



Who am I
what am I doing here

?

Bible Study Discussion Guide

Joel D. Biermann

Who Am I? What Am I Doing Here?

These are the big questions that eventually confront every man. Usually the dual questions begin to nag in childhood. Aware of a wide universe and seeking to grasp his place within it, the child asks and wonders. The truth, of course, is that the questions do not go away with time. Perhaps the nagging can be quelled or covered with distractions and with rationalizations. But, eventually everyone must return to the questions of one's own existence and the reason for being. These questions refuse to go away.

God has the answers.

Using what God has revealed, this study will provide honest and straightforward answers to these twin questions. God does not leave us desolate, wondering who we are. He does not condemn us to grope in the dark, seeking meaning in life. Man is not left to determine his own truth or to stumble through his days without direction. The six segments of this study will explore what God has revealed about life's biggest questions and will shed light on the difference that knowing the answers makes for the way a man lives in the routine of life. And it does make a difference—a profound difference. The answers are waiting. God is ready to tell you not only who you are but also what you're doing here. - **Joel D. Biermann**

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Who Am I? What Am I Doing Here? - Joel D. Biermann

Study 1 – In the Beginning

Opening Prayer

Watch the Video.

Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:1-6

- 7 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.
- 8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there He put the man He had formed.
- 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
- 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;
- 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."
- 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"
- 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,
- 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"
- 4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.
- 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
- 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
- a. According to the Bible, when God created Adam He called all the shots. Adam didn't get to choose where he would live, how tall he would be, or what he would look like. He was a creature and his Creator determined exactly where and how he fit into this world.

You didn't get a choice either. You didn't choose where and when you were born, who your parents were, or what your physical characteristics would be. If you could call the shots, what would you change?

- b. God fit Adam into a particular position among the creatures of this world. Within that niche he had freedom and choices (what to name the animals, how he wanted to work the garden, etc.), but for life to remain good, he had to stay in that niche. It has been argued that the sin of Adam (and Eve) was that he was not content to remain the creature God created him to be, doing the work God created him to do. Instead, he asserted his own sovereignty and chose his own path.

Describe times when you were not content with your lot in life and chose to follow your own path. When is it good to do this and when is it harmful? Recognizing that it takes both body and soul to make a whole person, what impact does that have on how you live your life?

- c. Think of your place in life right now—your various roles at home, at work, and in your community. Discuss how these roles are important for the world around you and why.
- d. Adam and Eve's sin didn't look so bad at the time; they only took a piece of fruit. But the consequences for them and all of creation were disastrous: violence, illness, misfortune, and death. Name some choices people make today which seem harmless at the time, but turn out quite differently. Discuss some of the tragic consequences that result when people choose to do things they were not created to do.
- e. There's one area of your life where you had no choice: God chose to send His Son to deliver you from the mess your choices put you in. How is knowing that it was His action freeing for you?

Weekly Challenge: What difference will this study make in the way that you live in the coming week? Choose one of the significant roles you play, then observe how you impact others in that role.

Closing Prayer: Wise Father in heaven, thank You for making me the way You chose. Forgive me for serving myself instead of Your creation. Show me the joy of being Your creature who does what You created me to do. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Study 2 – Coming to Terms with the Law

Opening Prayer

Last Week's Challenge: Discuss the significant role you focused on last week and how it impacted those around you.

Opening Discussion: Share with the group a civil law currently in effect that you consider a bad law (perhaps one that has caused you some trouble). What bothers you about this law?

Watch the Video.

Romans 1:18-32; 2:14-15

- 18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,
- 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
- 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
- 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
- 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.
- 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.
- 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.
- 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.
- 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.
- 28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.
- 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,
- 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;
- 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

2:14 Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the Law, do by nature things required by the Law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the Law,

15 since they show that the requirements of the Law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

a. Paul states that all people know God is real whether they are willing to admit it or not. Explain why a person might refuse to acknowledge God's existence. What things might make it hard to believe God exists?

b. Paul also tells us that God gave us a conscience and wrote His natural law on our hearts. This reading supports the idea that people just know or instinctively sense what is right. Discuss things your friends or associates do which they feel are perfectly okay but which you find morally wrong. Explain why we aren't all on the same page. Do you think there are people who are totally amoral?

c. The Bible teaches that our Creator's natural law is not only written on our hearts, it is hard wired into the fabric of the universe itself. Any decision we make, any word we speak, any action we take against that law will always prove harmful to ourselves, our families and, in fact, to all of creation. Would mainstream American culture agree with this? Do you agree? Why or why not?

d. If every person lived according to God's natural law, what would be the benefits for you, your family, and your community? What disadvantages might there be? Describe how other religions show that the law is hard wired, but the Gospel is not.

