

MBM Small Group Bible Studies - Genesis 1-12

In Genesis God gives us answers to the big life questions about meaning and purpose. It may not give us all the answers we really want, but it starts us on a journey to find the answers we really need. It also does not stand alone, but is the beginning of a long story that ultimately finds its meaning and purpose in Jesus Christ. God has appointed Jesus as the Saviour and Lord of all He created. God gave the Israelites this message in Genesis just before they entered a land filled with people who worshipped all kinds of other things. These other nations had their own ideas about how the world came into being and they practiced life and family the way they saw fit. This was a very relevant message for God's people before they mixed with those nations. It was foundational!

Genesis spoke a relevant message to those first hearers and it continues to speak directly into our lives today. It calls us back from building our lives around the patterns and opinions of the loudest voices of our day, to building our lives upon the solid foundation our Creator gave us in the beginning.

My prayer is that your time in Genesis will refresh, challenge and reshape you. I pray you will see God's creative pattern more beautifully, you'll see your need for Jesus more clearly and your place in this world more meaningfully.

- Rob Abboud, Maturity Pastor

Genesis Bible Studies - Term 2, 2020			
Week	Passage	Study Title	Sermon Date
1	Genesis 1:1-2:3	Creation	3rd May
2	Genesis 1:26-31	Image of God	10th May
3	Genesis 2:1-25	Work and Rest	17th May
4	Genesis 2:4-25	Gift of Relationships	24th May
5	Genesis 3:1-24	The Fall	31st May
6	Genesis 4-5	Broken Relationships	7th June
7	Genesis 6-9	The Flood	14th June
8	Genesis 10-11	The Tower of Babel	21st June
9	Genesis 12	The Promise	28th June

The philosophy behind these studies:

Many of us didn't know what Zoom was a couple of months ago. Then, all of a sudden, our whole world landed on Zoom. Work, family, friends, Church and Small Groups now live out their existence online. But we know that life online is different. It feels longer, uses more mental energy to engage, and is just not the same as being in a room with other people. For all of these reasons and more, we're trying something a little different with this term's small group studies.

1. **Shorter group time.** We're aiming for around 1 hour together in total (give or take 15 mins, depending on the group). This is to protect against "Zoom/online fatigue".
2. **Different style of studies.** We've aimed for more discussion type questions without sacrificing time in God's word. With that in mind, the middle part of the study (10 mins) is best done in smaller groups/pairs to help everyone get the most out of the word. This will either work by putting people into breakout rooms (if using paid version of Zoom) or pairing up with another person or family to call each other on the phone to work through the questions. You do this by either muting yourself while on Zoom and making the call from your phone, or if you're on the mobile version of Zoom, leave the meeting, make the call and then re-enter the meeting after the call. Online group meetings make it too easy to zone-out and be passive, so this will enable more time discussing the ideas together, and personally owning the truths of God's word. It will be different, but good!
3. **Shorter studies.** The Studies have been planned to take around 30-40 mins, leaving 20-30 mins for sharing and prayer time. If you use the free version of Zoom, let the 40min end-time be your guide to move into sharing and praying. Covid19 isolation means people may need more time to share what's happening for them. We want to make sure we are loving each other in prayer and not only through the word. (See advice on prayer in next section).
4. **This is a trial,** in a time when everything is different. What I'm suggesting and inviting you to do is work out how best to engage with God's word and with the others in your groups. In the words of Jerry Maguire - *"Help me, help you!"*

To get the most out of these studies and your group time:

- Watch the Sunday service and pay attention to the sermon
- Read the passage and watch the video links at the top of each study before the group meets (not essential - but very helpful).
- Have a Bible, Pen and Notebook ready to help you engage

Prayer time:

A helpful way to do this is, each week, share one challenge, one encouragement and one person you're hoping will come to know and love Jesus.

Some Zoom/online group tips:

Be on time:

If the group meets at 7:30pm, aim to be ready 5 or 10 mins before it begins. If chat time is 7:20-7:30pm don't arrive online at 7:30pm expecting a chat. Get your cup of tea and snacks ready, get your bible, study booklet and pen. Love the others in your group by sorting that out before you come together.

