

# I AM

GETTING TO KNOW THE  
GOD OF THE BIBLE





**I  
AM**

**GETTING TO KNOW THE  
GOD OF THE BIBLE**

A Community Groups Study  
of Crossline Community Church

# Contents

## INTRO

01	Prologue
02	A Word to Hosts
03	How to Get the Most Out of This Study
04	Nobody Not Connected
05	Foreword

## SESSION 1

07	Introduction
10	Discussion
13	Devotionals

## SESSION 2

25	Introduction
28	Discussion
31	Devotionals

## SESSION 3

43	Introduction
46	Discussion
52	Devotionals

## SESSION 4

65	Introduction
68	Discussion
71	Devotionals

## SESSION 5

83	Introduction
86	Discussion
90	Devotionals

## INFO

101	APPENDICES
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# PROLOGUE:

The Philistine army was gloating over the spoils of their fierce victory as they brought the Ark of the Covenant into the temple of Dagon, whom they saw as the father of gods and bringer of abundant harvest. Here they would place this holy relic of the Israelites to show the supremacy of the great Dagon over YHWH, the God of Israel. They may be laughing and celebrating now... but they are in for a rude awakening.

The following morning, the temple assistant staggers into the temple after a long night of carousing and celebration. He is rubbing his eyes. As his hands fall to his sides, he stops, confused. There on the floor is the statue of Dagon, face down before the Ark of the Covenant. Earthquake, maybe? A drunk temple worker bumping into it? Or...? No...it couldn't be. He quickly calls for the other assistants and together they lift the icon of Dagon back into its place.

The image of Dagon on the floor before the Ark of the Covenant was flashing in the mind of the temple assistant. He couldn't sleep. As he lay in bed, he began to fight feelings of shame for doubting the power of Dagon. It tormented him. He rose early to go pray and ask Dagon for forgiveness. As he rushed into the temple, the scene dropped him to his knees. He was trembling with fear.

There he saw the statue of Dagon, again on the floor before the Ark. However, this time, his head and hands had been broken from its body and lay on the threshold of the temple. Whispers, filled with fear and awe, slowly escape from his lips.

*"Who is this God? And what does he want from us?"*

A simple, yet unfathomably deep question. The most important question. Perhaps no question more informs the way we live our lives than this question. What does your life say about your answer to this question? How would understanding him more fully and accurately impact your thoughts, your relationships and your actions?

God is beckoning you, "who do you say I AM?"

## A WORD TO HOSTS:

Starting this 5-week community group study, you likely have a wide variety of emotions going through your head and your heart right now. Some of you are beyond excited and rejoicing that this study is finally here. You looked up new dessert recipes, printed out custom prayer request cards, and already comprised your email and text distribution lists for the group! Some of you may be terrified, questioning why in the world you've decided to do this. Wherever you are now, allow us to share one thing we know with great confidence—**you and your group will be blessed because you stepped out in faith!**

We have a specific encouragement for you: **YOU CAN DO THIS!** Our enemy, the devil, would want you to believe that you can't or that you should be afraid, but God is with you, and He has great plans for you and each person in your group! The Bible states that "[You] can do all things through Christ who strengthens [you]" (Philippians 4:13). The Lord proclaims over you, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9).

In addition, you are not alone. Take full advantage of the Church that God has put around you. Reach out to fellow hosts, key volunteers, leaders, or church staff. We all want to come alongside you and help you be successful. Don't try to do this in isolation, but instead link arms with your brothers and sisters.

May the Spirit of the Lord be upon you as you host and shepherd the group of people God has entrusted to you. Blessings!

# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS STUDY:

Welcome to the exciting adventure of studying the Bible! In I AM: Getting to Know the God of the Bible, you will be diving into the Holy Scriptures as a group of literary and spiritual archaeologists, seeking to uncover the truths about who God really is. God may seem grand and mysterious—and indeed He is—but with a focused exploration of the Bible and the help of the Holy Spirit, much about His character and attributes will be revealed.

To make the most of this study, here are some important suggestions:

1. The best way to get the most out of this study is to **ENGAGE**. Come to your community group ready to listen and discuss. If you are distracted or closed off, we can guarantee you that this experience won't be as rich for you as it could be.
2. Make an intentional effort to do the Daily Devotionals for each week. Each of these readings are designed to enhance your weekly discussions. They are written by pastors and ministry leaders serving within the church. These are men and women just like you and they write from a very personal perspective. You are likely to connect with these devotions in ways that are different from the other sections of the workbook.
3. Come as you are and don't let this study burden you! This workbook is designed to be a refreshing, thought-provoking, easy-to-use aid for discussion and study. All the Scripture references are already in the workbook. (You can certainly bring your Bible if you'd like to, or if that is what the group decides, but it is not required.)

# "NOBODY NOT CONNECTED"

Community is an essential need of humankind. When the weight of the world comes down upon us, it is a community that enables us to stand. Consider the wise words of King Solomon,

*"Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their labor:  
If either of them falls down,  
one can help the other up.  
But pity anyone who falls  
and has no one to help them up  
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
But how can one keep warm alone?  
Though one may be overpowered,  
Two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."  
(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)*

Whether you are stumbling over habits, struggling with destructive thinking, or being attacked, there is a security in belonging to a community that is for you.

With that in mind, we are strongly urging you to take ownership of the vision of making sure that everyone who wants community can find it. This is not something that leaders or hosts are solely responsible for; this is the conviction that must be woven into every person participating in this study. This means compassionately taking responsibility to walk alongside those you meet that are looking for a group. This means that groups must be more open to receiving newcomers. This means that new hosts and leaders must rise up from existing groups. This means that we need to be sacrificially thinking of the needs of others above our own needs. When we do this, everyone can receive a blessing.

*Nobody not connected...*

# FOREWORD:

Welcome to *I AM: Getting to Know the God of the Bible*, a 5-session small groups curriculum from Crossline Community Church. Although you can do this curriculum individually, it is best in the context of a small group of people. We pray that this content will bless you and assist you in your process of discipleship.

In *I AM*, you and your group will have the chance to look at some of the most informative passages in the Bible that describe God. In so doing, you will examine the character and attributes of the God of the Bible. You will learn to understand God better, to trust in him with all your heart and to live, pray and obey with confidence. Big thoughts about God inspire big faith and big faith motivates big action! Come ready and expectant to see and experience God like never before!

In addition to the written content in this booklet, videos accompany each session and can be accessed through the RightNow Media platform (see page 102) or by going to [crosslinechurch.com/IAM](http://crosslinechurch.com/IAM).

## *PART OF A LARGER COLLECTION OF CURRICULA*

If you enjoy this study, we encourage you to continue with the other study that is part of this collection. In *The Man. The Myth. The Legend. Getting to Know the Real Jesus*, groups can follow the same format as they take a deeper look at Jesus from the Bible. This study pairs really well with *I AM* and can provide a great run of 10 sessions of content for your Community Group.





# **SESSION 1**

**ETERNALLY**

**UNCHANGEABLE**

# INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever been to the Grand Canyon? I remember the first time I laid eyes on it...it took my breath away. The deep majestic walls rainbowed with color and the sparkling blue waters of the Colorado River winding through the canyon down below were enough to make me sit down and marvel. Or maybe you have meandered into an alpine meadow nestled amongst snow-topped spires and filled with thousands of vibrant flowers. Each and every flower is a work of art, but together, combined with their sweet aromas, it's a masterpiece. Our world is filled with truly phenomenal wonders of creation that can leave us in awe. Awesome as they may be, like all other things in this world, they are subject to change. The Grand Canyon was not the same as it was when your grandparents saw it and won't be the same as when your grandchildren see it. Whether it be the Grand Canyon, a flowery meadow, an island coral reef, the giant sequoia redwood, a stunning snow leopard, or the face looking back at you in the mirror, everything changes.

Except God.

The Creator never changes.

He is the everlasting God. Before all things, He was. At the end of all things, He will be. As we look into the Bible, in Exodus 3, God declares to Moses that He is the same God that appeared to and strengthened his fathers in generations past. He reveals His name as "I am"—a name that speaks to His self-existent, never-changing nature.

As you step into this week's study, think about the significance of having a God who is unchanging and unchangeable. What would that mean to your lives today when you discover truths about His character and attributes from the Bible? How would that affirm the relevance of the Bible to our daily lives?

“

A MORE POSITIVE ASSERTION OF SELFHOOD COULD NOT BE IMAGINED THAN THOSE WORDS OF GOD TO MOSES: I AM THAT I AM. EVERYTHING GOD IS, EVERYTHING THAT IS GOD, IS SET FORTH IN THAT UNQUALIFIED DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENT BEING.

SO, WERE EVERY MAN ON EARTH TO BECOME ATHEIST, IT COULD NOT AFFECT GOD IN ANY WAY. HE IS WHAT HE IS IN HIMSELF WITHOUT REGARD TO ANY OTHER. TO BELIEVE IN HIM ADDS NOTHING TO HIS PERFECTIONS; TO DOUBT HIM TAKES NOTHING AWAY.

BECAUSE GOD LIVES IN AN EVERLASTING NOW, HE HAS NO PAST AND NO FUTURE. WHEN TIME-WORDS OCCUR IN THE SCRIPTURES THEY REFER TO OUR TIME, NOT TO HIS...BUT SINCE GOD IS UNCREATED, HE IS NOT HIMSELF AFFECTED BY THAT SUCCESSION OF CONSECUTIVE CHANGES WE CALL TIME. GOD DWELLS IN ETERNITY BUT TIME DWELLS IN GOD.<sup>1</sup>

- AW TOZER

## VIDEO SEGMENT

Now, as a group, turn on your TV or Laptop and watch the video for Session 1,  
**ETERNALLY UNCHANGEABLE**

### 2 WAYS TO WATCH:

1. Through the RightNow Media platform  
(Learn How on Page 102)
2. Find and stream on [crosslinechurch.com/iam](http://crosslinechurch.com/iam)

*After Watching, take a moment to initially respond with your thoughts about the video.*

# READ:

## Exodus 3:1-15

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."<sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."<sup>5</sup> "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."<sup>6</sup> Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.<sup>7</sup> The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."<sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"<sup>12</sup> And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."<sup>13</sup> Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"<sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, "Say to

the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.'

"This is my name forever,  
the name you shall call me  
from generation to generation.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **See it**

1. What do you think is the big idea of this passage?
2. What do you learn about God?

### **Understand it**

3. What specific attributes, characteristics, actions and names, are ascribed to God?
4. What do you think God wants us to know about Him from this passage?

### **Live it**

5. Why do you think it is important to know these things about God?
6. Based on this passage, what would you tell someone who asks you, "What is God like?"
7. Based on this passage, what do you think God wants you to do?

# **NOTES // PRAYER REQUESTS**

# **SESSION 1**

## **DEVOTIONALS**

## DAY 1: MORE THAN A MINI-FIG

Jordan Gash

It's getting out of control. With three boys and a high dose of personal interest, LEGO bricks are starting to take over our house! To help with the chaos, I recently built a large wooden box, divided into segments, where we can organize all the LEGO bricks by color and purpose. It's a thing of beauty. It's so wonderfully functional that it brings a tear to my eye. I know some of you totally understand.

My kids' favorite thing to do with LEGO is to build the "mini-figs", which, for those who are unfamiliar, are little customizable figurines. Their mini-figs are personal to them. They build them in the exact way they want them and claim them as their very own for all their imaginative play. They've even had nights where they want them next to them while they sleep.

