Split up, pick one and discuss)



LETTING IT SINK IN...

Reflecting on this study, finish this sentence: If God is my sovereign leader
then_____

PRAY:

Ask God to help us to learn deeply from his word. Ask him to enable us to make decisions that honour him and seek his kingdom.

Want to learn more about God's sovereignty?
Here are some suggestions...

SOVEREIGN CREATOR:

- Isa 40:9-31, Ps 104, Acts 17:22-34, Gen 1, Job 38, Col 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:1-3, Rev 4:11 & Rev 5:13
- Ch 2 'Everlasting God' (Broughton Knox)
- Ch1-2 'Big God' (Orlando Saer)

SOVEREIGN SUSTAINER (PRAYER)

- *Luke 11:1-13, 12:22-32, Gen 16, Matt 5:25-24, 10:29-31, Acts 4:23-31, Rom 8:28-30, Phil 4, Jam 5:17-18, Heb 1:1-3, Rev 4:11*
- Ch 9 'A Call to Spiritual Reformation' (D A Carson)
- Ch 6 'Big God' (Orlando Saer)

SOVEREIGN SAVIOUR

- *John 6, Rom 8-10, 2 Tim 2:8-10, Gen 12, 25, John 10, Eph 1, 2 Pet 1:10-11*
- 'Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God' (J I Packer)
- Ch 4 'Big God' (Orlando Saer)

SOVEREIGN SUFFERER

- Romans 8:18-39, Dan 6, Gen 50:20, Acts 2:23, 2 Cor 4, Is 45:7-9
- 'How Long O Lord' (D A Carson)
- Ch 3 'Big God' (Orlando Saer)
- Ch 2 'Everlasting God' (Broughton Knox)

SOVERIGN LEADER (GUIDANCE)

- Heb 1:1-4, Heb 3:7-4:13, Rom 11:33-12:2, Gen 37-46, Prov 3:5-6, Prov 21:1, Ps 95, Isa 55:11, Gal 4:4,
- Ch 5 'Big God' (Orlando Saer)
- 'Just do Something' (Kevin de Young)
- 'Guidance and the Voice of God' (Phillip Jensen)