Think about your background/environment:

If possible, sit somewhere that doesn't have big distractions in the background. Aim not to be in a room with other people making lots of noise, or if that's impossible, wear head-phones. If there's a window in your room, try to put that behind the computer, not behind you.

Be an active participant in the group:

One of the challenges of online meetings is the ease of being passive and zoning out. But the truth is, the more we put in, the more we'll get out.

Be patient with your leader as they work out this new forum:

This terrain is new for everyone, help your leader do well for the group, don't judge them, be gracious. Your leaders put a lot of energy into loving you in this way. Go with what they're trying to do. By all means give them feedback, but be gentle with them. They're amazing!

Here's a visual overview of Genesis chapters 1-11:

Bible Project - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQI72THyO5I>

1 - Creation

Before your group meets - Read Genesis 1:1-2:3

And watch these videos:

Reading the Creation story in it's historical setting - John Dickson:

Part 1 - <https://www.publicchristianity.org/reading-the-genesis-creation-accounts-part-1/>

Part 2 - <https://www.publicchristianity.org/reading-the-genesis-creation-accounts-part-2/>

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, Louie Giglio - <https://youtu.be/2f5ST7FDyRI>

Discuss together (each person to share):

When you look around at God's creation, what things really amaze you?

(What things make you say, "someone had to have created that, there's no way that could be an accident"?)

Think on this:

Beginnings are important! They tell us where we came from, who we are and why we exist. They speak to our meaning, purpose and identity. While people in our day are looking up ancestry.com trying to find who they are and where they came from, God has given us the ultimate answer in Genesis 1.

Look at Qu.1–3 in Pairs: (10 mins)

Qu.1 Genesis 1 is written in a unique style to make it's point clearly and succinctly. What is the main message the writer is trying to convey?

These questions may help:

- Who was the creator?
- What did he make?
- How did he make it?
- What was it like?
- Does it seem like he knew what he was doing?

Qu.2 Turn the answers to those questions into a statement that you could share with a friend who was asking about the origins of life.

Qu.3 Most of us go about life thinking we are the main character in the story of our life. But Genesis 1:1 challenges that perspective. Before you or I existed, for all eternity, God was and still is the main character of this story of life. How does this affect the way you think about your purpose and place in God's creation?

Read together in main group:

The New Testament makes clear what was only hinted at in Genesis 1 (1:2 & 1:26). God is 3-in-1: Father, Son and Spirit. In fact the New Testament tells us that all creation was made by and through and for Jesus.

Colossians 1:15-16 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

All creation was made to celebrate Jesus!

Qu.4 As you go about your daily life, as you see, eat, breathe, build, use, how might you turn those experiences into reasons to praise Jesus for His creativity?

Qu.5 How does having this bigger view of God as maker and sustainer of our world encourage you during this season of Covid19?

A reflection for prayer time:

Revelation 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

2 - Image of God

Before your group meets - Read Genesis 1:26-31

And watch these videos:

Bible Project - image of God - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbipxLDtY8c>

John Piper - Image of God - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN96ct3vDGU>

Discuss together (each person to share):

What do you think it means to be the made in the image of God?

Think on this:

In the ancient world, statues were set up by kings as a sign of their rulership. People would see the statue and remember their king. It represented what the king wanted to be known for. In the Law, God commanded his people not to make statues representing God, instead, He made Humans for that purpose.

Look at Qu.1 – 2 in Pairs: (10 mins)

Qu.1 - In vs26-28 What is the task men and women are given to do together?