As we begin a 25-day journey through seeking to know the God of the Bible, one of the most important things for us to realize is that this God is our God. He is personal. He is present. He is the divine, all-powerful, Creator of the universe who created every living thing, including you. Because He created you, He is intimately aware and cares about the details of your life. Take a few extra breaths and just sit on that for a moment. I don't know where you are at with your understanding of God, but He fully understands you. No matter what has happened in your life, you weren't created to be casually tossed into the bin of this world. You were created with love and He wants you to be with Him.

Today, as we look at Exodus 3, notice that God is a God who sees, hears, speaks and touches. God explains why He is coming to rescue the Hebrew people in verse 7.

*The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering."  
(Exodus 3:7)*

There is much to discover about who God is—this is called

theology. There are complete master and doctorate-level degrees in theology! However, all theology is pointless if we do not grasp this vitally important, foundational knowledge, that God sees you and wants a relationship with you. This is most evidenced in the fact that He sent His son, Jesus, to die for you, cleansing you of all unrighteousness, making a way for you to have eternal life with Him.

Take heart today, child. Your God is near and He is concerned with your well-being.

### **PRAYER**

*I am one in whom the Lord dwells and delights, and I live, along with others, in the unshakable Kingdom of God.*

*Dear God, that is true and for that I thank you. Thank you for always being there for me. Thank you for being faithful and concerned with me in all the good times and hard times. I am yours. Lead me deeper and deeper into relationship with you. Amen.*

## DAY 2: WHAT'S YOUR PHARAOH?

Kelli Condon

"Dad! Guess what? I met the man I'm gonna marry!" (\*CRICKETS\*)... On the other end of the line, there was utter silence. After hearing my words, I'm sure my Dad was experiencing a rush of emotions—shock, confusion, sheer terror?! You see, I had moved to California from Colorado about a month prior, so this declaration seemed impulsive. I'm sure my parents were scratching their heads in dismay thinking, "Gosh...thought we raised a more level-headed daughter?! Who in their right mind considers marriage so quickly?!" Having three daughters of my own, I understand their concern! Admittedly, I'm unconvinced my response would be all that Christ-like.

I didn't blame my parents for questioning my judgment. Marriage is a BIG decision, right? But, here's the deal, I knew something about Ty my parents didn't (yet): his character. Ty had revealed WHO he was (albeit imperfect). Knowing his honorable character caused me to trust him. It laid the foundation for a healthy relationship. I wish I could say I was equally impressed with his sense of style, but luckily the Lord allowed me to see past lesser things. (Ty, you know I love you, babe!) Ty's character is worthy of my heart. God's character is worthy of my soul. In Exodus chapter 6, Moses witnesses firsthand God's nature as He powerfully reveals Himself.

*"Therefore say to the Israelites: 'I am the Lord, and I WILL bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I WILL free you from being slaves to them, and I WILL redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I WILL take you as my own people, and I WILL be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians, And I WILL bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I WILL give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.'"* (Exodus 6:6-8)

Whoa! I love God's assuredness. God emphatically explains to Moses, 1) I know your problem, don't panic. 2) Let me remind you who I am. 3) I'm going to fix your mess, step aside. This passage provides confidence in who God is and His plan to rescue. He bookends His words with "I am

the Lord," declaring His sufficiency. Each promise speaks powerfully to God's sovereign character, both then and now! Thankfully, His nature is unchanging. God's faithfulness remains and He is worthy of our trust. What's your "Pharaoh?" From what do you need to be rescued? Sin? Inability to forgive? Hopelessness? Today, I encourage you to relinquish whatever's keeping you "stuck" and place it into the hands of the great I am. He has a rescue plan for you!

### **PRAYER**

*God, thank you for your limitless and perfect character. Thank you for seeing me worthy of rescue! Today, may the truth of who you are prompt me to trust you wholeheartedly, obey you confidently, and love others unconditionally. May I be fully anchored in love because you are my rescuer and redeemer.  
Amen!*

## DAY 3: F.E.A.R

Holly Mora

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at the break of day...The Lord Almighty is with us; The God of Jacob is our fortress. (Psalm 46:1-5,7)*

Wow. I don't know about you, but when my "world" is giving way and the mountains are quaking around me, my first instinct is to panic and run! Then I seek out immediate comfort and ways to distract my anxiety. You too? Well, my friend, we have a better option. The offerings of this world for comfort and distraction can certainly bring immediate relief in some cases, but your favorite Netflix binge will do nothing (and often have the opposite effect) for reframing your thoughts to see fear for what it really is.

Webster's definition of fear is "a feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the presence of danger, pain or apprehension of the unknown." It reminds me of the saying F.E.A.R: FORGET EVERYTHING AND RUN. However, our response is very different when we reframe our understanding of fear based on the Bible. The Bible shows us that the "awe and reverence" fear that we have for the Lord can drown out every other fear. So let's switch that up. F.E.A.R FACE EVERYTHING AND RISE.

So much better right? It reminds us that God is our refuge! We can RISE up in His strength! He is always with us, regardless of our circumstances. When the sea around us is roaring, He is my calming force. Keeping our eyes on Him, instead of the waves of life that bring uncertainty and chaos, focuses our attention on the Kingdom to which we belong. We only need to "Be still and know that I am God..." (Ps. 46:10).

Fear is a real thing, a true emotion. The issue is that we are too quick to turn our fear into anxiety and worry. It makes us blind to the fact

that our Creator, our Abba Father commands us “do not fear”. That command is in the Bible 365 times. One for each day of the year! You don’t have to go through a single day without His comfort. So next time your mountains are quaking, and you are longing for peace, RISE UP and remember that He is WITH you, He is FOR you and He LOVES you more than you can possibly fathom. Those are promises we can live by every moment of every day.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, remind me every day that you are within me, I will not fall. You are my fortress. Holy Spirit lead my steps and when my circumstances threaten to drown me, lift my eyes to Your Holy place and grant me peace. In Jesus name. Amen.*

## DAY 4: I HAVE YOU

Grant Gunther

I feel like at this season in my life I am surrounded by little kiddos more than I have ever been. Babies are everywhere in my life. My close married friends are beginning to have kids and our church recently opened our own pre-school with infant care. One of the observations I have made with all these kiddos is that when they start being able to move around on their own, BOOM, they are zipping and zooming all over the place. Young kids are FEARLESS when it comes to moving around and exploring new areas. (Similar to when a high schooler gets their license!) The moment they can scoot, walk, or run, it seems like they are always in perpetual motion! However, I have also noticed that when they are adventuring around and get frightened by something, they go scurrying back to the comfort and protection of their mom, dad, or the person taking care of them. Whether the child clings to and hides behind their legs, or grabs for their hand, I am sure you have seen this exact scene play out at some point in your life.

Isaiah is one of the longer books in the Bible. When we get to the second part of Isaiah (ch. 40-66) we are dealing with a defeated people. God's chosen people in the Old Testament, the Israelites, have failed repeatedly to live according to the law given to them by God, and must now experience His judgment at the hands of the conquering nation of Babylon. Yet, as they are sitting in exile because of God's judgment, God continues to speak to them through the prophet Isaiah and actually provides them with hope! Here is what it says in Isaiah 41...

*I brought you from the ends of the earth and called you from its farthest corners. I said to you: You are My servant; I have chosen you and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:9-10)*

Much like when a scared child reaches for the strength and security found in the hand of an adult they know loves and cares for them, in these verses God promises to once again be that person for His people. These Israelites are a conquered people who were brutalized by one of the greatest world powers to ever exist. Still, the Lord has not given up on them, and He reminds them of a simple truth, He has them. God was

still sitting on His throne waiting for the moment that He would once again intervene and rescue them. He is the person who is, even in the midst of what might appear to be a hopeless situation, going to take our hand and say, "Do not be afraid, because I have you."

**PRAYER**

*Lord, what a comfort it is to know that You have me. Even though I might find myself in the midst of an impossible or hopeless situation that makes me want to give up, You reach into my life and promise to uphold me, to deliver me. Rather than being someone who lives in fear or without hope, would I be someone who turns to You and finds strength and peace in the grasp of Your outstretched hand. Amen.*

## DAY 5: THE VOICE OF AUTHORITY

David Wilson

I walked to the back of the office passing employees who gave me looks of curiosity, anxiety, and in some cases, understanding. Many of them sensed something had taken place in the conference room I had just exited where about half the company, except them, had been invited. I gathered my team of engineers and explained that their former peers were no longer with the company.

People search for answers in uncertain times. In their search, they aim to find a source of information they can trust which will return control and stability. In light of this, I spent following days, weeks, and even months returning confidence to my team. I was providing assurances, squashing untruths and misunderstandings, and convincing my team to seek answers from me, rather than listening to, or participating in, rumors.

Afterall, I was a voice - the voice - of authority for the team, which made me the most trustworthy source to help them navigate the uncertainty of the future. Not all of my advice might have sounded wise in the moment, but I knew things they did not about the company, about why we had chosen them and about the plans to come which would pivot our company into new blessings. Furthermore, I genuinely cared for their wellbeing.

The Book of Revelation begins in verse 1, introducing us to Jesus as God's messenger and authority.

*The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place... (Revelation 1:1a)*

Continuing the passage, we are reminded of Jesus' credentials as the Voice of Authority over all things. We are reminded not once, but four times (v. 4, 8, 11, 17) that He is present with us now speaking to us. He has seen what we were not around to see, and He will remain regardless of what changes around us. His wisdom and understanding are complete and will remain for all time. We are told His voice is trustworthy because He is faithful and proven. He loves us. He blesses

us by imparting His authority empowering us to be as Kings and Priests!

In times of uncertainty, Jesus wants you to turn to Him for your answers. Do thoughts of your future produce anxiousness and worry? "Do not be afraid," He encourages. Do His commands sometimes not make sense? "I am the First and Last", He reminds you. "I even hold the keys to death and Hades". There is no voice more trustworthy.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, teach me to trust Your voice and message, even when faced with doubt and uncertainty. Let me experience Your nature today as the one who has always been there, is with me today, and will remain tomorrow and forever. Amen.*





# **SESSION 2**

## **DIVINELY SOVEREIGN**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Imagine you bought a ticket for a trip to the sun. Considering the sun's atmosphere can reach an estimated 3.5 million degrees Fahrenheit, how do imagine that trip is going to end? I think we can all agree that your trip will be one-way. We know this to be true because of the intensity of the sun. None of us and nothing that exists on this planet is able to come into the proximity of the sun and survive. Everything would be consumed.

Now let's think about God's holiness.

God's holiness is intense. Really intense. Like more-than-the-sun intense. God's holiness would absolutely overwhelm and obliterate any unholiness. This is why there is a whole book in the Bible, Leviticus, that describes all laws and procedures for keeping the Israelites ritually pure. Even with all this, the Israelites were far from getting it right and the Bible is full of stories of the repercussions. Knowing this gives us some context for Isaiah's reaction to seeing God as He is in Isaiah 6.

However, as you will notice in today's session, God is holy, but He is also King. In His perfection and power, He will assert His sovereignty and will create for Himself a kingdom, purified by His own Holiness.