Weekly Challenge: Knowing God's good law is hard wired into every aspect of our world, what difference will that make in the way you live in the coming week? Name one harmful behavior you will battle with God's help in the days ahead.

Closing Prayer: Holy Father, You have a good and perfect plan for every part of Your creation. For Christ's sake, forgive me for disobeying the law You wrote on my heart. Empower me to joyfully serve You as I serve the rest of creation around me. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



Opening Prayer

Last Week's Challenge: Discuss your experiences attacking your one harmful behavior.

Opening Discussion: When you were in high school, what were you taught about the origins of the world?

Watch the Video.

Psalm 14:1-6

- 1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.
- 2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.
- 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.
- 4 Will evildoers never learn— those who devour my people as men eat bread and who do not call on the LORD?
- 5 There they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous.
- 6 You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge.
 - a. If you accept Darwinian evolution and believe that the universe somehow created itself through mere chance, where do you find meaning and significance in your life? What makes your life worth living?
 - b. If you accept God as the Creator who designed this universe to work together perfectly, where do you find meaning and significance in your life? What makes your life worth living?
 - c. One of the appeals of Darwinian evolution is the freedom of choice and autonomy it offers. Without God there is no natural law and there is no Judgment Day to fear. Describe what perceived advantages you would enjoy if you had no moral restraint. What dangers would this autonomy and freedom bring to our society?
 - d. Discuss what will happen at the end of your earthly life if Darwinian evolution is true. What comfort and hope does Darwinian evolution offer? Discuss what will happen at the end of your life if the Bible is true. What comfort and hope does a loving and forgiving Creator offer?

Weekly Challenge: Realizing how much we depend on God and how interdependent we are with each other, what difference will that make in the way you live in the coming week? Consider one area of your life in which you have not been as dependable as you would like and commit yourself to improve this area. (This is an area where accountability partners come in handy.)

Closing Prayer: Holy Father, You have shown me I can depend on You to provide every need. Forgive the times I have been undependable, and help me to be responsible and dependable to my family and friends, to my work, and to all You have created around me. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Last Week's Challenge: Discuss your experiences last week as you strove to be more dependable for those who rely on you.

Opening Discussion: Looking back on your youth, were there any indications or telltale signs that led you to your career or the life you live today?

Watch the Video.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

- 17 Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.
- 18 Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised.
- 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.
- 20 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him.
- 21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so.
- 22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.
- 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.
- 24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.
 - a. We can't serve God. He had to serve and save us through His Son. Because we are saved, God has chosen us by grace to serve His creation no matter what our place in life may be. How might a man who is a skilled carpenter be able to serve the Lord's creation much better in that field than if he went to seminary and became a pastor?
 - b. Discuss whether some of your roles/responsibilities are more important than others. Choose a few of your roles and describe how they serve those around you. Which of these roles seems least important to you? Explore how these can be very important for those around you.
 - c. Is volunteering at church more important than being with your family? Is helping your neighbor more important than putting in overtime at work? Is helping your child with homework more important than sitting down to talk with your wife? Discuss how you set your priorities and how you balance the needs of your different roles.

- d. We often hear we should give God the biggest piece of the pie, followed by our family, then our work, then our leisure. How would our perspective change if we realized that when we serve our family, our work, and our neighbors we are, in fact, serving God as He is the whole pie? Do we consider that all of our lives are to be lived in service to God?

Weekly Challenge: Knowing you please God by faithfully meeting your responsibilities at work, at home, and in the community, what difference will that make in the way you live in the coming week? Commit yourself to improving a role you have been neglecting?

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, You continually provide for all my needs—often through Your creatures who are near me. Forgive me for being so ungrateful. Give me joy to faithfully serve Your creation with all my might, no matter what my hands find to do. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



Opening Prayer

Last Week's Challenge: Discuss the successes you had while trying to improve your neglected role last week.

Opening Discussion: What is the most frightening thing you have ever been asked to do for someone else?

Watch the Video.

Galatians 6:2-10

- 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
 - 3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
 - 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,
 - 5 for each one should carry his own load.
 - 6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.
 - 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.
 - 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.
 - 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
 - 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.
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- a. Describe the last good deed you did. Explain the reasons why you did it. Which of these motives were good? Which may have been questionable or bad? Discuss whether wrong motives negated the goodness of your deed (to the person you served, to yourself, or to God).
 - b. Sometimes we view our giving to church as if that amount of our income belongs to God while the rest belongs to us. But, in reality, it is all God's money and we are simply the caretakers of it. How does that knowledge change the way you might spend your money?
 - c. Many charities and non-profit organizations are in need of contributions (Red Cross, Muscular Dystrophy Association, American Cancer Society). If you contribute to one of these organizations, is that worth less than a contribution to your church?

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

- 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
 - 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
 - 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.
 - 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.
- a. There's a quotation attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi: "Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary." Nothing destroys the impact of our words and promises more than expressions, deeds, actions, and attitudes that don't match up. List some simple ways to increase the value of your "two cents worth."
 - b. What are some topics you find easy to discuss? What topics are you reluctant to discuss and why?
 - c. Imagine on the news tonight someone claiming he discovered something that will improve all of our lives immensely—a cure for cancer, the solution to world hunger and poverty, a cheap and abundant source of energy. What type of reaction do you think he might get? How would you react to such unbelievably good news? Would you feel an obligation to pass that news on? What would you do if your friends didn't believe you? How is this similar to sharing the good news of God's love for all people in Jesus Christ?

Weekly Challenge: Since God generously provides for our families, and we have the responsibility to share the faith with them and all those around us, what difference will that make in the way you live in the coming week? Give thought to how you use your money to help our world. Take a moment and talk about God's truth with someone this week.

Closing Prayer: Holy Father, You have taught me about Your undeserved love through Your Son Jesus Christ. Give me the joy and courage to share Your wonderful love with those who are near me at home, at work, and in my community. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Last Week's Challenge: Discuss how you thought to use your money to benefit our world, or how you shared God's truth with someone else.

Opening Discussion: Describe what you think will happen after you die.

Watch the Video.

Romans 8:18-25

- 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.
- 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope
- 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
- 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
- 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
- 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?
- 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.
- a. In our youth, we are often filled with dreams and hopes and an impatience to get on with our lives. What were your hopes and dreams? The Bible teaches that on Judgment Day God will reunite our bodies and spirits and make us perfect forever. In that perfect world, which of these hopes and dreams would you still have? Which wouldn't be important anymore?
- b. As we pass through our twenties and thirties and reach our middle years, many men are hit by a mid-life crisis. Why do so many men get disillusioned at this time in life? What kinds of things does this mid-life crisis cause men to do? Why? How can you find joy and contentment at this point in your life?

- c. Few men picture themselves growing old. Do you? Of course, unless you die young, one day you will find yourself staring at an old man in the mirror. What can you do today to make sure your life will still have meaning and purpose when you are too old to work or too old to be at home anymore? If you were injured today and unable to work again for the rest of this life, how would you feel about yourself? How could your life still be worth living?
- d. As years pass and you come ever closer to the end of this life, how can you find peace, joy, and hope? How will God's offer to make your body perfect and give you an endless life of peace and joy if you trust in Jesus Christ help you through your final years?

Paul shows us the glorious end for believers in 1 Corinthians 15:51-57:

- 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—
- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
- 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.
- 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."
- 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"
- 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law.
- 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Weekly Challenge: Knowing the glorious future we will enjoy for Jesus' sake, what difference will that make in the way you live in the coming week? Name one way this knowledge will transform your thoughts or attitudes in the days ahead.

Closing Prayer: Almighty Father, because of my Savior Jesus Christ, I am looking forward to the Last Day when You will glorify my body and reveal the new heaven and the new earth. Transform my thoughts, words, and actions, so that they may reflect my joy and gratitude to You, while I live in joyful service to all Your creatures. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



NOTES



Dedication from the Author

God gave me my identity and my purpose,
and then made both more remarkable and delightful when He gave me a wife.
It is to Jeannalee that this work is dedicated.

Anything you want to say?

Topics such as those addressed in this Bible study are considered daily
on the **Men's NetWork** Forum at www.lhmmen.com/foruminfo.asp
Check it out, sign up, and join in.



The **Men's NetWork** is a Christ-centered, Scripture-guided, service-oriented fellowship committed to equipping and motivating men to greater levels of leadership and service as they become stronger disciples of Jesus Christ. At our Web site, www.lhmmen.com, we offer video Bible studies, ministry tools to deepen men's faith, practical and easy-to-use resources for hands-on service projects, and other useful information for men's groups.

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