Qu.2 - If we viewed all people as bearing the image of God, with inherent dignity given to them by their creator, how should it affect the way we think about:

(Choose 2)

- Racism
- Abortion and Euthanasia
- Hate
- Social justice (serving the needy)
- Evangelism
- Vulnerable people (elderly, physical or mental illness)
- Prisoners

Read together in main group:

After the fall (Genesis 3), mankind retained their dignity but lost their ability to reflect God properly. Humans no longer ruled or cared for God's creation the way God intended. God then called Israel to be His representatives, but they made God look terrible to their surrounding nations (Deuteronomy 4:5-8, Ezekiel 36:22-23). That's why God planned to send His Son into the world. Jesus perfectly represented God.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

When we put our faith in Jesus, God does a new creative work in us; he remakes us to reflect Jesus, the perfect image of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - And we all ... are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory.

2 Corinthians 4:16 - Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation: The old has gone, the new has come!

Qu.3 - How does it encourage you to know that the God who created all things is now re-creating you to be just like Him? (especially in this season of Covid19)

Think on this:

Another aspect of bearing God's image is reflecting his character to our world. It's seen in the way we care for and love others as Jesus loved and cared for us.

Qu.4 Reflect on the following verses, then share - what's one area of your life you want to change to reflect Jesus better?

Ephesians 4:25-5:1

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children.

For further reading and reflection on the image of God during the week:

What do the following passages teach about God's image?	
Romans 8:28-39	
1 Corinthians 15:48-58	
2 Corinthians 3:18	
2 Corinthians 4:1-7	
Colossians 1:15-20	
Colossians 3:8-17	
Hebrews 1:1-4	
James 3:7-10	
Psalms 8	

3 - God, the Lord of Work and Rest

Before your group meets - Read Genesis 2:1-25

Discuss together (each person to share):

What was your first job?

What's your dream job?

Think on this:

We're going to explore the themes of work and rest in this study. The way God works, rests and includes us in His work is foundational for the way we approach our work.

Look at Qu.1 – 5 in Pairs: (10 mins)

Qu.1 - In Gen 2:4-22 what is the work God does?

Qu.2 - In Gen 2:15, 19-20 what work does Adam do?

Qu.3 - If God sees work as a “good” thing, how should that affect my attitude towards work?

Qu.4 - How does the way God works and rests speak to the issues of overworking or refusing to work without good reason? (Genesis 1:31; 2:1-3)

Think on this:

The way God works shows us there is both worth and pleasure in what we do. God not only gave us a job to do (Be fruitful and increase, rule over creation), but he invites us to be his co-workers in the world (just as he placed Adam and Eve to work and take care of Eden). After the fall, work became more difficult, yet did not lose its inherent purpose and dignity. Work, in God's good design, is a gift! This is true regardless of whether we're on the front-line as an E.R Doctor during Covid19, doing the housework, studying, volunteering, or even looking for work.

Qu.5 - Share how you experience the goodness and frustrations of work in your current scenario?

Read together in main group: Let's now think about Rest

We can often think that rest = doing nothing or doing what I want to do. Whilst we are certainly NOT saved by obeying Old Testament laws like the Sabbath, they nonetheless contain wisdom for living well in God's world. Here's what God intended with rest (you won't have time to look these verses up now, but take time to reflect on them later):

- It is not about legalism (rule keeping) but about doing good and helping others (Matthew 12:9-12).
- It is about remembering God's promises (Exodus 31:12-13)
- It is about being refreshed (Exodus 31:17)
- It is about remembering to look to God for our provisions (Exodus 16:29-30).
- It is about remembering who is in control (Ezekiel 20:11-13).
- It involves gathering with God's people (Leviticus 23:3).
- It involves dropping tools, doing something different and giving some earnings back to God. This is also so that work and the fruit of work will not become an idol (Leviticus 23:23-25).
- It involves letting everyone in the household rest physically including animals, foreigners and servants who would otherwise be drained (Exodus 20:8-10). Even the land is to have rest from our work (Leviticus 25:1-5).

Qu.6 - How has God used either this study or COVID19 to change your work and rest patterns? How can you continue realigning your work-rest patterns with God's purposes?

(For example, perhaps coronavirus has helped you 'slow down' from work. Perhaps, you've discovered new things that have helped you rest as a result of isolation)

A reflection for prayer time:

Matthew 11:28-30 - Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."