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GOD'S HOLINESS IS NOT SIMPLY THE BEST WE KNOW INFINITELY BETTERED. WE KNOW NOTHING LIKE THE DIVINE HOLINESS. IT STANDS APART, UNIQUE, UNAPPROACHABLE, INCOMPREHENSIBLE AND UNATTAINABLE. THE NATURAL MAN IS BLIND TO IT. HE MAY FEAR GOD'S POWER AND ADMIRE HIS WISDOM, BUT HIS HOLINESS HE CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE... HOLY IS THE WAY GOD IS. TO BE HOLY HE DOES NOT CONFORM TO A STANDARD. HE IS THAT STANDARD. HE IS ABSOLUTELY HOLY WITH AN INFINITE, INCOMPREHENSIBLE FULLNESS OF PURITY THAT IS INCAPABLE OF BEING OTHER THAN IT IS. BECAUSE HE IS HOLY, HIS ATTRIBUTES ARE HOLY; THAT IS, WHATEVER WE THINK OF AS BELONGING TO GOD MUST BE THOUGHT OF AS HOLY. GOD IS HOLY AND HE HAS MADE HOLINESS THE MORAL CONDITION NECESSARY TO THE HEALTH OF HIS UNIVERSE.<sup>2</sup>

- AW TOZER

## VIDEO SEGMENT

Now, as a group, turn on your TV or Laptop and watch the video for Session 2,  
**DIVINELY SOVEREIGN**

### **2 WAYS TO WATCH:**

1. Through the RightNow Media platform  
(Learn How on Page 102)
2. Find and stream on [crosslinechurch.com/iam](http://crosslinechurch.com/iam)

*After Watching, take a moment to initially respond with your thoughts about the video.*

# READ:

## Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

<sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.<sup>5</sup> “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”<sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

# DISCUSSION:

## See it

1. What do you think is the big idea of this passage?
2. What do you learn about God?

## **Understand it**

3. What specific attributes, characteristics, actions and names, are ascribed to God? What do you think God wants us to know about Him from this passage?
4. What do you think God wants us to know about Him from this passage?

## **Live it**

5. Why do you think it is important to know these things about God?
6. Based on this passage, what would you tell someone who asks you, "What is God like?"
7. Based on this passage, what do you think God wants you to do?

# **PRAYER REQUESTS // NOTES**

# **SESSION 2**

## **DEVOTIONALS**

## DAY 6: CONFUSION TO CLARITY

*Kenny Luck*

When I got the call from my sister that my oldest brother had killed himself, a piece of my life was eliminated. It was hard to process, confusing, and disorienting. The suicide of a family member is like getting thrown into a raging sea with a big life jacket on - you're not drowning, but you're not in control either and getting mercilessly thrown around emotionally. Memories crash into your mind. Questions flood your spirit. Grief rises within and spills out. Anger invades unannounced. Guilt from your anger takes over. Unwelcomed revelations followed to add to my despair. Why didn't I know? What more could I have done? How could I have helped more? And more viscerally, where in the world is the LORD in all of this?

Isaiah begins his reflection today with, "In the year that King Uzziah died." This event is the context for what happens next to him. To open with this is to say A LOT for Isaiah because of who King Uzziah was to his friend and nation. Uzziah became king at 16 years old and led Israel for 52 years. He was an energetic, brave, and spiritually strong leader who - unfortunately - got prideful, was struck by God with leprosy, and died tragically (2 Chronicles 26:16). This precipitous sequence of events was disorienting, devastating, and hard to watch for anyone who had experienced his steady leadership over such a long time. Memories. Questions. Grief. Sad revelations. This was in no one's script for the future and yet it was now Isaiah's reality. Where was the Lord in this?

The answer? "I saw the Master sitting on a throne." He sees and senses that the throne of heaven is actively occupied, and the person sitting on it is wielding the sovereign authority, complete rule, and total command of the realm He possesses. It is a reset of his spirit. Anyone can sit in a chair. Sovereign kings and judges - those with absolute positions and powers sit on thrones. The immediate circumstance and instability he feels is replaced with the ultimate person and power.

The answer to Isaiah's rough moment of life is the right person - The Lord Almighty. Confusion gives way to clarity through seeing God as He is, where He is and being who He is. Isaiah sees God clearly which allows him to see himself, his situation, and his need clearly. The throne

of God is creating and demanding a response. Isaiah responds at the altar where he is cleansed and activated to serve!

We need to see God clearly. We need to see ourselves clearly. We need to for heaven to move toward us intentionally. We need to embrace God's purposes willingly when he asks.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, amidst all the confusion of my challenges help me to see you clearly as the One who is over heaven and earth, the One who is in control, and the One who sends me out into the world free and healed with a message of hope in Christ.  
Amen.*

# DAY 7: BETTER THAN AN INSTAGRAM-WORTHY LIFE

Moshelle Carlson

The other day my sister was venting her heart to me, as sisters do. She's had a lot of disappointment in her life in recent years. I have, too. Though we were blessed to be raised in the church, I have realized that I thought the Lord had made a deal with me. And although I knew better than ever to articulate it, I somehow thought that if we followed a particular formula and kept all the 'rules', the Lord would bless us with a relatively easy life where hard work paid off, loved ones would not disappoint us, and our children would be in church every Sunday morning singing praises to Jesus. We might have to deal with a few minor trials now and then (job loss, illness, the roof leaking, etc.), but with enough prayer, we would be victorious and give all the glory to Jesus! I was dreaming of an Instagram-worthy life before I even knew of the existence of such a thing. We all know those Instagram pictures are not real life. I have a prodigal child. My sister's marriage ended after 25 years. She went back to school for a Master's degree to secure a better career, but two years later, her dream job has not materialized. Our father died too young and now we care for our mother, who has dementia. We both feel our lives are far from Instagram-worthy.

Today's scriptures remind me: an Instagram-worthy life was never the promise. Oh no, the Lord promises us so much more! What He has to offer is a life in His presence. HIM, to whom the whole world and everything and everyone in it belong!

*Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob. (Psalm 24:3-6)*

Recognizing the idols and false gods in my life has often been challenging. I have learned that anything, even good things can be made into an idol or false god if I look to it for identity, worth, or salvation. Anything can become an idol: my marriage, my children, my vocation, my health, education, politics, ministry, and even my "good" deeds. That

Instagram-worthy life? It's an idol and will ultimately disappoint. Praise Jesus, that was never His deal. Instead, the Lord invites us into a heaven-worthy life where my peace, comfort, joy, worth and identity are based on something of true and lasting value: the privilege of entering the presence of the mighty and glorious Lord.

**PRAYER**

*Dear Lord, search my heart and clean my hands. Help me recognize every false god and idol I have placed before you. I pray for your blessing that vindicates me and invites me into your holy, mighty and glorious presence. I want the good life that can only be found when I place my identity in you. Amen.*

## DAY 8: AGE-OLD QUESTIONS

Colleen Myers

We make hundreds of decisions daily, and too often, we allow fear to become the primary influence on how we make those decisions. The destructive force of fear tears us down, weakens our faith, and causes us to question God as we attempt to walk through life. I am certainly not immune to its immobilizing effects, and I bet you aren't either.

Today, as I sat down yet again to write another draft of this devotion, I was seized with a paralyzing fear. "What if this isn't good enough? What if I am not good enough for God to use me to help others grow closer to Him?" Are you ever faced with a fear that you are not enough for the task at hand? Ah, these questions of doubt and fear are not new to humanity. Fear is all around us, now and throughout history, woven throughout the Bible.

*And Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you. Do not fear, O Jacob My servant. (Isaiah 44:1-2)*

Reading Isaiah 44:1-8, we see that God reminds His people that they should not fear because He knows them intimately and completely. God is speaking directly to us to tell us that He holds us firmly in His hands. He has chosen us to serve Him and step out in obedience, even when we don't think we are exactly what He needs or where our path will lead. He has formed us from the very moment of our conception and He continues to pour into us so that we can share our unique journey with others as we walk with Him through experiences in our lives. We are enough because He is more than enough.

*Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. And who is like Me? Let him proclaim it and declare it. Do not tremble and do not be afraid...Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none. (Isaiah 44:6-7a, 8)*

What prideful importance I put upon myself when it's really not my words, but God speaking through me. He proclaims that He is the first and the last - the King, the Redeemer, and the Lord. No one is more

powerful, complete, and perfect than He is. I am only a tiny dot on the timeline of eternity, but God is eternal and infinite. We don't need to be fearful because He is our Rock and our foundation upon whom He builds our lives.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, thank You that Your Word reminds us not to tremble or be afraid because You are our Rock and Foundation, and there is none other like You. Let us step out in faith in the assurance that we serve a mighty God that knows us intimately and has chosen us. Let us rest in the knowledge that You love us deeply and intimately. Amen.*

## DAY 9: SUCKING LESS AS A SINNER

Warren Thompson

I did it! I figured out how to suck less as a sinner. "Sorry Lord, the devil made me do it" seemed to work better than "Lord, forgive me" during my early years as a self-proclaimed Christian. Blaming His fallen angel for my misconduct helped me feel less guilty. It was great...until I entered the hall of shame for practicing cheap grace! You see, I was using my SHAPE (Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences) for personal gain instead of glorifying Him. Playing God (little g) led to dark corners of unconfessed sin, which naturally built a wall of guilt and shame that caused me to shrink back and compartmentalize my faith. It was time to take ownership of my sins by confessing the combination of self-efficiency, anger and lust to the one who wanted to free me from this pit of pride. So, I tapped out, knees dropped, arms opened, tears flowed, and I confessed with the prayer of prayers...

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. (Psalm 51:1-2)*

The weight was lifted as I was forgiven! What Kind David seeks in the entirety of Psalm 51 is what God wants for all of us! It's always been a part of His loving nature as He longs to guide us with love and wisdom rather than punishment.

*When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalm 32:3-5)*

In this passage, we see David trying to ignore his sin. Have you been there? I know that I have. However, praise God that when we, like David, confess our sin to God, we too can have this joyous experience of forgiveness through faith in Christ. These verses scream the horrible condition of unconfessed sins and describe how much God wants to

forgive us. To confess simply means to agree with Him, which always leads to the assurance of forgiveness.

So instead of “sucking less as sinners,” let’s be free from our sin and confess the root of our failures before to the Lord who longs to redeem us!

**PRAYER**

*Lord, thank you for the power and gift of forgiveness in spite of my faults and failures. Help me to fully accept it and live in it fully. Create in me a clean heart Lord, and renew a right spirit within me that seeks to serve and honor you, I love you Lord. Amen.*

## DAY 10: THE PERFECT-THINKER

Gigi Johnson

Walking into my office, you quickly notice a small, light blue, acrylic sign sitting neatly on the corner of my desk that reads: LET ME OVERTHINK THAT. Everyone who sees it chuckles and says, "Wow, Geeg, that sign is perfect for you." You see, I'm the quintessential overthinker. I consider something, consider it again, make a decision, undo said decision, then later go back and do it because it turns out it was the right decision after all... or so I think...

Whether or not you're an overthinker, an underthinker, or aren't even really a fan of thinking, none of us think the way God thinks. God is truly the "perfect-thinker."

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)*

So, this begs the question, if God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, full of complete and infinite knowledge and awareness, and His ways are higher than our ways, full of wisdom perfectly applied, what in the world is it that prevents us from putting every ounce of our faith and trust in Him in real life?!

Remember the old adage, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care?" Could it be that although we want to trust God because He is all-knowing, and we even know we should trust God because His ways are higher, it remains difficult to do so until we really understand that He cares?

"Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live." (55:3) God offers our souls LIFE—eternal, abundant, and complete life. He cares. "Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters. And you who have no money, come by and eat!" (55:1) God satisfies the needs we have in our hearts, souls, bodies, and minds. He cares. "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace." (55:12) God sends us on our way, generously giving of his goodness, joy and peace. He cares.

