

JESUS
IS
BETTER
A DISCIPLE MAKING STUDY OF
HEBREWS



GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH

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WELCOME

Followers of Jesus have always faced **pressure to trust in lesser things** for security and purpose. The book of Hebrews presents **overwhelming evidence for the greatness of Jesus**. He is better than all alternatives and He alone is worthy of all our worship.

“So great a salvation” fuels our desire to **share the way of Jesus** with people who may be far from God but who are all around us where we live, work and play.

This disciple-making study of Hebrews will equip you to:

- ▶ **Connect** in authentic community as your group shares the joys and struggles of life and praying together for big things
- ▶ **Grow** in biblical truth by searching the scripture and actively applying the word together
- ▶ Joyfully **engage** in helping others find and follow Jesus by learning and practicing simple discipleship tools

The 8 lessons in this packet are designed to walk us through this challenging book of the Bible. In the Survey, we will look at the overall message of the book of Hebrews. The next lessons will focus on studying key passages in detail. Then, in the Synthesis we will summarize what we have learned for future reference.

In studying each passage in detail, we will be learning and using a number of basic Bible study methods. These methods fit under three fundamental skills that are meant to be practiced in order each week.



OBSERVE

What do I see?



INTERPRET

What does it mean?



APPLY

How does it work?

These skills are summarized in the “Bible Study Tools Overview” that you can flip back through during your study. You can find it along with other advanced Bible study skills in the Appendix for those who want to go deeper in their study.

INTRO WEEK GROUP GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Get to know your group: What is your name? Why are you here? What do you hope to get out of this?

VISION

In this packet, a Group Guide will be included each week to help facilitate your group's discussion as you connect, grow, and engage.

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 25 MINUTES

The goal of this time is to ensure that your group stays relationally connected in a spiritually deep way and to "look back" over the previous week to reflect on what God has done. You will celebrate together, evaluate how everyone did while apart, and encourage each other that God can multiply disciples through your lives.

PRAY BIG

Each week, we would like to consistently celebrate together the good we have seen in our lives, and we also like to share some things that have been stressful or challenging. Our hope is that this will lead our group to praise God together for the good while also helping us serve and support one another in areas of difficulty. As each person shares, we have provided space to record these prayer requests at the top of the following week's Title Page.

- What has been encouraging you in your life lately?
- What has been difficult for you recently?
- Spend some time praising God for what has encouraged you and pray for each other in areas that have been difficult.

LIVE THE WORD

As we walk through Hebrews, we want to apply what we are learning. Specifically, we will set some individual and group application statements and review the steps we took to accomplish them. We will call these "I Will" and "We Will" statements, and they will be recorded on the next lesson's Title Page.

REMEMBERING OUR "WHY"

It is easy to lose track of why we are meeting, so we will spend some time considering the purpose of our group.

- In groups you have been involved with in the past, have they focused more on connect, grow, or engage?
- How will our group benefit from focusing on all three?

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 35 MINUTES

The goal of this time is to “look up” to God, ready to see how His Word will help us know Jesus more and become better equipped to share Him with others around us. This will be done primarily by memorizing the Word as a group and by studying new passages of the Bible.

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Together we will memorize and share two longer sections of Scripture. Specifically, we will memorize Hebrews 1:1-4 and 4:12-16. But for this week, we want to encourage you to memorize Hebrews 1:1.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

Each week we hope to be able to share our key insights and hear from each other on how they are impacting our lives. While we won't be able to be exhaustive in our discussion of the passage, each week's group guide will suggest a few questions to focus on.

ENGAGE~LOOKING AHEAD~ 30 MINUTES

The goal of this time is to “look ahead” and prepare as a group to implement the things God will be teaching you — evangelism, discipleship, training others, starting new groups, etc.

LIVE THE WORD

As we look back at the insights we just discussed, we will create main individual and group application statements and record them at the top of the following week's Title Page. For this week, we suggest that you record the following statements on the blanks provided on pg. 5.

I Will: Read the entire book of Hebrews once (or twice if you have time)

We Will: Set up a social time outside of our group to get together

Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

In the coming week, we will set aside a time during each group to demonstrate and practice several tools that our group can use to impact the people who live, work, and play around us.

Introduce BIG BLUE (See p. 59 in Engage Toolbox).

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

We believe evangelism is best done as a team sport. Therefore, we will spend time praying for the people in our lives that we hope to find Jesus. For the rest of our time together, let's pray for the people we just wrote on Big Blue.

SURVEY

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group and for the names you recorded on Big Blue ...

LIVE THE WORD

We concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

What concrete steps will you take to accomplish these this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Hebrews 1:1: Write it out to get your memorization started.

SURVEY

PRAY

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to illuminate your study.

SURVEY: WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Surveying a book like Hebrews allows you to grasp the big picture and the overall storyline of the book before getting caught up in the details. This survey provides a helpful road map to guide your study during the coming weeks. So begin this crucial first step by taking the next thirty minutes to read straight through Hebrews without stopping. Then, answer the questions below before moving on to the next page.

1. How would you describe the audience based on how the author addresses them?

2. What are the major themes or big ideas in this book? (Hint: Look for repeated words and ideas.)

3. After having read through the entire book, what is the author's purpose(s) in writing? Be as specific as you can.

BACKGROUND

Once you have completed the introductory questions, read this background article on the book of Hebrews (compiled from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, From Gospels to Glory: Exploring the New Testament, and Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary.*)

AUTHORSHIP

Other than 1 John, the Epistle to the Hebrews is the only letter in the New Testament with no greeting or identification of its author. Many names have been conjectured for the authorship including Paul, Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Luke, Silvanus, Philip the Evangelist, Priscilla and Apollos. While the identity of the author remains a mystery, his/her literary skill, knowledge of the Septuagint (Greek translation of Old Testament) and rich vocabulary are clearly evident in the writing. Some think the most likely candidates are Apollos (an eloquent Alexandrian Jew who knew the scriptures well – Acts 18:24) or Barnabas (a Levite – Acts 4:36).

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE

Internal evidence strongly indicates that the recipients of the letter were a specific, local assembly of Jewish believers (12:4, 13:19, 23-24) who had come out of Judaism to embrace Christ as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. The author writes from a Jewish point of view to people who were once in Judaism and are now being tempted to return to it. The book has 93 direct references to the Old Testament.