God's perfect thoughts and perfect ways make Him capable of offering things that our imperfect thoughts and ways cannot. Couple that with the realization that He cares—truly cares—about the most important aspects of our life, satisfying our every need, and providing deep joy and peace and we get to stop overthinking and start trusting God! In so doing, His glory is highlighted and our lives are blessed.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, help me understand your great care for me. Help me see that your thoughts are higher and your ways are higher, and that I can trust you completely. Today, help me hand over to You just one thing I've been holding to tightly, knowing your way is higher, your way is better. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



# **SESSION 3**

## **INCOMPARABLY UNDERSTANDING**

## INTRODUCTION:

GOAT is a title that has been given to famous athletes like boxer Muhammad Ali, basketball player Michael Jordan, tennis star Serena Williams and quarterback Tom Brady. They have been given the title not because they have characteristics reminiscent of the four-legged cud-chewing mammal, but because in their field, they arguably have out-competed every athlete to earn the title "greatest of all time".

Competition is part of our culture. Think about it...Americans spend \$60 billion every year attending sporting events. That doesn't even include merchandise! On television, millions of people tune in to watch competition each week in all its unique forms on shows like *The Bachelor*, *American Ninja Warrior* and *Cake Wars*. We compete at work for that promotion, compete with neighbors over Christmas lights, and compete playing video games like Fortnite online. It's a constant cycle of comparing abilities, skills, knowledge and strength with others—who will come out on top?

When it comes to the God of the Bible, He can be trusted because with Him, there clearly is no competition. Nothing can compare with Him. He is the original and everlasting GOAT.

Many in our world today might describe the God of the Bible as distant, removed or detached. They may say that He is a God who is uninterested in the affairs of our lives. As One so incomparable and superior, this is something that you could easily assume was true, but the reality is that nothing could be more wrong. That is what is so awesome about the God of the Bible! He is mighty, indeed, but evidently and wonderfully involved in our lives. Victory is yours when you are on God's team.

“

“FOR GOD IS GREATER THAN MIND ITSELF. HIS GREATNESS CANNOT BE CONCEIVED. MAY, COULD WE CONCEIVE OF HIS GREATNESS HE WOULD BE LESS THAN THE HUMAN MIND, WHICH COULD FORM THE CONCEPTION. HE IS GREATER THAN ALL LANGUAGE, AND NO STATEMENT CAN EXPRESS HIM. INDEED, IF ANY STATEMENT COULD EXPRESS HIM, HE WOULD BE LESS THAN HUMAN SPEECH WHICH COULD BY SUCH STATEMENT COMPREHEND AND GATHER UP ALL THAT HE IS. ALL OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT HIM WILL BE LESS THAN HE, AND OUR LOFTIEST UTTERANCES WILL BE TRIVIALITIES IN COMPARISON WITH HIM.”

GOD PERFECTLY KNOWS HIMSELF AND, BEING THE SOURCE AND AUTHOR OF ALL THINGS, IT FOLLOWS THAT HE KNOWS ALL THAT CAN BE KNOWN.

SOVEREIGNTY AND OMNIPOTENCE MUST GO TOGETHER. ONE CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE OTHER. TO REIGN, GOD MUST HAVE POWER, AND TO REIGN SOVEREIGNLY, HE MUST HAVE ALL POWER. AND THAT IS WHAT OMNIPOTENT MEANS, HAVING ALL POWER.

FROM THIS KNOWLEDGE WE REASON TO THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD THIS WAY: GOD HAS POWER. SINCE GOD IS ALSO INFINITE, WHATEVER HE HAS MUST BE WITHOUT LIMIT; THEREFORE GOD HAS LIMITLESS POWER, HE IS OMNIPOTENT. WE SEE FURTHER THAT GOD THE SELF-EXISTENT CREATOR IS THE SOURCE OF ALL THE POWER THERE IS, AND SINCE A SOURCE MUST BE AT LEAST EQUAL TO ANYTHING THAT EMANATES FROM IT, GOD IS OF NECESSITY EQUAL TO ALL THE POWER THERE IS, AND THIS IS TO SAY AGAIN THAT HE IS OMNIPOTENT.”<sup>3</sup>

- AW TOZER

## VIDEO SEGMENT

Now, as a group, turn on your TV or Laptop and watch the video for Session 3,  
**INCOMPARABLY UNDERSTANDING**

### 2 WAYS TO WATCH:

1. Through the RightNow Media platform  
(Learn How on Page 102)
2. Find and stream on [crosslinechurch.com/iam](http://crosslinechurch.com/iam)

*After Watching, take a moment to initially respond with your thoughts about the video.*

## READ:

### Isaiah 40

Comfort, comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and proclaim to her  
that her hard service has been completed,  
that her sin has been paid for,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice of one calling:  
"In the wilderness prepare  
the way for the LORD;  
make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level,  
the rugged places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,  
and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry out."

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass,

and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

<sup>7</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,

because the breath of the LORD blows on them.

Surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,

but the word of our God endures forever."

<sup>9</sup> You who bring good news to Zion,

go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good news to Jerusalem,

lift up your voice with a shout,

lift it up, do not be afraid;

say to the towns of Judah,

"Here is your God!"

<sup>10</sup> See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,

and he rules with a mighty arm.

See, his reward is with him,

and his recompense accompanies him.

<sup>11</sup> He tends his flock like a shepherd:

He gathers the lambs in his arms

and carries them close to his heart;

he gently leads those that have young.

<sup>12</sup> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,

or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?

Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket,

or weighed the mountains on the scales

and the hills in a balance?

<sup>13</sup> Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD,

or instruct the LORD as his counselor?

<sup>14</sup> Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him,

and who taught him the right way?

Who was it that taught him knowledge,

or showed him the path of understanding?

<sup>15</sup> Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;

they are regarded as dust on the scales;  
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

<sup>16</sup> Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires,  
nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

<sup>17</sup> Before him all the nations are as nothing;  
they are regarded by him as worthless  
and less than nothing.

<sup>18</sup> With whom, then, will you compare God?  
To what image will you liken him?

<sup>19</sup> As for an idol, a metalworker casts it,  
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold  
and fashions silver chains for it.

<sup>20</sup> A person too poor to present such an offering  
selects wood that will not rot;  
they look for a skilled worker  
to set up an idol that will not topple.

<sup>21</sup> Do you not know?  
Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

<sup>22</sup> He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,  
and its people are like grasshoppers.  
He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,  
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

<sup>23</sup> He brings princes to naught  
and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

<sup>24</sup> No sooner are they planted,  
no sooner are they sown,  
no sooner do they take root in the ground,  
than he blows on them and they wither,  
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

<sup>25</sup> "To whom will you compare me?  
Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:  
Who created all these?  
He who brings out the starry host one by one  
and calls forth each of them by name.

Because of his great power and mighty strength,  
not one of them is missing.

<sup>27</sup> Why do you complain, Jacob?

Why do you say, Israel,

“My way is hidden from the LORD;

my cause is disregarded by my God”?

<sup>28</sup> Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,

the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,

and his understanding no one can fathom.

<sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary

and increases the power of the weak.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary,

and young men stumble and fall;

<sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the LORD

will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

they will run and not grow weary,

they will walk and not be faint.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **See it**

1. What do you think is the big idea of this passage?
2. What do you learn about God?

### **Understand it**

3. What specific attributes, characteristics, actions and names, are ascribed to God?
4. What do you think God wants us to know about Him from this passage?

## **Live it**

5. Why do you think it is important to know these things about God?
6. Based on this passage, what would you tell someone who asks you, "What is God like?"
7. Based on this passage, what do you think God wants you to do?

# **NOTES // PRAYER REQUESTS**

# **SESSION 3**

## DEVOTIONALS

## DAY 11: WE'RE IN GOOD HANDS

*Sergio Serrano*

“What you accomplished last year is in the past. If you want to win it all “Tio! Tio! I love it!” I could hear the sweet voice of my 2-year-old niece, as we rode together on a beach bike ride. It was her first beach bike ride and a successful one, at that! It was a bit of an emotional turnaround, as she was reluctant to ride at first. In her little toddler brain, sitting on that back seat of a bike with no training wheels was NOT the safe play.

As her uncle, it was my job to instill confidence and trust. Taking a moment to kneel at her side, I looked into her sweet innocent face and empathized with her. I acknowledged her fears and understood her hesitancy, yet I encouraged her with the truth that she’d be in good hands and I’d make sure she would be safe. When I reminded her that I, “Tio,” would be the one on the front seat, leading the fun, she was sold! I lifted her up, buckled her in and we were ready to roll! As we rode down the beach boardwalk, with the warm summer breeze on our faces and the California sun shining, it brought me so much joy to hear her sweet voice laughing behind me. I can’t help but think that she was freed up to enjoy the ride when she gained confidence from really knowing that she was in good hands.

*He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; He gently leads those that have young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? (Isaiah 40:11,12)*

This scripture provokes my faith and confidence. When I read about the greatness of the One who’s seated in the front seat, whose hands are holding all of creation and every life within it, including my own, what is there to fear? The God of the Bible assures me through this scripture as He affirms Himself--my Maker and my Sustainer. Isaiah chapter 40 marks a significant turnaround in the entire book. It moves us from a story of judgment into a promise of hope for a better tomorrow. God assures the people of Judah that they were never neglected. All along, they had been held in the same hands that hold the waters, the mountains and the universe.

Just like an uncle having gone through many bike rides, inviting his little niece to trust him for a new one, this scripture is an invitation to trust our future into the Good Shepherd's hands. I believe it's provoking a generation with a resilient allegiance to Christ, come what may. I can actually see it and perceive it. There is a rise of a post-pandemic church that is beholding the King and living with radical faith. Whatever might be heavy on your heart, entrust it to the Lord. It's going to be okay; we're in good hands

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I pray to You, as the Maker and Sustainer of all things. You see it all. There's nothing I can hide from You. Within Your eternal and global view, you see me personally. I trust all I am, all that I have, and all that I hope for, into Your skillful hands.  
Amen.*

## DAY 12: FEAR NO EVIL

Cobi Shahrestani

When I was a little boy, my family used to take regular ski trips to Mammoth Mountain. I could always trust my parents to take care of my brothers and me, whether it was the drive, the food, or the ski clothes to keep us warm. My brothers were old enough to go boarding by themselves. Still, being several years younger, I always stayed by my dad's side when we would go on the chairlifts. We skied each day of the trip, from mid-morning till around four o'clock when the runs would shut down, and every single run we went down, I skied right beside or right in front of my father. One day, after several runs, my father and I were heading down "Broadway Express," a level 'blue' slope in terms of difficulty. The exhilaration of the more speedy and steeper slope got the best of me. I blasted down without regard to my father's whereabouts. As a six-year old boy, as I reached the bottom of the run, smiling with triumph from ear to ear, I looked behind me to find that my father was nowhere in sight. My smile turned to panic. I exhaustingly searched the slopes with teary eyes in order to spot my dad in his distinct skiing attire. After several minutes (which felt like an eternity) of worry and fear taking over, I turned to my side and there was my dad, just a few yards away, looking directly at me. That day I learned not to go on ahead of myself, without the uttermost faith that my father would be right beside me.

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23)*

This passage of scripture shows us that our entire being is in the palms of our Heavenly Father's sovereign hands. For HE alone goes before us to prepare the way when there seems to be no way. He knows His sheep and is faithful to protect, provide, and restore His precious flock. Even in the shadow of death, even in the presence of our enemies, we can trust the Lord's providence over our lives. We all have and will again

face complex and challenging trials in our life. God's word to us in those times is, "fear not, for I am with you!"

**PRAYER**

*Lord, we believe. Help us overcome our unbelief as we step out in faith and obedience to pursue your written will for our lives further. Help us not to be found wanting or covetous, but in every circumstance give thanks as we wait upon you to renew our strength, for apart from you we can do nothing. Lead us and counsel us in the way we should go, and grant us all boldness to diligently, earnestly, and whole-heartedly proclaim your Gospel to the world and seek your presence continually. Amen.*

## DAY 13: LOOK AT MY PICTURE

*Donna Jones*

"Look at my picture. I made it just for you." Three-year-old Hallie grins broadly as she places her creation in my hands. She's clearly pleased with the simple white sheet of paper filled with scribbles and lines colored in various shades of red, blue, purple, and pink. Intuitively I know her creation is more than a picture; it's a reflection of her. "I love it, Hallie. It's beautiful, just like you." As I examine the picture closely, I see her ability (pretty darn good for a three-year-old), her preferences (she's obviously partial to pinks and purples), her creativity (definitely unique!), and her heart ("I made this for you"). In many ways, her creation reveals her character. And, whether crafted by a three-year-old child or a three-in-one God, all creation reflects its creator. The first words, in the first line of the Bible's first book read, "In the beginning God created...." These five words tell us more about God than most people will grasp in a lifetime.

"In the beginning" tells us God is eternal and was present from the onset of creation.

"In the beginning God" tells us creation wasn't initiated by a nameless cosmic force, but by a real God, who actually exists.

"In the beginning God created" tells us creation is not the product of random time and chance, but by the active, intentional will of a creator.

The account goes on to tell us that "the earth was formless and empty." God initiated creation with less than nothing. God simply spoke the words, "Let there be..." and whatever He willed into existence came into being. Light. Dark. Sun. Moon. Water. Land. Plants, Birds, Fish. Animals. Each creation reveals another facet of God's glory, another angle of God's character. So, we look up and see stars that teach us God is vast. We dive to the ocean floor and see that God is deep. We look out and see nature--animals, flowers, mountains, trees--and see that God's is creative, artistic, scientific, and majestic. Creation gives us a glimpse of His wisdom and His attention to detail. In it, we see God's glory.

Creation is God's megaphone to humanity, declaring, "I am real. I can be known. Look at what I created and you'll see a reflection of Me." Perhaps this is why nature touches our hearts, calms our souls, and refreshes our spirits like nothing else can. It's all an expression of Him.

But, God saved his masterpiece for last. "Let us make mankind in our image." (Genesis 1:26) God marked human beings as His image-bearers. Humans--male and female--can think, feel, and choose. They can create and relate, just like their creator. All creation--from the smallest particle of matter to the largest living creature, to the farthest galaxy--is designed to give us a glimpse of God's greatness, goodness, and glory.

Creation is God's way of whispering, "Look at my picture. I made this for you."

**PRAYER**

*God, I have no excuse not to believe in you. You've made your existence and your character known through your creation. Help me pause long enough to admire your handiwork so I can get a better glimpse of your heart. Amen.*

## DAY 14: GOD'S ACTIVE PRESENCE

*Michele Stark*

Raising four boys as a single mom often feels overwhelming. The responsibilities of school, homework, sports, doctor's visits, laundry, yard work, grocery shopping, birthday parties, driving, prom, graduation, and college are BIG! Not to mention the intense work schedule that I have chosen in order to provide for them financially.

In the natural, all of these responsibilities can seem completely overwhelming, daunting, and lonely at times, BUT GOD!

*O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. (Psalm 139:1-4)*

Psalm 139 is one of the most personal passages in scripture for me. It is a Psalm about God's continual active presence with me wherever I go. Christ in me means that God knows everything about me. He knows when I sit down and when I stand up (Psalm 139:2). He knows what I am going to say before I speak (Psalm 139:4). He saw me when I was being formed in my mother's womb. He was there knitting me together (Psalm 139:13-16).

What an AMAZING truth – God's eternal presence with us every moment! We are never alone. It gets even better. We see God's absolute holiness and His unconditional love for us. He loves and understands us better than anyone else ever will. His love for us is everlasting and personal. What a treasured truth is knowing that we can live in the certainty that His grace is sufficient for us today, regardless of our circumstances or how we feel. We don't ever have to do this life alone.

## **PRAYER**

*God, thank You for Your unconditional love for me! I am in awe of how You created me exactly as You desired to fulfill your perfect plan. Thank You for your promise that You would never leave me or forsake me. You are well aware of all the intricate details of my life, good and bad, and yet You still love me.  
Amen.*

## DAY 15: THE SONG OF PRAISE

Pat Lawless

As a young man, I remember wishing I was a better man, but every day I seemed to defy my desire to become the man I wanted to be. I thought to myself, maybe there is something wrong with me, and I'm destined to always be wishing I was someone I was not.

I decided that I should pray and ask God to help me, which began a process of God leading me to salvation by faith in Jesus. God saved me from me, and for the last 27 years God has been revealing himself to me in every season of my life. That is why when I read Psalm 145, I can hear or relate to David's heart.

*I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name forever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name forever and ever. (Psalm. 145:1-2)*

God did something I could never do for myself: He saved me. When we personalize God's love for us, we want to praise Him. When you realize that God is the only one who has the power to save you by sacrificing His one and only Son Jesus for you, this Psalm starts to take a personal meaning. David describes what God is like, His character qualities and why He is worthy of our praise. So, if you are ever stuck spiritually and wondering what you should you praise God for, speak these attributes back to God, praising Him and He will change your heart.

(1) God is the King. (2) Great is the Lord. (3) His greatness, no one can fathom. (4) Generation after generation commends the works of the God. (5) They tell of Your mighty acts. (6) The Lord is gracious and compassionate. (7) The Lord is slow to anger. (8) The Lord is rich in love. (9) The Lord is good to all. (10) God is the King of a glorious kingdom. (11) The Lord is mighty. (12) The Lord is trustworthy. (13) The Lord is faithful in all that he does. (14) The Lord is righteous in all His ways.

When David says, "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts." It makes me think about my children and how God saved them and prayerfully one day, their children will be saved. I told my kids how God saved me. They know my story because I wanted them to understand how awesome God is and think of how

one generation can tell the next generation so they can commend God's works in their lives; God's praises will multiply.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, I praise You my Lord the King! I praise You for loving me and the salvation You have given me and my family in Jesus. I will praise You and speak of Your mighty acts all the days of my life because You have been so good and faithful to me. Fill me with your Holy Spirit, so that I can remember all Your attributes and never forget the love and compassion You have shown me. Amen.*





# **SESSION 4**

**UNSHAKABLY  
INSEPARABLE**

## INTRODUCTION:

As I tuck my kids in bed and am pulling up their covers, kissing them on their cheeks, I begin to sing,

*“Goodnight my child.  
Goodnight my love.  
Always forever you’ll be.  
Nothing you say,  
nothing you do,  
will ever change how I love you.  
Just as our God sings this song over us  
I will pass this blessing down.  
Goodnight my child.  
Goodnight my love.  
Always forever you’ll be.  
Nothing you say,  
nothing you do,  
will ever change how I love you.”*

This lullaby, written by musical artist Tim Timmons, is personal and precious in its melody, but powerful in its lyrics. This is, indeed, the song that God sings over His children. God’s love for His children is inseparable and sufficient to meet every need. His song is most evidently sung in the in the person of Jesus, His son, fully God and fully man. We will look more into Jesus as the revelation of God in the next session, but as you step into your group time today, open your hearts to receive the amazing love of God.

“

“GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY IS THE ATTRIBUTE BY WHICH HE RULES HIS ENTIRE CREATION, AND TO BE SOVEREIGN GOD MUST BE ALL-KNOWING, ALL-POWERFUL, AND ABSOLUTELY FREE... GOD IS SAID TO BE ABSOLUTELY FREE BECAUSE NO ONE AND NOTHING CAN HINDER HIM OR COMPEL HIM OR STOP HIM. HE IS ABLE TO DO AS HE PLEASES ALWAYS, EVERYWHERE, FOREVER. TO BE THUS FREE MEANS ALSO THAT HE MUST POSSESS UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD IS THAT WHICH DISPOSES HIM TO BE KIND, CORDIAL, BENEVOLENT, AND FULL OF GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN. HE IS TENDERHEARTED AND OF QUICK SYMPATHY, AND HIS UNFAILING ATTITUDE TOWARD ALL MORAL BEINGS IS OPEN, FRANK, AND FRIENDLY. BY HIS NATURE HE IS INCLINED TO BESTOW BLESSEDNESS AND HE TAKES HOLY PLEASURE IN THE HAPPINESS OF HIS PEOPLE.

TO KNOW THAT LOVE IS OF GOD AND TO ENTER INTO THE SECRET PLACE LEANING UPON THE ARM OF THE BELOVED – THIS AND ONLY THIS CAN CAST OUT FEAR. LET A MAN BECOME CONVINCED THAT NOTHING CAN HARM HIM AND INSTANTLY FOR HIM ALL FEAR GOES OUT OF THE UNIVERSE. THE NERVOUS REFLEX, THE NATURAL REVULSION TO PHYSICAL PAIN MAY BE FELT SOMETIMES, BUT THE DEEP TORMENT OF FEAR IS GONE FOREVER. GOD IS LOVE AND GOD IS SOVEREIGN. HIS LOVE DISPOSES HIM TO DESIRE OUR EVERLASTING WELFARE AND HIS SOVEREIGNTY ENABLES HIM TO SECURE IT.”<sup>4</sup>

- AW TOZER

## VIDEO SEGMENT

Now, as a group, turn on your TV or Laptop and watch the video for Session 4,  
**UNSHAKABLY INSEPARABLE**

### 2 WAYS TO WATCH:

1. Through the RightNow Media platform  
(Learn How on Page 102)
2. Find and stream on [crosslinechurch.com/iam](http://crosslinechurch.com/iam)

*After Watching, take a moment to initially respond with your thoughts about the video.*

## READ:

### Romans 8:28-39

<sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup> What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **See it**

1. What do you think is the big idea of this passage?
2. What do you learn about God?

### **Understand it**

3. What specific attributes, characteristics, actions and names, are ascribed to God?
4. What do you think God wants us to know about Him from this passage?

### **Live it**

5. Why do you think it is important to know these things about God?
6. Based on this passage, what would you tell someone who asks you, “What is God like?”
7. Based on this passage, what do you think God wants you to do?

# **NOTES // PRAYER REQUESTS**

# **SESSION 4**

## **DEVOTIONALS**

# DAY 16: GOD IS...

*Kylie Healy*

As A.W. Tozer puts it in his book Knowledge of the Holy, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” So naturally, we must ask ourselves, “what does come into my mind when I think about God?” Do I think He is a floating man in the clouds? Do I think he is my personal genie appearing when I need something? Do I even think of Him at all? The reality is, if our thoughts about God differ in ANY WAY from what the Bible says about God, then we need to change our thoughts. Let’s go straight to the source: the Bible!

Today, we will unpack Psalm 34:1-10. It was written by David as a praise to God and an encouragement to trust him. With each verse, we will see how we can shape our minds to align more appropriately with a Biblical view of who God is.

<b>Psalm 34:1-10</b>	<b>God Is...</b>
<sup>1</sup> I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises.	God is worthy to be praised at all times. We should constantly be speaking his praises!
<sup>2</sup> I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart.	God is a helper to the helpless.
<sup>3</sup> Come, let us tell of the LORD’s greatness; let us exalt his name together.	God is great and His name is to be exalted.
<sup>4</sup> I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.	God hears and answers our prayers. He frees us from fear.
<sup>5</sup> Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.	God is a helper to those in need and He gives us joy. Nothing can take the joy found in Him away.
<sup>6</sup> In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles.	God hears us in our most desperate moments. He saves us from our troubles.

<sup>7</sup> For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.	God is a defender to those who fear Him. He rescues us.
<sup>8</sup> Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!	God is good! He is our refuge.
<sup>9</sup> Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need.	God is the supplier of all our needs; He is our provider.
<sup>10</sup> Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing.	God is our fulfiller. In Him, we lack nothing!