PURPOSE

There are several interrelated reasons for the writing of Hebrews:

1. Supremacy of Christ – The writer sets out to demonstrate the superiority of Christ over all that Old Testament Judaism offered. This essential truth forms both the primary purpose and the central theme of Hebrews.
2. Maturity – The major goal of the author is to see that the readers progress to maturity in Christ (5:11-14). They had made a good start but were in danger of drifting and going back to Judaism rather than progressing on to maturity in Christ.

The Epistle to the Hebrews exalts the person and work of Christ and makes valuable contributions to the doctrines of His Incarnation, His substitutionary death, His priesthood and the relationship between the New Covenant and the Old.

OBSERVE: WHAT DO I SEE?

HEBREWS 1:1-3

¹God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ²in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

³And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. Circle every reference or descriptor to Jesus you see in these verses.

OBSERVATIONS

List at least 1 observation per verse. See [Bible Study Tools Overview](#) for instruction.

v 1

v 2-3

INTERPRET: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. What ways did people hear from God in the Old Testament (with cross-references)?

2. Why does the author contrast Jesus to the prophets of the Old Testament?

APPLY: HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. The original readers of Hebrews faced a culture hostile to their faith in Jesus. How can you listen and follow Jesus more closely in our culture?

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 25 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

- Where have you seen the Lord's grace and kindness this week?
- Where have you felt stressed and anxious over this past week?
- Spend some time praising God for where you have seen his grace and pray for each other in areas that have been stressful.

LIVE THE WORD

- Looking back on last week, how did you do with accomplishing your personal application statement?
- How did we do with accomplishing our group application statement?

REMEMBERING OUR "WHY"

- As discussed last week, what are the three objectives of our group and why are they each important?

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 35 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share Hebrews 1:1.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

- In the Survey section on page 6, discuss questions 1 and 2.
- In the Observe, Interpret, and Apply sections on pages 8-9, discuss your insights from each question.

ENGAGE~LOOKING AHEAD~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- As a group, form an individual and group application statement, and record it on next week's Title Page.
- Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

- Introduce the Oikos Map tool (live, work, play) and fill it out in the appendix on page 60

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Using your new Oikos Map, add names to Big Blue and pray for them together as a group.

LESSON 1 HEBREWS 1:4-2:4

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group ...

LIVE THE WORD

As a reminder, we concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

How will you take steps to follow through on these application statements this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

This semester, we are going to focus on memorizing 2 longer sections of Scripture. Specifically, we will memorize Hebrews 1:1-4 and 4:12-16. But for this week, we want to encourage you to memorize Hebrews 1:1-2.

Hebrews 1:1-2: Write it out to get your memorization started.

OBSERVE: WHAT DO I SEE?

THEMATIC REFLECTION:

Looking back at last week's Survey lesson, what was the main theme of the book of Hebrews?

HEBREWS 1:4-14

⁴Having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

⁵For to which of the angels did He ever say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again,

"I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me"? ⁶And when He again brings the firstborn into the

world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." ⁷And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels

winds, and His ministers a flame of fire." ⁸But of the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and

the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. ⁹"You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;

Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your companions." ¹⁰And, "You, Lord,

in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Your hands; ¹¹They will

perish, but You remain; And they all will become old like a garment, ¹²And like a mantle You will roll them up;

Like a garment they will also be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end." ¹³But

to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies A footstool for Your

feet"? ¹⁴Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit

salvation?

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. Circle every name or title given to Jesus in this passage.
2. Underline every action or activity that Jesus does in this passage.

ANGELS vs JESUS	
COMPARE	CONTRAST

OBSERVATIONS

List at least 1 observation per verse. See *Bible Study Tools Overview* for instruction.

v 4-6

v 7-9

v 10-12

v 13-14

INTERPRET: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. Why did the author of Hebrews feel there was a need to compare and contrast Jesus with angels? According to 2:2-3, how does this comparison fit with the overall purpose of the book?
2. How does the “excellent name” for Jesus prove His superiority over angels (cf. 1:1-3; Psalm 2; Luke 1:30-33, Philippians 2:5-11)?
3. Based on this passage, how exactly is Jesus better than angels?
4. What role did the angels play in the giving of the Old Testament Law to the nation of Israel (cf. 2:1-2, Deuteronomy 33:2, Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19)? How does this compare and contrast with what has been revealed through Jesus in 1:1-3?

APPLY: HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Everyone struggles with the worship of lesser things. This is by definition known as idolatry.

What are you tempted to pursue for security and satisfaction other than Jesus? And why?

When you have pursued things other than Jesus, what have been the consequences in your life and those around you?

2. How can you “pay closer attention” to Jesus this week personally?

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 25 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

- What are you celebrating from this past week?
- What has disappointed you during this last week?
- Spend some time praying for the things you are celebrating and for the areas that have been disappointing.

LIVE THE WORD

- Looking back on last week, how did you do with accomplishing your personal application statement?
- How did we do with accomplishing our group application statement?

REMEMBERING OUR “WHY”

- Read Acts 2:42-47. List all of the marks of a healthy group. How did the early church connect, grow, and engage with those around them?

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 35 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share the memory verses for this week.

DISCUSS PASSAGE

- Thematic Preview – How do we typically view angels today in our culture?
- Observe – Discuss everyone’s comparison and contrast of Jesus and the angels.
- Interpret – Focus on Questions 2, 3, and 4.

ENGAGE~LOOKING AHEAD~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- Apply–focus on Question 1
- As a group, form an individual and group application statement, and record it on the following week’s Title Page.
- Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

- Introduce the Interest Creating Story tool using page 61 in the appendix and come prepared to share your own story next week.

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Add names to Big Blue and pray for them together as a group.

LESSON 2 HEBREWS 2:5-18

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group ...

LIVE THE WORD

As a reminder, we concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

How will you take steps to follow through on these application statements this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Hebrews 1:1-3: Write it out to get your memorization started.

OBSERVE: WHAT DO I SEE?

THEMATIC REFLECTION:

Looking back last week at 1:4-2:4, how did the author teach us about Jesus?

HEBREWS 2:5-18

⁵For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. ⁶But one has testified somewhere, saying, “What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him? ⁷“You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And have appointed him over the works of Your hands; ⁸ You have put all things in subjection under his feet. ”For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.⁹ But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹²saying, “I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.”¹³ And again, “I will put My trust in Him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.”¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. ¹⁶For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren

in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. Circle every familial term (e.g. “brethren”) in this section.
2. Box connecting words in this section (see appendix page 53 for a list).