Take time today to meditate and praise God for these truths. This is who our God is.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I want to know you more fully. I want to think about you more accurately. Help my thoughts about you align with who your word says you are. Amen.*

# DAY 17: GOD IS GOD AND I AM NOT...

Kymbry Munck

Have you ever been told “The world doesn’t revolve around you”? I certainly have! When I was in middle school, I really felt like I should be the center of everyone’s attention. At home, I wanted and expected everyone to drop what they were doing to tend to my needs. Because my parents loved me, they would most often give me the attention I desired. Looking back now, I think: “Who did I think I was!?” I truly did feel the whole world (at least my family’s world) should revolve around me and what I wanted. Today’s passage reminds me of that. We as humans often question God about why He made us a certain way or why He didn’t give us certain gifts. Why weren’t we born into wealth or in a particular place or whatever it may be? Who the heck do we think we are to question God and His sovereignty!? He sees the WHOLE picture while we only see what’s right in front of us. God chose to make each of us exactly the way we are. He is incapable of making a mistake. He knows what He is doing.

*One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, “Why did you make me like this?” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath- prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory. (Romans 9:19-23)*

The bottom-line message here? God is God and will do as He pleases. Who are we to question God? I don’t believe that anyone who loves God sets out to go against the will of God, but in our humanness, we are naturally inclined to sin. Paul mentions how disrespectful it is to question God. If God chooses to glorify Himself by letting people walk their own path and then letting them righteously receive His wrath to make His power known, who can oppose Him? If God desires to be fair with others, showing them His mercy, who can oppose Him? If God wants to

show mercy to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, who can oppose Him?

The Jews were inclined to think that God could not make them anything other than vessels of honor. Paul rejects this view and points out that God does what He wills. God is God; I am not...and the world doesn't revolve around me.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, thank you that you are God and we are not. Thank you for loving us so perfectly and completely. I pray that the words you have given me would bring life and that you would use this study to draw people to your side. Lord we love you and we love your word. I ask that you bless the reader of this word. In Jesus name, Amen.*

## DAY 18: GET HIT BY A BUS

Jessie Winslow

My hope is that you get hit by a bus. Okay, that may sound a little harsh, but I promise this will all make sense. Let me back up. Recently, I got the amazing opportunity to go on a trip to Hawaii to scout out the River of Life Mission and some incredible staff members told us their stories. After meeting everyone, one person stood out to me, the beautiful Angela with the angelic voice. She shared with us that she used to be homeless, an alcoholic, and without hope as she walked along the streets of Oahu. One day she had been drinking heavily and she had been walking for a while, so she leaned against a bus to rest but suddenly, the bus started to head on for its next destination. Angela then found herself under the wheels of the 25,000-pound bus as it went full force to pick up its next set of people. She told us that she laid on the road with her eyes closed feeling like this was her end. Then she heard a voice tell her to “get up and live.” When she opened her eyes no one was around, and she immediately knew it was Jesus. Miraculously, she got up, walked to River of Life Mission, and decided to live every day for the Lord. Now she sings praises of blessing daily as she works and lives every day like it’s her last.

*“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So, he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. (Luke 1:13-14; 18-20)*

In this parable, we see that even though the lost son had walked away from his father, he was openly accepted back home with a hug. Sometimes we might turn away from our faith or even start to let the world consume us, but it’s essential to know that we will always be accepted home by God. Stories like this remind us

to check our hearts and make sure our priorities are in the right place with God. For some, running back to God takes getting hit by a bus, filing for bankruptcy, or losing a job, to realize that we can only fully rely on God while living in this world. My hope for you is that you get hit by the bus of the Holy Spirit instead. Trust me. It's worth it.

**PRAYER**

*Dear God, thank You for this beautiful life. Lord right now I pray for anyone reading this message. You know them. You know their hearts. God, I ask you to give them a moment that will help them return or hug You tighter. With all authority in heaven, I ask You to place specific people in their lives to help them connect with You more and feel your love more. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## DAY 19: UNDESERVED FAVOR

Greg Munck

Have you ever done something wrong? Sure you have. Having done something wrong, have you ever been offered forgiveness in place of the consequence due? Wow, there is no better feeling than the moment when our dread and sorrow turn to pure joy because of forgiveness. It's like receiving a gift that you did not earn in any way. Simply put, receiving grace from someone is undeserved favor. That is what God did for us.

For today's passage, you must read Romans 5:1-11. It is a powerful passage. So powerful, in fact, this is what Martin Luther said about it. "In the whole Bible, there is hardly another chapter which can equal this triumphant text." Jesus Christ came to pay a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay. Jesus died on a cross for our sins past, present and future. That is a beautiful thing and why it's called "Good News," which is the definition of "The Gospel".

*Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. (Romans 5:1-2)*

Receiving this undeserved favor, what does it mean for me to stand in grace? It means I don't have to prove I am worthy of God's love. It means God is my friend. It means the door of access is permanently open to Him. It means I am free from what I owe for my sin - the account is settled in Jesus. Finally, it means I can spend more time praising God and less time hating myself.

People who used to rebel against God are not only forgiven and have their due punishment forgiven, but they are also brought into a place of high favor with God in heaven! Grace is God's undeserved favor towards us. It is not only the way salvation comes to us but also a description of our present standing before God. It is the beginning and the continuing principle of the Christian life. In v.8 of this passage, it says: But God demonstrates his own love

for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. How wonderful is that! At our worst, He died for us! Not at our best, at our worst! The work of Jesus on the cross is God's ultimate proof of His love for you.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, help me to truly understand Your love and grace for me. Help to stand in and live in the forever grace that You provide. Help me to share that grace and love with everyone I encounter. You are worthy of all praise! Amen.*

## DAY 20: WHO WE REALLY ARE

*Jason Park*

I recently watched a video of a family who had rescued a baby boar abandoned at birth. They took the baby boar home, hoping to help it survive. Their female golden retriever provided many motherly responsibilities. The first time the baby boar opened its eyes and saw the golden retriever, he assumed it was his mother and began taking on the same characteristics. Some animals attach themselves to the first thing they see after birth, thinking they are “that” thing. This is typically not a problem, since, when they are born, the first thing they usually see is their actual mother. That is how they discover who they are and how they are intended to act. The family raised that boar along with a few other dogs. And yes, the boar thinks he is just another dog. He learned about his identity from the culture where he was raised.

We often experience a similar confusion about our identity. We have been born into and grown up in a fallen world. We have learned the world’s ways and become like it. When we become a Christian, we are in Christ. We die to the world and are born again, so that, spiritually, we are no longer who we once were (2 Corinthians 5:17). Though, we often don’t see ourselves correctly. We act like the thing we think we are, rather than what we really are. We believe and try to do the right things, but we struggle and cannot get it exactly right.

Paul’s letter reminds us that even though we are in the world, we are not of the world (John 17:16). His letter to the Ephesians clarifies who we are. We were chosen (v.4) by God the Father and “adopted” to be his spiritual children (v.6). In Christ, our sins have been forgiven (v.7), and we have been given an inheritance (v.8) that the world’s standards cannot measure. In the Holy Spirit, we have been sealed in Christ, and made secure until our final redemption when we see the Lord face-to-face (v.13).

We can rest in God’s love, which He expressed in his offer of complete salvation. Because of all God has done for us, we understand our identity is in Christ, and we can begin to see ourselves as who we really are. When we know who we are, we

know what to do. We can be at peace and experience joy that we belong to God, and when we get to heaven, we will belong there, too. We should allow our lives to boldly reflect our gratefulness that God has forgiven our sins and given us eternal life. Lastly, we should thank God for taking the initiative in our relationship with him.

**PRAYER**

*God, please allow us to understand the magnitude and significance of the blessings which you have given us. Open our minds to understand and our hearts to appreciate that we might glorify you fully. Then, grant the grace that we might live accordingly resulting in others coming to know you. We thank you. We love you. Amen.*





# **SESSION 5**

## **INCARNATIONALLY KNOWN**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

In this day and age, it wouldn't be strange to get up from your seat at a coffee shop, walk over to a cork-board ornamented with material about local events and shows, and see a bunch of black and white squares on all the flyers. One flyer in front of you may read "Local Country Music Festival at Grand Park!", but as you examine the flyer, there is no other information, except that strange-looking black and white square - a QR code. Most of you know to scan the QR code with your smartphone, and it will reveal all the relevant information that you need to know for the event. Once you have all the details, you need only grab your boots and cowboy hat and make your way to the festival. Easy. Accessible. Actionable.

As we seek to know who God is through the Old Testament of the Bible, we can get a pretty good picture of His character and attributes, but there still remains elements of mystery. Fortunately, we then reach the New Testament and are introduced to Jesus, in whom all the relevant information about God is revealed.

There is no clearer picture of the God of the Bible than Jesus Christ. Any person that wants to know what the God of the Bible is like should realistically start in the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They tell of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. You'll be surprised how much a knowledge of the four gospels will help you better understand God throughout the Bible.

If you know Jesus the Son, you know God the Father (John 14:9). Jesus spoke the words of God and acted in the will of God because He was with God and was God.  
Easy. Accessible. Actionable.

“

BUT IN FACT THE REAL DIFFICULTY, THE SUPREME MYSTERY WITH WHICH THE GOSPEL CONFRONTS US, DOES NOT LIE HERE AT ALL: IT LIES NOT IN THE GOOD FRIDAY MESSAGE OF ATONEMENT, NOR IN THE EASTER MESSAGE OF RESURRECTION, BUT IN THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE OF INCARNATION. THE REALLY STAGGERING CHRISTIAN CLAIM IS THAT JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS GOD MADE MAN—THAT THE SECOND PERSON OF THE GODHEAD BECAME THE “SECOND MAN” (1 COR 15:47), DETERMINING HUMAN DESTINY, THE SECOND REPRESENTATIVE HEAD OF THE RACE, AND THAT HE TOOK HUMANITY WITHOUT LOSS OF DEITY, SO THAT JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS AS TRULY AND FULLY DIVINE AS HE WAS HUMAN.

HERE ARE TWO MYSTERIES FOR THE PRICE OF ONE—THE PLURALITY OF PERSONS WITHIN THE UNITY OF GOD, AND THE UNION OF GODHEAD AND MANHOOD IN THE PERSON OF JESUS. IT IS HERE, IN THE THING THAT HAPPENED AT THE FIRST CHRISTMAS, THAT THE PROFOUNDTEST AND MOST UNFATHOMABLE DEPTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION LIE. “THE WORD BECAME FLESH” (JN 1:14); GOD BECAME MAN, THE DIVINE SON BECAME A JEW; THE ALMIGHTY APPEARED ON EARTH AS A HELPLESS HUMAN BABY, UNABLE TO DO MORE THAN HE AND STARE AND WRIGGLE AND MAKE NOISES, NEEDING TO BE FED AND CHANGED AND TAUGHT TO TALK LIKE ANY OTHER CHILD. AND THERE WAS NO ILLUSION OR DECEPTION IN THIS: THE BABYHOOD OF THE SON OF GOD WAS A REALITY. THE MORE YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THE MORE STAGGERING IT GETS. NOTHING IN FICTION IS SO FANTASTIC AS IS THIS TRUTH OF THE INCARNATION.<sup>5</sup>

- J. I. PACKER

## VIDEO SEGMENT

Now, as a group, turn on your TV or Laptop and watch the video for Session 5,  
**INCARNATIONALLY KNOWN**

### 2 WAYS TO WATCH:

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(Learn How on Page 102)
2. Find and stream on [crosslinechurch.com/iam](http://crosslinechurch.com/iam)

*After Watching, take a moment to initially respond with your thoughts about the video.*

## READ:

### John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born

not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup> (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

# **DISCUSSION:**

## **See it**

1. What do you think is the big idea of this passage?
2. What do you learn about God?

## **Understand it**

3. What specific attributes, characteristics, actions and names, are ascribed to God?
4. What do you think God wants us to know about Him from this passage?

## **Live it**

5. Why do you think it is important to know these things about God?
6. Based on this passage, what would you tell someone who asks you, "What is God like?"
7. Based on this passage, what do you think God wants you to do?

# **NOTES // PRAYER REQUESTS**

# **SESSION 5**

## **DEVOTIONALS**

## DAY 21: ASKED AND ANSWERED

*Andy Benis*

My wife Debby and I love good movies and TV shows. Our latest binge is British crime dramas. As we find new series, we regularly see actors and actresses that we know we've seen before, but can't remember where. And not knowing makes us crazy until we can figure it out or look it up. Sometimes, it literally interrupts my ability to watch the show until we've answered the question of what else we've seen them in.

If you're old enough to remember life before the internet, it's the same frustrating feeling we had with hundreds of other questions. What's the capital of Iceland? How long does it take to drive to Seattle? How many tablespoons are in a cup? No Google. No Alexa. No Siri. You either had to know the answer, know someone who had the answer, or know where to go get the answer - like in an encyclopedia or library. (You young folks might need to Google those last two.) It meant you could go hours, days, or weeks without an answer. And while inconvenient, the consequences for not knowing usually weren't severe. Often, you'd just give up and decide it wasn't important enough to know.

Sadly, even in an age of instant information, too many people are struggling through life without answers to some of life's biggest questions. How did all life begin? What's our purpose for being here? Where do we go when we die? Stuff that Siri, even on her best day, couldn't tell you. Even more heartbreaking is that many give up and decide it isn't important enough to know. That's a shoulder shrug with eternal consequences.

What I love most about John 1:1-18 is that it's a powerful, succinct collection of answers to many of the most important questions we ask. Is there a God? Does He love us? Is Jesus God? Can we know Him? (Intimately?) Why did He come down to earth and dwell among us? As you read John 1:1-18, catch all the places where these questions are answered. May our hearts be comforted, our faith strengthened, and our confidence ignited by the answers we find in these verses. To what end? Just so we personally feel more

hope, joy, and peace? Yes, and so that you carry those answers to a world full of hurting people living in a fog of not knowing.

Be prepared to give the answers when the questions come. So just like your favorite courtroom drama, when the enemy (our prosecutor) badgers the innocent people on the stand with endless questions of doubt and accusation, you (as opposing counsel) can jump to your feet and cry out "I object, your honor. Asked and answered." Drop gavel. Case dismissed.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that You were there from the beginning. Your plan always included humbling Yourself to dwell among us so that we could know you, and know how to live. Give me the courage to turn my hope and joy into action. Help me confidently and lovingly share Your love and truth with a world desperate for answers. Amen.*

## DAY 22: THE PERFECT EXAMPLE

Malisa Hendry

“Neighborhood Watch!” I took this sign seriously and reported to an association board member that I had witnessed a neighbor’s son breaking the lock to the pool. Later that day, I found a letter on my doorstep telling me I was a liar and a slanderer. I was called names, attacked for my poor character, and my husband was criticized. Perplexed, I reached out to the board member, and we agreed to have a meeting between the three of us. When we met, the enraged mother brought her son, and each of them vehemently denied his wrongdoing. I was verbally assaulted, but now I had to defend myself from the mother, the board member, and the dishonest son. Peace and reconciliation seemed more important than clearing my name, so I humbled myself, claimed to have been mistaken about who I saw at the pool, and simply said sorry. I didn’t deserve the treatment I received. I did what the signs said: I was a caring neighbor who watched and acted.

God sent his son Jesus, fully God and fully man, to demonstrate humility and servanthood. Jesus deserved praise and adoration, yet received suffering and persecution to the point of death.

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5-8)*

Jesus is our perfect example of how to live in humility. Jesus sacrificed His life to bring all souls to salvation. He laid aside the essence of His deity to be born into poverty, living an obscure life under the authority of human parents. In ministry, He chose average disciples and served and taught them.

Let Jesus be your perfect example of how to be humble and have

a servant's heart. His reward was not on earth. After death, He received the glory He deserved, and God named him the Lord of all, where even creation is subject to Him. Here on earth, you may be mistreated and you may not get what you deserve, but take heart, your treasure is in heaven and an eternity of joy awaits you! Give up your rights and privileges to serve others where God calls you. Submit to the Lord as Christ did, for His suffering and servanthood give you salvation and eternal life.

**PRAYER**

*God, open my eyes and my heart to humble myself and live a life that exemplifies your servanthood. Allow me to think of others before myself and shine the light of Jesus today. I pray for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh on me now and strengthen me to do good works in your name. Amen!*

## DAY 23: WHEN SIMPLE BECOMES COMPLICATED

Nancy Matossian

Growing up, there was nothing complicated about following Jesus. It was just what we did in our family.

Of course, a time came when my faith became my own, and I moved beyond it being my parent's faith. I remember meeting people who had never heard of Paul or Jonah from the Bible. That is when my mission suddenly became clear.

I wanted my kids and the kids in my ministry to grow up knowing God and the people from His Word. As Bob and I raised our daughters to know God and follow Jesus, we discovered a new reality. There seems to be a season for all of us when the simple becomes complicated. It takes on another layer of depth. A time when our perspectives need to change for us to grow.

*I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe: how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? (John 3:12)*

For Nicodemus, in John 3, this happened when he went to meet Jesus. Nicodemus had faith, but he needed to shift his perspective to allow God to take him to what would come next in his life of faith. He needed to understand that things were different now that Jesus had come. Prophecies were fulfilled instead of still being anticipated.

One of the basics we teach (and learn) in Children's ministry is the truth that God's Word is alive. We discover that each time we read the words of scripture, we can 'see' something new. May I challenge you to be ready and willing to open your heart each time you read God's Word? What is the great I Am showing you?

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)*

## **PRAYER**

*Lord, open our eyes to You. Open our eyes to Your people. Help us to grow in our perspective and know what we may see as simple could be unbelievable to someone else. Help us to show You to others in all we say and do. Guide us to help others see through 'complicated' and know the decision to follow You is simple and the best decision we could ever make. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## DAY 24: IN AN INSTANT

*Josh Johnson*

A few years ago, while at work, my phone rang from another department within the company. The voice on the other end of the line was a familiar one I had worked with many times before, Still, this time there was a bit of a different tone throughout the conversation. After taking care of the business side of things, he finally said, "Hey, are you the same Josh Johnson that went to Woodbridge High?" I kind of chuckled, said I was, and asked if we knew each other. The reply was not what I was expecting. "We didn't know each other, but I know one of your friends from back then. I have heard some stories about you, dude!" In an instant, all the stupid things I did in high school came flooding over me! I thought back to the attention-seeking antics, how I treated certain people, the trouble I caused--all of it, good and bad. Though, I could tell he wasn't focused on the good. "Wow, I don't know which stories you've heard, but I hope you aren't judging who I am today based upon who you have heard I used to be."

In Acts 2:22-41, the apostle Peter reminds those who are before him who Jesus is: a man who was sent to us by God, confirmed by the miracles he performed, crucified by death on the cross, and who God raised again three days later. It wasn't just a reminder of the events that had taken place, it was a call to action based on what they knew to be true of God through Jesus' time with them. Their response to this reminder? "What can we do?" "Repent and be baptized," Peter replied.

Repentance is more than just asking for forgiveness. It's defined as "changing your mind, attitude, and purpose." It's asking forgiveness PLUS changing behavior based upon what you know is right. Peter knew that everyone had something in their life that didn't match up with what Jesus modeled for them, so when they asked what to do, he put it simply--Ask for forgiveness and stop doing wrong. However, then he took it one step further. "... and be baptized." He didn't want those listening to inwardly ask for forgiveness and repent. He wanted them to make boldly state to others that they were changed. It was an outward expression of an inward decision to change their lives and be set apart from

others.

As I listened to my co-worker's words, I was thankful that I am no longer the person I used to be: Attention-seeking, loud-mouthed, rude, cocky, etc. Because I asked for forgiveness, changed my ways, and was living that outwardly, I could be confident that I was living my life for Jesus. We were able to have a conversation, and ultimately I re-gained a friend I had hurt in my life so many years ago. Of course, there are still things for which I need to repent. It's an ongoing process. Peter asked over 3,000 people to repent and be baptized two thousand years ago. Today, if you haven't done so before, I am unashamedly asking you. It will change your life.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, thank you for changing my life by calling me to repentance and bold living for Your name. Help me live my life in a way worthy of Your sacrifice. To you be the glory!  
Amen.*

## DAY 25: NO DISQUALIFICATION

Alexandra Gash

Have you ever decided--in your own mind--that a person would "never accept Jesus" and therefore resolved that you didn't even need to share Him? Maybe they think differently than you politically and are completely opposite in their ideologies, or their lifestyle is so far from your own that it just seems impossible. Perhaps you, in a moment of boldness, even invited them to church, but when they "couldn't come", that was enough for you to leave it alone and to leave them alone. Although I wouldn't say I like it, I know I have. I have disqualified people in my own thinking, believing they would never come to faith in Christ and making my own judgments about them. By doing so, I "let" myself off the hook in my God-given commission and blessing to make disciples and share the love of Christ. Hear the words of Paul,

*...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news?' ...so faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."  
(Romans 10:14-15, 17)*

Friends, we need to remember that a person's rejection of attending church with you is not their rejection of Christ. Jesus disqualifies no one. Let's try a different approach. The Gospel means "Good news," and if that good news is for anyone, let us not give up on bringing the good news to them. Let us not rely on our pastors (as awesome as they are) to make disciples out of the people that God has put in our lives. We have Christ in us (Gal. 2:20), we have his authority (Matt. 18:18), and the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). We are more than equipped and capable of sharing our own stories of what God has done in our lives--our stories of salvation, redemption, and transformation! Knowing Jesus transforms us daily!

And let us not negate the power of prayer! We can pray for opportunities, pray for those we are talking with, and even pray with them. Everyone is hurting and the world is chaotic. Prayer is a welcomed necessity! I'm batting 100! Never once when I have asked someone whether or not I could pray for them have they said no. We do our part and let our most magnificent Jesus do His. Pray today to be aggressively available to the work of God and His Kingdom. He wants to use you!

**PRAYER**

*Holy Father, we are inadequate in ourselves, but you are more than enough! You qualify us through Christ and call us to be your messengers to this lost and dying world. We have hope in you, and our heart's desire and prayer is for others to know that same hope and receive salvation by faith. Equip us, embolden us, and make our feet so beautiful as we bring your good news. Amen.*

# APPENDICES

# HOW TO ACCESS RIGHTNOW MEDIA:

RightNow media is your all-inclusive ticket to tens of thousands of streaming videos with vetted and fantastic Christian content. There is no topic you can't find a Bible Study or training about. It's basically the Netflix of Christian Content.

The wide breadth of content can be accessed via a web browser or the app available for iOS, Android, Roku TV, Apple TV, and Fire TV.

Furthermore, if needed, you can access content simultaneously with others, all online, with RightNow Media Virtual Groups.

## TO START YOUR RIGHTNOW MEDIA EXPERIENCE:

### In a web browser...

1. Go to [Crosslinechurch.com/Community-groups](http://Crosslinechurch.com/Community-groups)
2. Find the link to gain RightNow Media access
3. Create an account, login, and you are ready to go!