OBSERVATIONS

List at least 1 observation per verse. See [Bible Study Tools Overview](#) for instruction.

vv 5-7

vv 8-10

vv 11-13

vv 14-16

vv 17-18

INTERPRET: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. According to this passage, why did the eternal Son of God need to become human?
2. Why does the author quote from Psalm 8 in verses 6-8? What is he trying to establish about Jesus' earthly nature and mission?
3. What is the significance for us of being called the "brethren" of Jesus (cf 2:11, 12, 17) and "children" of God? (cf. 2:13, 14)
4. How was Jesus made "perfect ... through sufferings" according to 2:10?

How does the author's usage of this same word through the book shed light on its use here (cf. 5:9, 7:19, 28, 9:9, 10:1, 14, 11:40, 12:23)?

5. According to 2:9, 14-18 what did the Incarnation and Crucifixion of Jesus accomplish for us?

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 25 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

- What was the highlight from your week?
- What has discouraged you during this last week?
- Spend some time praying for the things you are celebrating and for the areas that have been discouraging.

LIVE THE WORD

- Looking back on last week, how did you do with accomplishing your personal application statement?
- How did we do with accomplishing our group application statement?

REMEMBERING OUR “WHY”

- Read Matthew 28:18-20. Why do we “engage” with those around us?

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 35 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share the memory verses for this week.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

- Thematic Preview – What does this passage teach us about the person and work of Christ?
- Observe – How do the connecting words reveal the author’s flow of thought?
- Interpret – Focus on Questions 1, 2, and 5.

ENGAGE~LOOKING AHEAD~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- Apply – Focus on Question 2
- As a group, form an individual and group application statement, and record it on the following week’s Title Page.
- Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

- Last week we introduced the Interest Creating Story. Pair up and practice sharing your own story with someone else in the group.

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Add names to Big Blue and pray for an opportunity to share your story with your friends this week.

LESSON 3 HEBREWS 3:1-19

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group ...

LIVE THE WORD

As a reminder, we concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

How will you take steps to follow through on these application statements this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Hebrews 1:1-4: Write it out to get your memorization started.

OBSERVE: WHAT DO I SEE?

THEMATIC REFLECTION:

Looking back at the last 2 chapters, how has the author established the superiority of Jesus so far?

HEBREWS 3:1-19

¹Therefore, holy brethren' partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; ²He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. ³For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. ⁴For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. ⁵Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; ⁶but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. ⁷Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, ⁸Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, And saw My works for forty years. ¹⁰"Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they did not know My ways'; ¹¹As I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" ¹²take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, ¹⁵while it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me." ¹⁶For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not

with those who sinned whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. Circle key words and any repeated themes within this passage.

MOSES vs JESUS	
COMPARE	CONTRAST

OBSERVATIONS

List at least 1 observation per verse. See [Bible Study Tools Overview](#) for instruction.

vv 1-4

vv 5-8

vv 9-12

vv 13-16

vv 17-19

INTERPRET: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. Why does the audience need to be reminded of Jesus' superiority over Moses?
2. What is meant by "rest" in 3:11-4:11? Note that there are multiple "rests" described in the passage. List and explain each.
3. What exactly did the nation of Israel forfeit because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord according to 3:7-11? (Hint: You will find the answer in Numbers 14).
4. What is significant about the commands in verses 12-13? How do they address the problems seen in the previous verses?
5. Verses 6 and 14 encourage the audience to persevere in hope and assurance until the end. What will happen to the audience if they do not persevere?

What are the possible interpretive options for the meaning of these verses? Of those options, which would you choose and why?

APPLY: HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Are there any specific situations where you feel your heart hardened against the Lord? If so, how do you typically respond with your words and actions?

- How can I engage the world around me?

SERVICE

GOD

- How does this truth affect my relationship with God?

MAIN TRUTH: A bitter heart threatens faithfulness to the Lord

- How can I integrate this truth into my work environment?

WORK

FAMILY/FRIENDS

- How does this truth challenge me regarding my family/friends?

2. What specific steps individually and collectively should we take to not be deceived by sin in our lives?

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 25 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

Break up into groups of 3-4 and discuss:

- Share a way that God blessed you through another person this week.
- What burdens are you carrying that we can pray for?
- Spend some time praying for the things you are celebrating and for the areas that have been discouraging.

LIVE THE WORD

- Looking back on last week, how did you do with accomplishing your personal application statement?
- How did we do with accomplishing our group application statement?

REMEMBERING OUR “WHY”

- What would happen if our group didn't commit to connect, grow, or engage? How would the absence of one of these elements affect us? Which one is our group strongest and weakest in?

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 35 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share the memory verses for this week.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

- Thematic Preview – What are we continuing to learn about the superiority of Jesus?
- Observe – Discuss the observations you made in Question 2
- Interpret – Focus on Questions 2, 3, and 4.

ENGAGE~LOOKING AHEAD~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- Apply – Focus on Question 1
- As a group, form an individual and group application statement, and record it on the following week's Title Page.
- Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

- Demonstrate the Bridge Gospel tool (see Appendix page 62), and then pair up and practice it.

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Add names to Big Blue and pray for an opportunity to share your story with your friends this week.

LESSON 4 HEBREWS 4:12-5:10

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group ...

LIVE THE WORD

As a reminder, we concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

How will you take steps to follow through on these application statements this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Having finished memorizing Hebrews 1:1-4, we want to encourage you begin memorizing 4:12-16. This week, focus on verses 12-13.

Hebrews 4:12-13: Write it out to get your memorization started.

OBSERVE: WHAT DO I SEE?

THEMATIC REFLECTION:

What people, positions, or things from the Old Testament has the author compared to Jesus so far in the book? What Old Testament office does he focus on this next passage?

HEBREWS 4:12-5:10

¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

¹For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; ²he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; ³and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. ⁴And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. ⁵So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”; ⁶just as He says also in another passage, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

⁸Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, ¹⁰being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. Underline each qualification for Old Testament priests within this passage.

OT PRIESTS vs JESUS	
COMPARE	CONTRAST

OBSERVATIONS

List at least 1 observation per verse. See [Bible Study Tools Overview](#) for instruction.

vv 12-13

vv 14-16

vv 1-3

vv 4-6

vv 7-10

INTERPRET: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. How do verses 12-13 relate to verses 14-16?
2. What is the significance of Jesus being both the Son of God and our great high priest (cf. Heb 1:1-3; 4:14, 5:5, 8 and Psalm 2:6-9)? How is this an improvement on what God's people had in the Old Testament?
3. Why can Jesus be such a sympathetic high priest to us according to this passage? Specifically, how does He share in our human experience and struggle against sin and temptation?
4. What experience in the life of Christ is the author referring to in 5:7-10 (cf. Matthew 26:36-39)? What does this teach us about the relationship between prayer and suffering?

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 25 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

- What are you thankful for this week?
- What are you asking God for this week?
- Spend some time giving thanks for the ways God has blessed you and pray for each other's needs.

LIVE THE WORD

- Looking back on last week, how did you do with accomplishing your personal application statement?
- How did we do with accomplishing our group application statement?

REMEMBERING OUR "WHY"

- Have each person in the group come up with a short statement for "why does our group exist?" Have a few people share.

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 35 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share the memory verses for this week.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

- Thematic Preview – What are we continuing to learn about the superiority of Jesus?
- Observe – Discuss the observations you made in Question 2
- Interpret – Focus on Questions 2, 3, and 4.

ENGAGE~LOOKING UP~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- Apply – Focus on Question 2
- As a group, form an individual and group application statement, and record it on the following week's Title Page.
- Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

- Have some from the group demonstrate the Bridge Gospel tool (see Appendix page 62), and then pair up and practice it.

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Add names to Big Blue and pray for an opportunity to share your story with your friends this week.

LESSON 5 HEBREWS 5:11–6:8

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group ...

LIVE THE WORD

As a reminder, we concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

How will you take steps to follow through on these application statements this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Hebrews 4:12-14: Write it out to get your memorization started.

OBSERVE: WHAT DO I SEE?

THEMATIC REFLECTION:

Looking back through the book of Hebrews, who has the author shown Jesus to be superior over?

HEBREWS 5:11–6:8

¹¹Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

¹Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. ³And this we will do if God permits. ⁴For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. ⁷For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; ⁸but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the author's tone within this section?
2. Circle the descriptions of the audience in verses 11-14.
3. Underline any commands you see in this section.
4. List all examples of figurative language (e.g. "milk/solid food"):

OBSERVATIONS

List at least 1 observation per verse. See [Bible Study Tools Overview](#) for instruction.

vv 11-12

vv 13-14

vv 1-2

vv 3-4

vv 5-6

vv 7-8

INTERPRET: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

CONTEXT: The book of Hebrews contains a series of five warning passages that highlight the consequences for abandoning Jesus to return to Judaism. Keep in mind, this original audience faced immense pressure from a hostile culture (cf. Hebrews 10:32-36). As a result, the following warning passages escalate in their intensity to encourage these early believers to hold on to their faith in Christ:

- 2:1 – “we must pay much closer attention... that we do not drift away”
- 3:12 – “take care, brethren that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God”
- 6:4, 6 – “in the case of those who have... fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put him to open shame”

1. According to 5:11-14, what is it about the original audience’s spiritual condition that so concerned the author?

How does the analogy of milk and solid food further demonstrate the reality of their spiritual condition? Why is this condition so problematic considering the persecution they face?

2. According to 6:3, it may not be possible for some to “press on to maturity.” In 6:4-6, the author lists five key descriptions that illustrate such a scenario. Define the following key words:

“Have been enlightened” (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4, Heb. 10:32) -

“Have tasted the heavenly gift...the good word of God and the powers of the age to come” (cf. Heb. 2:9) -

“Made partakers of the Holy Spirit” (cf. Heb. 3:1) -

“Fallen Away” (cf. Gal. 3:2) -

With a better understanding of these descriptions, is the author portraying a scenario for a genuine believer? Why or why not?

3. What experience in the life of Christ is the author referring to in 5:7-10 (cf. Matthew 26:36-39)? What does this teach us about the relationship between prayer and suffering?

4. How did Israel's forfeiture of rest in chapter 3 illustrate the consequences of apostasy?

5. Is a field being burnt synonymous with hell, or does it refer to something else?

APPLY: HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. What are the dangers of persistent immaturity in the life of a believer?

2. What practical steps can you take to grow in spiritual maturity?

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 20 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

- How have you witnessed God's goodness to you this week?
- What stressors are you facing this week?
- Spend some time praying for the things you are celebrating and for the areas that have been discouraging.

LIVE THE WORD

- Looking back on last week, how did you do with accomplishing your personal application statement?

REMEMBERING OUR "WHY"

- Complete the statements: this group does not meet to _____. This group does meet to _____.

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 45 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share the memory verses for this week.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

- Thematic Preview – What are the purposes of the warning passages in Hebrews?
- Observe – Discuss the observations you made in Question 2
- Interpret – Focus on Questions 1, 2, and 3

ENGAGE~LOOKING UP~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- Apply – Focus on Question 1 and 2
- As a group, form an individual and group application statement, and record it on the following week's Title Page.
- Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

- To help your group become more confident in studying the Bible with an unbeliever, next week's lesson will introduce and model the Discovery Bible Group tool. Please do not study the passage ahead of time, but read the introduction to this Bible study tool that is included in the next lesson.

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Add names to Big Blue and pray for an opportunity to share your story with your friends this week.

LESSON 6 HEBREWS 6:9-20

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group ...

LIVE THE WORD

As a reminder, we concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

How will you take steps to follow through on these application statements this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Hebrews 4:12-16: Write it out to get your memorization started.

INTRODUCTION TO DISCOVERY BIBLE GROUPS

We hope you have enjoyed your study of the book of Hebrews so far. This week, we are going to change the method of study quite a bit to demonstrate an adaptation of the Inductive Bible Study tool called Discovery Bible Groups (DBGs). Our hope is that this lesson will prepare you to read the Bible with friends in your life who do not know Jesus.

WHY DBGs?

When many of you think about studying the Bible with others, you likely assume that there is going to be some pre-meeting preparation followed by a two-hour group meeting with other believers who are knowledgeable about the Bible and theology. Unfortunately, this typical experience presents a couple of potential barriers for someone looking to read the Bible with a lost friend.

First, this kind of study is not likely to sound enticing for someone who is not saved! You might get a friend to bite for the first two or three studies, but once other opportunities present themselves, you will surely find them showing up less and less.

Second, if you are being honest, most of us struggle to find the time to complete the weekly homework for the Bible studies we are already committed to, so to add something new to your plate might sound like an impossible task. On top of that, you might not want to bear the responsibility of being the “Bible study leader” as you know it from previous studies you have been a part of.

What we want to teach you this week is another way. DBGs require very little preparation, take less than an hour a week, and are very personally focused on your relationship with your lost friends and *their* community.

So, we would like for you to trust us and prepare to “study” the next passage in Hebrews by learning to use the DBG tool. Yes, that’s right – we do not want you to study the passage before you attend your next group meeting so that you can experience first-hand just how much God can teach you and your friends in a DBG.

Question to Consider: Looking back at a time you have wanted to read the Bible with a lost friend, what are the barriers that prevented you from being successful?

DISTINCTIONS OF A DBG

Before we introduce you to the DBG tool, we first want to establish some core distinctions of the DBG process.

#1 – GOD IS YOUR FRIEND’S PRIMARY TEACHER, NOT YOU

In John 6:44-45, Jesus says, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they shall *all* be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned *from the Father*, comes to Me.” You can rest assured right now that God is at work teaching your friend what they need to know for salvation! From the very beginning, a DBG is an opportunity to facilitate an encounter between the truth that God wants to speak and your friend’s heart. The goal of this process is to remove as many barriers to that as possible.

Right now, you can let out a deep breath because God is going to do the heavy lifting of teaching for you. To help your friend “discover” the answers to their questions through God’s Word, you will only answer questions that the passage directly addresses. There is no need to worry about having the right answers to every question that might pop up. Just politely respond to a difficult question (or one not addressed in the passage) by saying, “That’s a great question. Let’s write that one down and see if it is answered in a later passage.”

You will find the urge to answer peripheral questions to be quite strong – RESIST, RESIST, RESIST that urge. You might feel like leaving questions unanswered is leaving a stumbling block between your friend and Jesus, but demonstrating the role of spiritual expert can often make people feel as if they could never believe in Jesus because they do not know what you know. It also places your friend’s trust in your knowledge and not in their encounter with the living God through His Word. You want their decision to follow Jesus to be based more around their response to the conviction of the Holy Spirit than on your ability to provide a sufficient answer to every question they might have. These Bible readings will also tee up many other “outside of the group” conversations where you can follow up on other conversations at a later date.

#2 – BECOMING A GROUP IS KEY TO A DBG

From the moment your lost friend agrees to read the Bible with you, you want to encourage them to invite other friends to join you using a statement like: “I am really excited about reading the Bible with you, and I have found that these discussions are most interesting when more people are able to jump in. Is there anyone you would like to invite to read the Bible with us?”

Having others from their community join you is critical to keep your friend from feeling like a future decision to follow Jesus means that they must leave the group of friends they have had for so long. If that friend group has been a part of their journey to Jesus, they are more likely to respect your friend’s decision, and they might even decide to follow Jesus themselves!

With that said, it becomes difficult to catch new group members up to speed after the third or fourth lesson, so you will likely get to the point where it is difficult to have new people join. In this case, encourage your friend to begin to read the Bible in Genesis 1 with interested people using the DBG method, and assure them that you will help them be prepared to lead their own group. Empower your friend to facilitate their own group regardless of whether they have chosen to follow Jesus yet or not!

#3 – EVERYONE CAN FACILITATE THE DBG

This gets us to the last major distinction of a DBG. You will find the DBG method to be intentionally simple enough to empower your lost friends to be able to facilitate the group themselves after experiencing it only a few times. Once you hit the fourth or fifth lesson, we encourage you to take a risk and empower your friend to lead the next group meeting. They will be honored that you would trust them with that, and in most cases, you will find that they take it more seriously once they have their own sense of ownership about the group!

Because we believe that God’s Word is true and sufficient, you can trust that if the group is committed to the text, they will be able to navigate new theological territory with the trust in God’s Word.

Question to Consider: Which of these core distinctions will be most difficult for you in practice? Why?

THE DBG PROCESS

This method is purposefully very simple, reproducible, and obedience-oriented. You can also find a single-page simplified DBG process along with some suggested passages to read in the Appendix on page 63.

We have broken the DBG process up into three helpful sections:

CONNECT

This section of the DBG is designed to deepen your relationship with the other group members and to hold each other accountable to the actions steps that were committed to in the previous week. It also models for your friend what worship (“thankfulness”) and dependence on God (“stress”) look like before they ever believe in Jesus. At first, you are teaching them to express these things to the group, but once they believe in Jesus, they will naturally begin to express them to God as well.

- Ask the group: “What are you thankful for, and what has stressed you out this week? Did you see an answered prayer this week?” Have each person share briefly and set an example by recording their responses.
- After the first meeting, ask: “Did you do what you said you would this past week?” Ask everyone to share.
- After the first meeting, ask: “Did you share with the people you said you would this past week?” Ask everyone to share.

GROW

This section begins by helping the group become familiar with the passage being studied. Because you want to eventually empower other group members to facilitate the group, it is essential that you model a DBG that is centered on the text itself. That begins by teaching the group to be bold in self-correcting anything that does not line up with what the passage actually says.

Once the group is familiar with the passage, you will walk them through the first three discussion questions. The goal is to have as many people share their thoughts as time allows. Again, you should focus on facilitating discussion about the passage rather than “teaching” or adding your own knowledge to the discussion. If the discussion begins to stray from the passage, then you need to be firm in redirecting the conversation back to the text itself.

- Say: “Let’s see what the Bible teaches us today.” Starting with Genesis 1:1-25, read the passage twice out loud – asking different people to read it. (Go through one passage each meeting time.)
- Ask for someone to retell the passage in their own words like they were telling a friend who wasn’t there.
- Ask: “Do you agree with their retelling? Is there something they added or left out that they shouldn’t have?” If the group doesn’t miss a key component of the passage, continue on to the discussion questions. If they miss something, read the passage again. If someone states something that isn’t in the passage, ask, “Where did you find [what they said] in this passage?” Reread the passage, if necessary.
- Ask Discussion Question #1: “What does this passage teach us about God?”
- Ask Discussion Question #2: “What does this passage teach us about people?”
- Ask Discussion Question #3: “What do you like about this passage?”

ENGAGE

This last section is designed to develop a habit of being obedient to the Word of God. You will find that many of the passages have clear, moral implications that unbelievers are eager to incorporate into their lives. It is also quite natural for people to talk with others about things they find interesting, so do not be afraid of setting some tangible action steps as a response to the things that interested them in reading the Bible.

- Ask Discussion Question #4: “If we believe this passage is from God, how must we change? How are you going to obey what God says in this passage this week?” Have everyone share. This should be something

- very specific that you can say yes or no to doing the next time you have a DBG meeting.
- Ask Discussion Question #5: Whom are you going to share this passage with before we meet again?
Have everyone share.
- Ask: Is there any way we can pray for you this week?

After each group meeting, go ahead and let the group know what passage will be read the following week and take a minute to put the next meeting on the calendar. Some people like to set a consistent, weekly time, whereas others prefer to ask a question like, “When would you like to get together to read the Bible again?”

Question to Consider: Do you feel like you could facilitate the Discovery Bible Group process? Is there anyone you would like to invite to read the Bible with you in the coming weeks?

CONCLUSION

Well, that’s it! You are now prepared to read the Bible with lost friends in a way that requires very little preparation, takes less than an hour a week, and is personally focused on your relationship with your them and *their* community. If you do not yet feel confident about doing this yourself, don’t worry. Once you experience this process as a group this week, we believe you will find it to be incredibly simple and natural to facilitate on your own.

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 25 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

- What are you thankful for, and what has stressed you out this week?
- Did you see an answered prayer this week?
- Spend some time giving thanks for the ways you have seen God's goodness and pray for each other's needs.

LIVE THE WORD

- "Did you do what you said you would this past week?"

REMEMBERING OUR "WHY"

- How does a Discovery Bible Group help us "engage" people around us?

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 35 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share the memory verses for this week.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

- Say: "Let's see what the Bible teaches us today." Starting with Hebrews 6:9-20, read the passage twice out loud – asking different people to read it. (Go through one passage each meeting time.)
- Ask for someone to retell the passage in their own words like they were telling a friend who wasn't there.
- Ask: "Do you agree with their retelling? Is there something they added or left out that they shouldn't have?" If the group doesn't miss a key component of the passage, continue on to the discussion questions. If they miss something, read the passage again. If someone states something that isn't in the passage, ask, "Where did you find [what they said] in this passage?" Reread the passage, if necessary.
- Ask Discussion Question #1: "What does this passage teach us about God?"
- Ask Discussion Question #2: "What does this passage teach us about people?"
- Ask Discussion Question #3: "What do you like about this passage?"

ENGAGE~LOOKING BACK~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- Ask Discussion Question #4: "If we believe this passage is from God, how must we change? How are you going to obey what God says in this passage this week?" Have everyone share. This should be something very specific that you can say yes or no to doing the next time you have a DBG meeting.
- Ask Discussion Question #5: Whom are you going to share this passage with before we meet again? Have everyone share.
- As a group, form an individual and group application statement, and record it on the following week's Title Page.
- Spend some time planning the steps you will take to accomplish your group application statement.

TOOL BOX

- Debrief your Discovery Bible Group experience.

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Add names to Big Blue and pray for an opportunity to share your story with your friends this week.

SYNTHESIS

PRAY BIG

Throughout this week, pray daily for the people in your group ...

LIVE THE WORD

As a reminder, we concluded our last lesson with the following individual and group application statements ...

I will: _____

We will: _____

How will you take steps to follow through on these application statements this week?

MEMORIZE THE WORD

Hebrews 1:1-3: Write it out.

Hebrews 4:12-16: Write it out.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

1. For an audience that was tempted to return to Judaism, how does the supremacy of Christ motivate them to persevere in a hostile culture?
2. How do the warning passages throughout chapters 1-6 challenge the audience to press on to spiritual maturity?

Create a list of the theological truths and life lessons you have learned for the first time or have been reminded of from your study of Hebrews. As an example of a theological truth, you might write *“I was taught that I can draw near to God in confidence because of Jesus’ mediation as my High Priest.”* Hebrews 4:15-16. As an example of a life lesson, you might write *“This book reminded me that spiritual growth is a community project pursued not just individually but also corporately.”*

List at least ten theological truths and ten life lessons that you learned from your study of Hebrews. Note the scripture reference too.

THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS I’VE LEARNED

LIFE LESSONS I’VE LEARNED

LIVE THE WORD

PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

List the most significant ways that you personally have applied biblical truth during this study.

GROUP APPLICATIONS

What were some of the challenges and benefits of creating “We will” statements. Which ones stood out to you?

ENGAGE TOOLBOX

Review the disciple-making tools that you have learned and practiced during the study (Big Blue, Oikos Map, Interest Creating Story, the Bridge Illustration, and Discover Bible Groups).

- Which did you find most challenging?

- Which have you used the most in your daily life?

- How will you continue to practice these in the coming days?

GROUP GUIDE

CONNECT~LOOKING BACK~ 20 MINUTES

PRAY BIG

Break up into groups of 3-4 and discuss:

- What are you thankful for, and what has stressed you out this week?
- Did you see an answered prayer this week?
- Spend some time giving thanks for the ways you have seen God's goodness throughout this study.

LIVE THE WORD

- "Did you do what you said you would this past week?"

REMEMBERING OUR "WHY"

- Read Revelation 7:9 as a reminder of what is to come. Complete this statement. The body of Christ exists to _____.

GROW~LOOKING UP~ 45 MINUTES

MEMORIZE THE WORD

- With a partner, share the memory verses for this study.

DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

- Share some of the theological truths and life lessons you have discovered during your study of Hebrews.

ENGAGE~LOOKING UP~ 30 MINUTES

LIVE THE WORD

- What are some practical ways that we can continue to apply the truths we have learned as a group during this study?

TOOL BOX

- Recap what you have learned about making disciples: Big Blue, Oikos Map, Interest Creating Story, the Bridge Illustration, and DBGs and share examples for how these tools have helped you in your relationships with lost friends.

PRAY BIG FOR THE LOST

- Add names to Big Blue and pray for an opportunity to share your story with your friends this week.

APPENDIX

A. BIBLE STUDY TOOLS OVERVIEW

OBSERVE:

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. Here are four tasks involved in observation which should be performed in the order below:

Observation Task 1: Mark up the passage by visually identifying the following specific elements:

- **Underline** all verbs. A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action is taking place (“we will reign with Him”) or that a state or condition exists (“we are faithless”). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author’s flow of thought.
- Circle key words or phrases. These are words or short phrases that are important theologically or thematically (they set the theme or main idea for the passage).
- Highlight repeated words or phrases. Also, include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as “suffer hardship” and “endure suffering”). You’ll also want to highlight things that are repeated from previous passages.
- Box connecting words. These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. Here are eight types of common connecting words to look for:
 1. **Comparison** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so.
 2. **Contrast** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however.
 3. **Purpose** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that.
 4. **Result** is similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that.
 5. **Cause** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: because, since, and sometimes for.
 6. **Explanation** is what follows and further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word “for.”
 7. **Inference** provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: therefore, for this reason.
 8. **Condition** presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can take place. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is “if.”

Observation Task 2: List 2-3 primary themes you see in the passage each week

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

Observation Task 3: Write two or more observations per verse

Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see.

Observation Task 4: Record your own interpretive questions

Here are a few examples:

WHO IS	WHAT IS THE	WHY DID THE AUTHOR	HOW
....James talking about?meaning of this word?choose this word?was this action accomplished?
....accomplishing the action?significance of this phrase?include this phrase, statement or command?will this situation occur?
....benefiting from the action?implication of this statement?not say _____?	
....relationship between these phrases?			

INTERPRET:

Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study: interpretation. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for answers (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). Use the following six methods, as needed, to tackle a variety of questions.

Interpretation Method 1: Use the context.

Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the author's flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may need to read ahead for clues.

Interpretation Method 2: Study cross-references.

Cross references are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such cross references can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting the online reference www.biblestudytools.com. Simply type in the book and chapter in the box to the left of the "Search" button and then click "Search." All of the chapter will appear on the screen. Be sure that "New American Standard" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to "Cross References" so that numbers appear throughout the passage. Clicking any of these will move your screen to the bottom of the page where you will find a series of cross references for specific verses within the passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

Interpretation Method 3: Look up key words.

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek is far better and is surprisingly easy, thanks to the internet. Simply log onto www.biblestudytools.com, and as an example, type in the book and chapter in the box to the left of the "Search" button and then click "Search." All of the chapter will appear on the screen. Be sure that "New American Standard" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to "Strong Numbers" so that most of the words will be highlighted in blue. Clicking on any of these will bring up a new screen that will tell you the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the New Testament (NT). Click on any of the other NT books (under the title "NAS Verse Count"), and get a list of every verse in that book that uses this Greek word. What used to take hours now takes seconds!

Interpretation Method 4: Look up background information

You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall. The *IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

Interpretation Method 5: Tackle tough questions step-by-step

When trying to answer the most challenging questions, follow this four-step process:

1. List all the options. Always start by brainstorming every possible answer to your question.
2. List pros and cons for each option. See all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology.
3. Choose the most likely option. Look at your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books of the Bible, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight unless the solution contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you must eliminate that option.
4. Decide on your certainty level. Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct ... 60% = This solution is just a bit more likely than the others!). Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

Interpretation Method 6: Compare multiple translations

This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. You can often find helpful interpretive clues by comparing this translation with other translations. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and thus often easier to read. Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at net.bible.org. You can find and compare numerous translations of any Bible passage at www.biblestudytools.com.

APPLY:

Our Bible Study is not over until we practically apply what we have learned to our everyday lives. And, we know that because we are relational by nature, our learning and growth can and should impact other people in our lives.

The Relational Application section in this study provides an opportunity to **connect the personal application** of God's word **with the relational spheres** we live in.

Application Task 1:

1. Prayerfully determine the **main biblical truth or principle** that God revealed to you during your study. A principle is a fact stated or implied in a passage that is relevant to our lives and not specific to a particular person or time. A few questions to ask are:

- Is there a promise for me to claim?
- Is there a truth for me to believe?
- Is there a command for me to obey?

Application Task 2:

2. Determine how this truth impacts the **four main relational areas** in your life.

God

- How does this truth stretch me in my relationship with God?
- Is there something from which I need to confess and repent?
- Are there some characteristics of God of which I am reminded to praise or worship Him?

Family/Friends

- How does this truth impact my relationship with my family or friends?
- How could I share this truth with these loved ones?
- Is there something or someone specific I can pray for?

Work

- Is there an opportunity to integrate this truth in my work environment?
- Is there a next step of ministry I can take based on this truth?
- How does this truth impact my attitude, decision-making and conversations at work?

Service

- How does this truth change my view of the people in the world around me?
- Is there a way to care for, serve or reach out to the others based on this truth?
- Is there a next step of ministry I can take based on this truth?

(Example on next page)

Here is an example from Psalm 1:

- Pray that Bible translation ministries will make significant progress in unreached areas of the world.

SERVICE
GOD

- Praise God each morning this week for the gift of His Word.
- Meditate on each lesson's memory verse during each week of this study.

MAIN TRUTH: A healthy, righteous life is rooted in God's word

- Look for ways to winsomely speak truth into the conversations I have at work.

WORK
FAMILY/FRIENDS

- Ask my spouse what God is showing him/her through the Word this week.

B. ADDITIONAL STUDY RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES

biblestudytools.com - online word studies

blueletterbible.org - online word studies

soniclight.com - online commentary

bestcommentaries.com - online commentary database

DISCIPLESHIP/BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

Living By the Book by Howard Hendricks and Charles Swindoll

A more in-depth book on how to study the Bible using the tools discussed in this packet.

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman

A highly motivational analysis of Jesus' own principles of evangelism and discipleship.

The Lost Art of Disciple Making by Leroy Eims

This practical resource will give you a detailed structure to follow and great content to cover as you begin to disciple a new believer.

A Survey of Bible Doctrine by Charles Ryrie

An easy-to-read, relatively short systematic theology primer that you can walk a new believer through to ground them in the faith.

Essentials of the Faith by Grace Bible Church, College Station, TX

This small group Bible study packet walks a new believer through the fundamental trusts and practices of the Christian faith in ten self-paced lessons.

** Note: Grace Bible Church does not always agree with the views of these commentaries. These are good tools to help understand hard passages, but the particular theological views reflect the author, of the commentary and not those of Grace Bible Church.*

ENGAGE TOOLBOX

BIG BLUE

“The Legend of Big Blue” -- In 2007, a dedicated group of believers in Iowa began to meet as a missional community. A cornerstone of their weekly meetings was a time of prayer for the lost. Names of lost friends were written on a leftover piece of blue flooring material, which was then laid in the middle of the room to be prayed over. Each week, as members recalled people they had met, new names were added to the list. A time of intense prayer would follow as disciples got on their knees to pray for the names on the “Big Blue.” As these groups multiplied and spread to other states, so did the inclusion of Big Blue.

Each week, we will add names of our lost friends and those we would like to train on a large piece of blue poster board called “Big Blue.”

Draw a line down the middle of Big Blue, and label the left side “Bless” and the right side “Train.” Every time we meet people, we want to ask the question, “Is this someone who needs to be blessed with the gospel or someone who needs training to multiply?” Leave space under the name for others in their oikos and find ways to be intentional to meet their network of friends and family. (You can read about oikoses in another section of this appendix.)

BLESS

After spending time finding and creating interest with people, ask friends if they (and their oikos) would be interested in reading the Bible with you. Underline names of those we are reading the Bible with, and put a cross next to anyone’s name who starts following Christ.

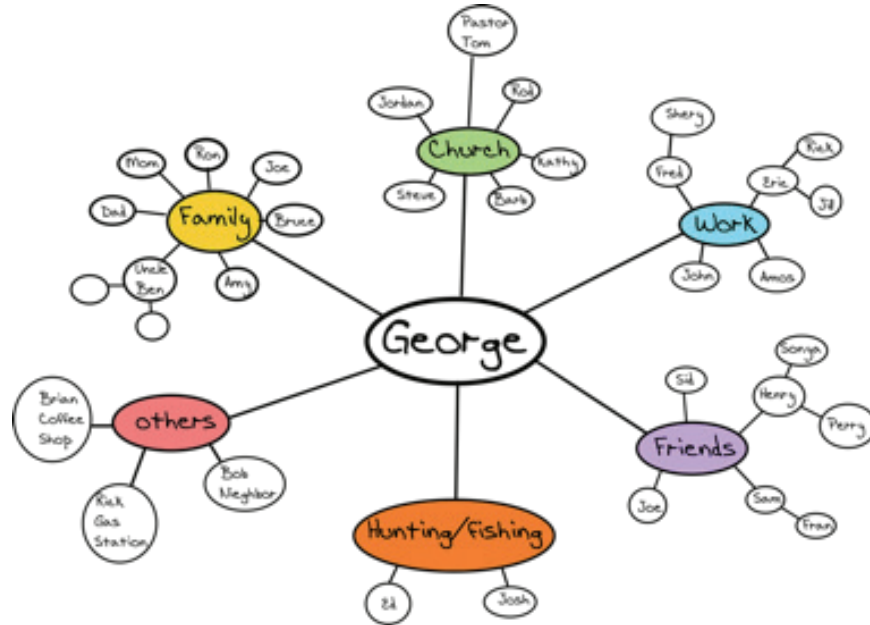
TRAIN

For those who have already been blessed by the gospel, we want to help them learn to multiply their lives and share the gospel with others. You can share with them the tools we will learn in this group.

OIKOS MAPPING

Oikos Mapping is a tool that has revolutionized the way many Christians think about evangelism. Simply put, oikos is a Greek word that means family. A family in Jesus' time would also include servants, extended family, and anyone else residing in their home. Basically, it's their circle of influence. For us, this could include not only our family but our friends, coworkers, and acquaintances. It can even include the guy at the gas station that you see every morning. It is anyone that we commonly come in contact with on a regular basis giving you the ability to, even in a small way, have a bit of influence in their lives.

So what does this have to do with us, and how does it help us to spread the gospel? Well the word oikos is used about 120 times in the New Testament. Often times, when Jesus found people that were open to His message, He would eventually share the message with the entire family network, their oikos. A great example is when Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). After Jesus revealed His message and who he was, she went and told her oikos, the whole town, and they came to hear Jesus and many were healed.



Draw your Oikos Map: Think about the people in your spheres of influence. With whom do you live, work or play? Who are you near that may be of a different ethnicity, nationality, or socio-economic group?

INTEREST CREATING STORY

The story of why and how you decided to follow Jesus is a powerful way to engage the lost with the truth of Jesus. Your story should be short (less than 3 minutes), easy to follow, and avoid “Christianese” language. In its simplest form, this is the story of your life before Christ, how you met Christ, and your life after Christ.

Fill in these blanks below to help you get started, and then practice sharing your story in pairs.

I first sensed my need for Jesus when... (emphasize how you felt, not a laundry list of sin)

What made me most interested in Jesus was... (emphasize a particular attribute of Jesus)

I finally decided to trust Jesus and follow him when I realized that...

Since I entered into a relationship with Jesus, I have changed

From:

To:

From:

To:

Jesus helps me in my daily life by...

I have seen God answer my prayers in some pretty cool ways, like the time...

_____, have you ever considered learning about how to follow Jesus?

THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION~PRACTICE PAGES

DISCOVERY BIBLE GROUPS (DBGs)

This method is purposefully very simple, reproducible, and obedience-oriented. You should focus on facilitating discussion about the passage, rather than “teaching” or adding your own knowledge to the discussion. The Holy Spirit is the main teacher for this study. To learn more about this tool, please read the introduction in Lesson 6 of this guide.

CONNECT ~ 15 MINUTES

- Ask the group: “What are you thankful for, and what has stressed you out this week? Did you see an answered prayer this week?” Have each person share briefly and set an example by recording their responses.
- After the first meeting, ask: “Did you do what you said you would this past week?” Ask everyone to share.
- After the first meeting, ask: “Did you share with the people you said you would this past week?” Ask everyone to share.

GROW ~ 15-20 MINUTES

- Say: “Let’s see what the Bible teaches us today.” Starting with Genesis 1:1-25, read the passage twice out loud – asking different people to read it. (Go through one passage each meeting time.)
- Ask for someone to retell the passage in their own words like they were telling a friend who wasn’t there.
- Ask: “Do you agree with their retelling? Is there something they added or left out that they shouldn’t have?” If the group doesn’t miss a key component of the passage, continue on to the discussion questions. If they miss something, read the passage again. If someone states something that isn’t in the passage, ask, “Where did you find [what they said] in this passage?” Reread the passage, if necessary.
- Ask Discussion Question #1: “What does this passage teach us about God?”
- Ask Discussion Question #2: “What does this passage teach us about people?”
- Ask Discussion Question #3: “What do you like about this passage?”

ENGAGE ~ 15 MINUTES

- Ask Discussion Question #4: “If we believe this passage is from God, how must we change? How are you going to obey what God says in this passage this week?” Have everyone share. This should be something very specific that you can say yes or no to doing the next time you have a DBG meeting.
- Ask Discussion Question #5: Whom are you going to share this passage with before we meet again? Have everyone share.
- Ask: Is there any way we can pray for you this week?

Discovery Bible Group Passage List: Creation to Christ

Genesis 1:1-25	Matthew 3; John 1:29-34
Genesis 2:4-24	Matthew 4:1-11
Genesis 3:1-13	John 3:1-21
Genesis 3:14-24	John 4:1-26, 39-42
Genesis 6:5-8	Luke 5:17-26
Genesis 6:9-8:14	Mark 4:35-41
Genesis 8:15-9:17	Mark 5:1-20
Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6, 17:1-7	John 11:1-44
Genesis 22:1-19	Matthew 26:17-30
Exodus 12:1-28	John 18:1-19:16
Exodus 20:1-21	Luke 23:32-5
Leviticus 4:1-35	Luke 24:1-35
Isaiah 53	Luke 24:36-53
Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20	John 3:1-21