### On your phone...

1. Text "RightNow Crossline" to 41411
2. Create an account and you are ready to go!

\*\*\*Streaming videos for I AM: Getting to Know the God of the Bible will be found on your RightNow Media landing page or can be found with a simple search in the search bar.

We encourage you to look around the many different libraries for content that is appealing to you. Happy browsing!

# INGREDIENTS FOR A GREAT GROUP:

Whether you have been a part of a group like this before or not, please take a look at the following guidelines to help your group function to its greatest possible potential.

- **Don't Miss it!** This first tip is a big one! As a community group, commit to never missing a gathering. And be on time! If you are going to miss or be late, let your host/group know as soon as you can.
- **Assign a timekeeper!** Within the group, someone appreciates organization and timeliness—assign this person to be the timekeeper for group time together. Permit this person to move things along to make sure everything gets done and the group ends on time.
- **Keep it Confidential!** One of the beautiful things about Community Groups is the deep, meaningful conversation that happens. This often means people share sensitive things – please keep it confidential.
- **R-E-S-P-E-C-T!** Your group comprises all sorts of people from different backgrounds—it's one of the great features of your group! As a group, commit to making your group a safe environment with mutual respect. Respect not only your fellow group members and your host but also the home in which you are meeting.
- **Have Fun!** Don't forget to have fun! Laugh! Play games! You can even make specific space for that stuff!
- **Eat Up!!** Food always provides a sense of comfort and unity in group settings, so whether it's a full meal, snacks, dessert, or coffee—eat up!

- **Take Turns!** Many groups find ways for members to take turns on things such as providing food, leading prayer requests, texting reminders, or opening their home for the group. It's always healthy to not have one person in charge of something every time. (You can even assign a group member to coordinate this.)
- **Find your groove!** No two community groups are the same, and that's okay! As a group, find your groove on how you do things and stick with it.
- **Don't let kids control!** If you are a group with kids, make group time a priority. It's easy to become overwhelmed with kids and their schedules and babysitters, but don't let that control your involvement. As a group, figure out the best scenario for childcare early on so that you can fully participate in the group(e.g. individual babysitters, group babysitter(s), putting on a movie in the back room, etc.)

# CREATING A MULTIPLYING GROUP:

“Every day, they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)

The traditional and most widely accepted understanding of a small group in Western culture is that it is a place for you to find friends from your church that you can grow close to over the course of years as you study the Bible. It is a social gathering with a spiritual emphasis. Then, once you find the right mix of friends, you protect it so that you can have an inner-circle community that you can do life with; we believe this is a central part of small groups.

However, this definition is not fully complete because it is lacking the missional purpose of a small group. As we see in the passage above, the Lord added daily those who were being saved as a response to the fellowship of believers meeting in their homes and in the temple courts. As a follower of Jesus, isn't that your greatest hope? People being saved? If we collectively share this hope, we must acknowledge that it needs to be a core emphasis of our small group gatherings.

Similarly, small groups of believers must also have the same heart and attitude as Christ, who compassionately saw the crowds of Israel as “sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36) and who pulled the outcasts and overlooked into community with him. So, whether it's someone lost in sin or an uninvited brother or sister, small groups of God's people must have open doors.

Anything healthy and attractive will grow. If your group is healthy, you should expect it to grow. Our job is not to stifle growth, but rather, with prayerful discernment, seek out the will of God for

our group. That said, here are five helpful tips that you can weave into the leadership of your group that will create a culture of multiplication while still maintaining closeness with those in the group.

- **Communicate and meta-message the vision:** One of the essential parts of creating a multiplying group is to be clear about the mission and purpose of your group. This means that it would be wise to communicate the vision for your group at the start of each new study and check in with your group members about that vision. You can also meta-message the vision in group discussion throughout each study.
- **Stay flexible:** Be very careful not to get too rigid in the structure or makeup of your group, which would prohibit newcomers from participating and stunt growth. Instead, be open to changing things up and check in with your group members often.
- **Share the air:** An essential part of being an inclusive group is ensuring everyone has the opportunity to speak and contribute to discussion. Be mindful of overtaking conversations, and if you notice someone who may be introverted or reluctant to speak up, gently provide some encouragement. It may be just what they need!
- **Celebrate newcomers:** If you or one of your group members happens to bring a newcomer (after first notifying the group), celebrate their participation! Be sure to extend loving hospitality that makes them feel genuinely welcome. Do your very best, as a group, not to come off as cliquey or exclusive.
- **Train up the members of your group:** As a leader, you should always be seeking to train the group members to lead as well. You can do this by asking them to facilitate

conversation, lead prayer, set up the meeting schedule, select and lead a study, etc. Then be sure to follow up with them about it. If you are doing everything yourself, you are not creating a multiplying group.

- **Plant seeds of leadership:** One of the biggest reasons people do not lead or serve in ways they are capable of is that they are not asked. As you begin to notice certain members of the group evidencing leadership skills and spiritual maturity, it may be time to ask them if they would consider leading a group of their own. That can mean passing the torch of leadership to them OR having them start their own group OR splitting/subgrouping the group (which is growing) and having them lead the other group out of the split.

Having a multiplying group in which you truly see people connected and brought to salvation through is wildly rewarding. I fully understand that it may seem to be disruptive to the closeness of your group. Still, counterintuitively, it brings a group much closer as you engage in mission together and see God working through it. Don't feel like you have to start over every time your group grows, but rather, just pull people on board for the journey that you are already on and trust the Holy Spirit!

# COMMITMENT CONTRACT:

(Some groups may want to consider utilizing this simple commitment contract as a way of keeping each other accountable to healthy group participation.)

- I commit to taking this group seriously.
- I commit to being intentional with my attendance to this group.
- I commit to engaging in conversation.
- I commit to respecting my fellow group members and keeping everything I hear confidential.
- I commit to being honest.
- I commit to all the things listed above because I value community, and I desire to grow closer to all those in my group.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE ROMANS ROAD: AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL

As we look at the book of Romans, written by the apostle Paul, we can see that it provides a detailed map for our salvation and eternal fellowship with God. Just follow these steps:

1. We must acknowledge God as the Creator of everything, accepting our humble position in God's created order and purpose. Romans 1:20-21

*"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

2. We must realize that we are sinners and that we need forgiveness. None of us are worthy under God's standards. Romans 3:23

*"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."*

3. God gave us the way to be forgiven of our sins. He showed us His love by giving us the potential for life through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:8

*"But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

4. If we remain sinners, we will die. However, if we repent of our sins, and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will have eternal life. Romans 6:23

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

5. Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and you are saved.  
Romans 10:9-10

*"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

## **OTHER CROSSLINE GROUPS RESOURCES:**

If you enjoyed this series, you might also enjoy the other small group studies produced by Crossline Community Church. Small-Group workbooks are available at Crossline Community Church. You can access all the content and arrange a pickup of hard copy workbooks by going to [crosslinechurch.com/community-groups](http://crosslinechurch.com/community-groups).

*The Man. The Myth. The Legend. Getting to Know the Real Jesus*

*XII. Experiencing your Best Relationship with God and Others*

*FAITH. Against All Hope*

*Expectation: Living as Children of Promise*

*Outpouring: Unleashed with Holy Spirit Power*

*Advancement: Moving in Authority and Confidence*

## ABOUT THE EDITORS

**Jordan Gash** is the Community Life Pastor at Crossline Community Church in Laguna Hills, CA. He graduated from Azusa Pacific Seminary with a M.A. in Pastoral Studies. Jordan has been working in both the Church and Christian organizational spheres since 2006. In his role as Community Life Pastor, Jordan oversees and shepherds a vast network of Community Groups. He has contributed to multiple adult small group curricula, including authoring the fifteen sessions of the Crossline-produced series on Acts 1-4, as well as several youth ministry groups' curricula. As a speaker at conferences and camps, he is passionate about encouraging practical application to Biblical truths. He is married to his wife, Alexandra and has three young sons.

**JP Jones** is the Founding Senior Pastor of Crossline Church in Laguna Hills, CA. JP is a graduate of Talbot Seminary where he did his Master of Divinity and Doctoral studies. A published author, JP has written the men's book, Facing Goliath and several small groups' curricula such as FAITH: Against all Hope and XII: Experiencing your Best Life with God and Others. JP is a popular speaker at Men's events and conferences and his radio program, Truth that Changes Lives is listened to in all 50 states and over 150 countries of the world. JP is on the faculty of Biola University where he teaches Theology and Biblical Studies. JP is married to his wife Donna and they have three children.

## ABOUT CROSSLINE COMMUNITY CHURCH:

Three words describe the history of Crossline Church: Prayer, Faith and Relationships. In the fall of 2004 I began to seriously pray about the future God had for me and my family. I was at a crossroads in ministry and needed clear direction from God. I went to Forest Home, a Christian conference center in the San Bernardino Mountains and earnestly sought the Lord. Praying on the spot where God spoke to Billy Graham, I asked God to speak to me about where and how He wanted me to serve Him. That time of prayer launched a 10 day period of prayer and fasting to seek the confirmation and leading of God. True to His Word, God spoke to me and others about the vision to start a church that

would reach both seekers and committed disciples with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. For a period of four months, a weekly prayer meeting gathered to pray and dream about God's direction. Following the pattern of the early disciples in Acts 1-2, the founding core group of Crossline spent a focused 10 day season of prayer before it launched the first public worship services in February of 2005.

Our new congregation grew over the next 4 years to a little over 1,000 in attendance. With growth came good challenges and once again we spent a focused period of prayer concerning a move from the high school campus to a permanent home for our church. That season of prayer was answered miraculously by God and Crossline now meets at its 25 acre home in Laguna Hills, CA. Our congregation has grown to over 2,000 and prayer continues to be a core value for the daily life of Crossline, its vision and its future.

Crossline began as a commitment of faith. Not sponsored by any denomination, foundation or church, the Pastors and volunteers stepped into an initial ministry with a million dollar a year budget. Having no meeting place, offices or staff, within a few months God miraculously answered prayer and provided everything we needed to be a mobile church. From its inception, Crossline has had a core commitment to believe great things about God, to ask great things of God and attempt great things for God! What began as a prayer meeting with 16 people has grown to a local church of over 2,000.

Crossline Church is a body made up of ordinary people who believe in an extra-ordinary God. We believe that everyone is on a spiritual journey and whether you are a first time visitor or have been with us from day one, you are a vital part of our church right now and of the community He is shaping us to be for the future. At Crossline it our desire to connect people to Jesus Christ and to one another. Our motto is, "Love God, love people and have a blast!" We would love for you to join us. Together we can do great things for God!

JP Jones  
Founding Senior Pastor

## **SUNDAY SERVICES:**

### **Main Services**

**9:00am & 11:00am** - Worship Center

### **Classic Service** (Traditional)

**9:00am** - Chapel

### **Information:**

**23331 Moulton Parkway  
Laguna Hills, CA 92653**

**(949) 916-0250**

**[crosslinechurch.com](http://crosslinechurch.com)**

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Who is God? A simple, yet unfathomably deep question. The most important question. Perhaps no question more informs the way we live our lives than this question. Maybe that is where we start...looking at our lives. What does your life say about your answer to this question? How would understanding him more fully and accurately impact your thoughts, your relationships and your actions? In this 5-week series, you will examine the character and attributes of the God of the Bible. You will learn to understand God better, to trust in him with all your heart and to live, pray and obey with confidence. Big thoughts about God inspire big faith and big faith motivates big action! God is beckoning you, "who do you say I AM?"



**CROSSLine**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH