

BAPTISTWAY ADULT BIBLE TEACHING GUIDE®

*Created for Relationships*

ELIJAH BROWN  
JIMMY HESTER  
DENNIS HORTON  
RANDY JOHNSON  
KEITH LOWRY  
DEBORAH MCCOLLISTER  
ALLEN REASONS  
CHARLES WALTON



BAPTISTWAYPRESS®

Dallas, Texas

*Created for Relationships—Adult Bible Teaching Guide*

Copyright © 2015 by BAPTISTWAY PRESS®.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations. For information, contact BAPTISTWAY PRESS, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 North Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 1-4 and 8-13 are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. NIV84 refers to this edition of the New International Version.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 5-7 are taken from the 1995 update of the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission. NASB refers to this edition of the New American Standard Bible®.

All Scripture quotations marked NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.  
Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible (registered symbol) copyright (copyright symbol) 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com>. All rights reserved.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® Leadership Team  
Executive Director, Baptist General Convention of Texas: David Hardage  
Director, Church Ministry Resources: Chris Liebrum  
Director, Bible Study/Discipleship Team: Phil Miller  
Publisher, BaptistWay Press®: Scott Stevens

Cover and Interior Design and Production: Desktop Miracles, Inc.  
Printing: Data Reproductions Corporation

First edition: June 2015  
ISBN-13: 978-1-938355-38-7

# *How to Make the Best Use of This Teaching Guide*

Leading a class in studying the Bible is a sacred trust. This *Teaching Guide* has been prepared to help you as you give your best to this important task.

In each lesson, you will find first “Bible Comments” for teachers, to aid you in your study and preparation. The three sections of “Bible Comments” are “Understanding the Context,” “Interpreting the Scriptures,” and “Focusing on the Meaning.” “Understanding the Context” provides a summary overview of the entire background passage that also sets the passage in the context of the Bible book being studied. “Interpreting the Scriptures” provides verse-by-verse comments on the focal passage. “Focusing on the Meaning” offers help with the meaning and application of the focal text.

The second main part of each lesson is “Teaching Plans.” You’ll find two complete teaching plans in this section. The first is called “Teaching Plan—Varied Learning Activities,” and the second is called “Teaching Plan—Lecture and Questions.” Choose the plan that best fits your class and your style of teaching. You may also use and adapt ideas from both. Each plan is intended to be practical, helpful, and immediately useful as you prepare to teach.

The major headings in each teaching plan are intended to help you sequence how you teach so as to follow the flow of how people tend to learn. The first major heading, “Connect with Life,” provides ideas that will help you begin the class session where your class is and draw your class into the study. The second major heading, “Guide Bible Study,” offers suggestions for helping your class engage the Scriptures actively and develop a greater understanding of this portion of the Bible’s message. The third major heading, “Encourage Application,” is meant to help participants focus on how to respond with their lives to this message.

As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. You might use one or more of the following methods:

In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents in their *Study Guides* and on the first page of each lesson.

- Make and post a chart that indicates the date on which each lesson will be studied.
- If all of your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
- Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org) on the Resources for Adults page.
- Develop a sticker with the lesson dates, and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.
- Here are some steps you can take to help you prepare well to teach each lesson and save time in doing so:

Start early in the week before your class meets.

1. If your church's adult Bible study teachers meet for lesson overview and preparation, plan to participate. If your church's adult Bible study teachers don't have this planning time now, look for ways to begin. You, your fellow teachers, and your church will benefit from this mutual encouragement and preparation.
2. Overview the study in the *Study Guide*. Look at the table of contents, and see where this lesson fits in the overall study. Then read or review the study introduction to the book that is being studied.
3. Consider carefully the suggested Main Idea, Question to Explore, and Teaching Aim. These can help you discover the main thrust of this particular lesson.
4. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. Using your Bible in your study and in the class session can provide a positive model to class members to use their

own Bibles and give more attention to Bible study themselves. (Each writer of the Bible comments in both the *Teaching Guide* and the *Study Guide* has chosen a favorite translation. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translations chosen, of course.)

5. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the Bible comments in the *Study Guide*. The Bible comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible. Read also the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and you can also use them in the class session itself. Continue your Bible study with the aid of the Bible comments included in this *Teaching Guide*.
6. Review the "Teaching Plans" in this *Teaching Guide*. Consider how these suggestions would help you teach this Bible passage in your class to accomplish the teaching aim.
7. Consider prayerfully the needs of your class, and think about how to teach so you can help your class learn best.
8. Develop and follow a lesson plan based on the suggestions in this *Teaching Guide*, with alterations as needed for your class.
9. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.

***Premium Adult Online Bible Commentary.*** Plan to get the additional adult Bible study comments available online. Call 1-866-249-1799 or e-mail [baptistway@texasbaptists.org](mailto:baptistway@texasbaptists.org) to order the *Premium Adult Online Bible Commentary*. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website. The price of these comments is \$6 for individuals and \$25 for a group of five. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Adult Online Bible Commentary* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org) for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.

***Premium Adult Online Teaching Plans.*** An additional teaching plan is also available in electronic format (PDF) by calling 1-866-249-1799. The price of these plans for an entire study is \$5 for an individual or \$20 for a group of five. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Adult Online Teaching Plans* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org) for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.

***FREE!*** Downloadable teaching resource items for use in your class are available at [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org). Watch for them in the “Teaching Plans” for each lesson. Then go online to [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org) and click on “Teaching Resource Items” for this study. These items are selected from the “Teaching Plans.” They are provided online to make lesson preparation easier for hand-outs and similar items. Permission is granted to download these teaching resource items, print them out, copy them as needed, and use them in your class.

***IN ADDITION:*** Enrichment teaching help is provided in the online *Baptist Standard*, which is available at [www.baptiststandard.com](http://www.baptiststandard.com). The *Baptist Standard* is available online for an annual subscription rate of \$10. Subscribe online at [www.baptiststandard.com](http://www.baptiststandard.com) or call 214-630-4571. A free thirty-day trial subscription is currently available.

## *Writers of This Teaching Guide*

**Dennis Horton, writer of “Bible Comments” for lessons one through four**, is the Associate Director and J. David Slover Professor of Ministry Guidance at Baylor University. He has a Ph.D. in New Testament from Baylor, an M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a B.A. in Religion and Greek from Baylor. Prior to his current teaching position, Dennis pastored and/or taught in Indiana, Hong Kong, Thailand, Georgia, and Brownwood, Texas. He is married to Sara, and they have two sons, Joshua and Joel.

**Jimmy Hester, writer of “Teaching Plans” for lessons one through four**, retired in 2011 after twenty-seven years of publishing for churches through magazines, Bible studies, and books. Dr. Hester is Bible study director and teacher of adults at First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, where he and his wife Kim have been members since 1985. They have two grown sons and two grandchildren. Dr. Hester received the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Allen Reasons, writer of “Bible Comments” for lessons five through seven**, is the senior minister of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, Huntington, West Virginia. He also serves as an instructor for Palmer Theological Seminary. He has previously pastored churches in Texas and Missouri. Dr. Reasons holds the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife Laurie have two children, Katherine and Preston, and one grandchild James.

**Randy Johnson, writer of “Teaching Plans” for lessons five through seven**, is a graduate of Howard Payne University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received a Masters of Divinity from the School of Theology. He retired after completing thirty-eight years of full-time Youth Ministry. He served at Monterey Church in Lubbock, Texas, the First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas, and for twenty-eight years at First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas. Randy and his wife Carol, who is employed by the Richardson Independent

School District, have been married for thirty-six years. They have two adult daughters and two grandchildren.

**Elijah Brown wrote “Bible Comments” for lessons eight through ten.**

Dr. Brown was the Assistant Professor of Missions at East Texas Baptist University in Marshall, Texas. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh, New College in Edinburgh, Scotland and a B.A. in Religion and History from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas. Elijah has served on the board of consultants for the Christian Life Commission of the B.G.C.T. and serves in a variety of roles with the Baptist World Alliance. Elijah recently became the Chief of Staff with the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, working to advance human rights and international religious freedom from a Christian perspective. He and his family now make their home in Falls Church, Virginia.

**Keith Lowry wrote the “Teaching Plans” for lessons eight through ten.**

Keith is the Adult Sunday School Consultant and the Boomer-Senior Adult Ministry/Single Adult Ministry/Family Ministry Specialist for the Bible Study/Discipleship Team at the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Keith has served churches in Louisiana, Texas, and Tennessee in youth, music, education, administration, adults, single adults, and outreach and evangelism, for more than thirty-five years. He has worked with the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay) as an Adult Sunday School consultant. Keith is married to Suzanne and they have three grown children and four grandchildren.

**Charles Walton wrote “Bible Comments” for lessons eleven through thirteen.**

Dr. Walton is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a graduate of Louisiana State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div. and D. Min.). He retired from the active pastorate after serving Texas congregations for forty years. He and his wife Brenda have two children and five grandchildren. They make their home in Conroe, Texas, where Dr. Walton serves as the chaplain of the Conroe Police Department. Dr. Walton is also actively involved in the Intentional Interim Ministry of Texas Baptists.

**Deborah McCollister, wrote the “Teaching Plans” for lessons eleven through thirteen.**

Dr. McCollister is professor of English at Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, Texas. She and her husband Mackie, are active members of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas. She has written many previous assignments for BaptistWay Bible study materials.

# Created for Relationships

<i>How to Make the Best Use of This Teaching Guide</i>	3
<i>Writers for This Teaching Guide</i>	7

## DATE OF STUDY

LESSON 1	_____	<i>God</i>	
		GENESIS 1:26-31; ROMANS 5:1-11	11
LESSON 2	_____	<i>Self</i>	
		1 SAMUEL 16:1-7; PSALM 139	22
LESSON 3	_____	<i>Spouse</i>	
		EPHESIANS 5:21-33	32
LESSON 4	_____	<i>Children</i>	
		PSALM 127:3-5; PROVERBS 22:6; DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9	43
LESSON 5	_____	<i>Parents</i>	
		EXODUS 20:12; LUKE 2:45-52; JOHN 19:25-27	54
LESSON 6	_____	<i>Friends</i>	
		ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12; 1 SAMUEL 20:1-17, 27-42	64
LESSON 7	_____	<i>Enemies</i>	
		LUKE 6:27-36; ROMANS 12:17-21	74
LESSON 8	_____	<i>Neighbors/Community</i>	
		EXODUS 20:13-17; LEVITICUS 19:16-18; ZECHARIAH 7:8-10; MATTHEW 5:13-16	85
LESSON 9	_____	<i>Employer</i>	
		EPHESIANS 6:5-9; COLOSSIANS 3:22-25; 1 TIMOTHY 6:1-2; TITUS 2:9-11	96
LESSON 10	_____	<i>Government</i>	
		ROMANS 13:1-7; 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4	107

LESSON 11	_____	<i>Church Leaders</i>	
		EPHESIANS 4:11–16; 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12–13; HEBREWS 13:17–18	117
LESSON 12	_____	<i>Fellow Christians</i>	
		ACTS 4:32–37; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–27; GALATIANS 6:9–10; HEBREWS 10:24–25	128
LESSON 13	_____	<i>Non-Christians</i>	
		2 CORINTHIANS 5:11–21; 1 PETER 3:15–16; COLOSSIANS 4:2–6	139
		<i>How to Order More Bible Study Materials</i>	151

# LESSON ONE

## *God*

### **FOCAL TEXT**

Genesis 1:26–31;  
Romans 5:1–11

### **BACKGROUND**

Genesis 1:26–31;  
Romans 5:1–11

### **MAIN IDEA**

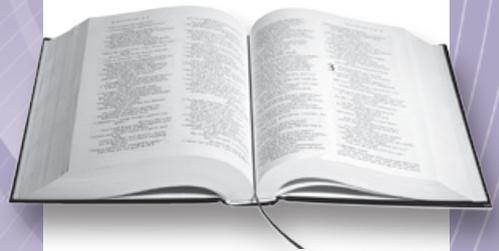
God created us for relationships, and Jesus has reconciled our relationship with God.

### **QUESTION TO EXPLORE**

What does it mean to be created in God's image, and how has Jesus reconciled our relationship with God?

### **TEACHING AIM**

To lead adults to comprehend what it means to be created in God's image and to understand how Jesus provides reconciliation with God



## BIBLE COMMENTS

### Understanding the Context

---

The opening chapters of Genesis provide answers to some of the key questions in life: Why do we exist? Who created us? What is our relationship with our Creator? What is our role in this world? The first chapter of Genesis paints a picture of creation in broad beautiful strokes. With each unfolding day, God created new wonders. Out of shapelessness and emptiness (Genesis 1:2), God formed and then later filled. God formed light and darkness on the first day, and on the fourth day filled this expanse with stars, the sun, and the moon. God shaped the sky above and the waters below on the second day, and on the fifth day filled the sky with birds and the waters with sea creatures. God formed the dry ground on the third day, and on the sixth day filled the ground with land animals and human beings. The seventh day became a day of rest.

This account of creation makes at least three significant theological points. First, God is the Creator; everything and everyone else is part of his creation. Second, God alone is the Creator. No other deities participated in this process, despite other ancient Near Eastern stories of creation. The sun, moon, and stars are not deities. The Lord is the Creator of these heavenly bodies and is the source of their light (Gen. 1:3). God alone is the author of all space and all life. Third, human beings are a special creation of God, created in his image and intended for relationship with him. Unfortunately, as the later chapters of Genesis explain, people rebelled against God and broke this relationship.

In the first four chapters of Romans, Paul explained how all of humanity falls under God's judgment because of their rebellion and sinfulness. Even those who had been given the special revelation of the Mosaic Law fell short; the rest of humanity has refused to respond to God's general revelation found in creation, choosing instead to live in rebellion. All people have broken their relationship with God, choosing instead to live in sin. God, however, offers a remedy by providing salvation and a renewed relationship through the atoning death of his Son. The fifth chapter of Romans documents the hope and joy we experience because of this right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

## Interpreting the Scriptures

---

### Created for Relationship (Genesis 1:26–31)

**1:26.** The use of the first-person plural in the phrase, “Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness” (NET) has been interpreted in four primary ways. First, the usage of the plural could be a means to highlight God’s majesty. Sometimes the Hebrew language uses the plural as a means to magnify a subject. In this case, the plural usage would highlight the majesty of God because of all the divine attributes and powers within God’s being. Second, the plural usage may refer to the host of angels that are part of the divine court, but this heavenly court has not yet been mentioned in Genesis.

Third, many Christians often understand the plural usage as a reference to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, since the Spirit (1:2) and the Son (John 1:1–3) were also present during the act of creation. Fourth, several commentators believe that the intended meaning of this plural is one of self-deliberation. In other words, he stopped for purposeful, careful consideration before creating humanity. On the previous five days and the first part of the sixth day, God created by simply stating, “Let there be . . .” However, God paused at this point on the sixth day, after the creation of the animals, in order to reflect on the importance of his next act as Creator. The pause signifies the importance of creating beings made in the divine image.

**1:27.** God created both male and female human beings in his image, in his likeness. Although some have attempted to make a distinction between the terms “image” and “likeness,” these two words function as synonyms that form a parallel repetition for emphasis. However, what does it mean to be created in the image or likeness of God? It cannot refer to a physical likeness because God is spirit. Being made in the image of God includes three important connecting points with God.

First, being an image-bearer implies that human beings share certain important characteristics with God. The abilities to reason, to make moral choices, and to be self-aware all set us apart from other creatures. Second, the image of God includes a representative element; that is, God has given people the responsibility of working on God’s behalf. Therefore, our actions should reflect what God would want us to

do. Third, and most significant, being made in the image of God implies that we are capable of having a relationship with God. To live separate from God prevents people from fulfilling a key element of what it means to be human. God created people to be in a meaningful relationship with him and with each other. Human interpersonal relationships reflect God's personhood. God created us for relationship, not isolation.

**1:28–30.** After God had blessed the humans, he commanded them to be *fruitful* and *multiply* and *fill* (the earth). These three verbs make clear the command to reproduce and expand humanity's presence across the earth. Many early Christian leaders and theologians mistakenly drew a division between body and spirit, viewing the spirit as good and the physical body as evil. The creation narrative contains no such dichotomy. Human beings—physical bodies included—form the highest point of creation, and God's first command to them is to reproduce. Sexual intercourse is part of God's original design for humanity, providing not only a means to produce offspring but also a way to bind couples more closely together.

God also commanded these image-bearers (both male and female) to *subdue* the earth and *rule* over the other creatures that inhabit the water, air, and land. God specified that this reign also extends to plant life, which serves as a valuable source of food for humans (1:29–30). While some people have used this directive to justify exploitation and even destruction of the earth's resources, God's people are to reign over creation in a different way (see Matthew 20:25–28). As God's representatives, people have the responsibility of overseeing the earth in the same way that God cares for his creation—making it productive and life-giving. Our stewardship role over creation is both a blessing and a responsibility.

**1:31.** God's reflection at the end of the sixth day differs from the evaluations for the previous five days of creation. Here God contemplated on "*all* that he had made" (*italics added*) as opposed to reflecting on the single days of creation. The Hebrew terms used in this reflection also vary slightly from previous days to heighten the importance of this concluding day of creation. For example, when the writer talked about the previous five days, he used the Hebrew form of article "a" (a fifth day). However, the sixth day includes the definite article in Hebrew—"the

sixth day” to set it apart from the other days. Most importantly, God declared that all of the work of creation was not just “good” but “very good.” Only after the creation of humanity does God use the adverb “very.” This usage underscores the importance that God places on human beings as the crowning achievement of his creation.

### A New Relationship with God (Romans 5:1–5)

**5:1–2.** The verb, “to justify” (*dikaioō*), is a legal term meaning to render a favorable verdict; to declare one to be righteous or just. This judgment is made on the basis of a person’s faith, not works (see Romans 2:24, 4:3–5). The results of this verdict are threefold: peace, access, and rejoicing. The hostility between the justified ones and God has ceased; the broken relationship has become whole and harmonious. Jesus, the mediator, has reconciled believers with God. Justification also provides access to God’s grace. Believers now freely stand in God’s presence without any fear; they live in a state of grace. Justification becomes a source of rejoicing because of the hope believers have of sharing in the fullness of God’s presence when they go to be with God for all of eternity.

**5:3–5.** Believers also rejoice in their sufferings (5:3). God works to redeem our tribulations. Peace with God does not necessarily bring peace with others who may even persecute Christians. In the midst of affliction, God is present, pouring out his love into our hearts through the gift of his Holy Spirit (5:5). This “pouring out” of God’s love reflects great abundance and recalls the same pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost (see Acts 2:17–18). By allowing God’s Spirit to work in our lives, our suffering produces perseverance rather than despair or bitterness. Perseverance then builds character, the quality of being proven genuine. Character in turn produces hope. Believers gain a renewed sense of hope as they see evidence of God’s Spirit at work in their lives and in the lives of other believers as they respond to suffering in such an unexpected manner. Our relationship with God changes our whole perspective on life’s troubles. Suffering thus becomes an opportunity to affirm and display God’s love.

## Proof of God's Love for Us (Romans 5:6–8)

**5:6–8.** Not only do we have internal evidence of God's love for us through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, but we also have unquestionable external evidence of God's love for us in that Christ died for us. Jesus offered his life on our behalf "at just the right time" (5:6). This phrase reflects God's intentional plan to save us. In Galatians 4:4, Paul used an equivalent phrase to describe this moment in history as the perfect timing for God to send his Son to die on our behalf.

Several factors converged during this period, making this the optimal time for God to send his Son: humanity's state of rebellion; the rise of Jewish legalism which had corrupted the original commandments to love God and love neighbors; the *Pax Romana* (peace provided through the Roman government); and the use of Greek as the common language of the day. These latter two factors—the peace in Rome and the Greek language—facilitated the spread of the Good News throughout the Roman Empire after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Paul described the recipients of this great sacrifice as powerless and ungodly (5:6) and as sinners (5:8) and enemies (5:10). The state of being powerless is to be without strength or to be weak. We are unable to obtain righteousness through our good works or obedience to the Law. We are ungodly in that we have turned away from God. As sinners, we have failed to live up to God's holy standards. We have missed the target by having committed wrongs and have wandered off the path of righteousness. We have turned against God through our self-centered attitudes and actions.

## Reconciliation with God (Romans 5:9–11)

**5:9–10.** These two verses parallel each other, forming a creative repetition of the same thought for greater emphasis and elaboration. Being "justified by his blood" (5:9) is equivalent to being "reconciled to him through the death of his Son" (5:10), but each phrase has a slightly different meaning. Justification highlights the pronouncement of innocence we receive because Jesus, who was innocent, offered his life in our place. Reconciliation also results from the death of Jesus, bringing us back together with God. Because God has justified us, we will be "saved from God's wrath through him" (5:9). Because God has reconciled us to

himself, we will be “saved through his life” (5:10). Not only have we been saved and now live in right relationship with God through Christ, we will also be saved from God’s judgment in the future. Our salvation is both a present reality and a future event.

**5:11.** Our reconciliation with God provides one more reason for believers to rejoice. We are no longer enemies of God. We have been reunited with God and therefore can rejoice in this renewed relationship with him. We have full confidence in what God has done for us in the past, so we can also have complete confidence in what he will do for us in the future.

### **Focusing on the Meaning**

---

Given the immensity of space and time, human beings seem quite insignificant. Those who reflect seriously on the comparative smallness and brevity of our lives draw one of two conclusions. Those who refuse to acknowledge God’s existence and deep love for humanity can fall into despair over the relative insignificance and meaninglessness of life. On the other hand, those who realize that the eternal God and Creator of the universe highly values each person have reason to view life from a completely different perspective. Each person is created in God’s image in order to have a relationship with him. Each life is significant and meaningful because God loves each and every person.

Even in our fallen condition of weakness and rebellion, God’s sacrificial love creates a way for us to experience salvation and a renewed relationship with our Creator. Paul emphasizes the depth of God’s love and sacrifice for us by describing the human reluctance to sacrifice one’s life even for a righteous person (Rom. 5:7). Sometimes people are willing to die for a good person or perhaps for their child. People do not have any willingness, however, to die for those who are enemies or those who are evil. Yet, such sacrifice is precisely what Christ did for us because God loves us so much and desires to have a relationship with us. This act of selfless love certainly gives us a reason for hope and great rejoicing.

## TEACHING PLANS

### Teaching Plan—Varied Learning Activities

---

#### Connect with Life

1. As members arrive, give each one a blank sheet of paper and ask them to create a list of titles that signify the relationships they hold in life. While family relationships may dominate the list, challenge them to include work, church, community, and social relationships. After everyone has arrived, allow members to share some of the titles they listed. Use the *Study Guide* to review briefly the introduction to the study and show members the thirteen categories of relationships you will be discussing. Challenge adults to use the study to evaluate the current condition of their relationships in each area.
2. Make the transition to today's subject by asking: *Of all the titles you listed, which one describes the most significant relationship you have?* Ask a member to read the list of questions in the introduction to this lesson. Explain that while all of these questions cannot be fully considered in this session, a strong foundation will be laid for understanding God's intention in creating humans for relationships, and why we should view every relationship from God's perspective.

#### Guide Bible Study

3. Point out that a relationship involves two people. Then ask: *What would you add to that statement to define the word "relationship"?* After several people have shared, make two columns on a large poster or white board. Label one column "God" and the other column "humanity." As you (or a class member) read Genesis 1:26–31, instruct the class to identify characteristics of each party—God and humanity. Note that some elements in the relationship are blessings (creating male and female humans), while other elements carry responsibilities (having dominion over creation).

4. Using one picture of the sun and one of the moon, ask members to identify the difference between the two. Summarize their thoughts by explaining that the sun is the source of light, and the moon reflects that light. Use this imagery to explain that human beings reflect God's character, like the moon reflects the sun. Humans are personal beings able to think, feel, and decide. Humans, unlike other creatures, are aware of their mortality and are capable of making choices between right and wrong.
5. Transition to Romans 5 by saying, *While God's creation was "very good," Genesis 3 describes the entrance of sin and rebellion that caused a broken relationship between God and humanity. The only cure for this predicament was God's response of redemption and rescue.* Read Romans 5:1–11. Ask for two or three volunteers to summarize these verses. Focus on the concept of justification (being made right with God by faith in Jesus). Explain that because of Jesus' sacrifice, there is no more hostility between humanity and God. A new, harmonious relationship with God is possible for those who turn to him through faith in Christ. Conclude by saying: *Jesus' sacrifice made a right relationship with God possible. Nothing you and I could do would make things right, so God took the initiative to reconcile us to himself.*

### Encourage Application

6. Your group might include people who have never made a commitment to Jesus Christ and thus do not experience a right relationship with God. Acknowledge their potential presence and invite them to talk with you (or someone else) after the session about reconciling their relationship with God.
7. Remind the group of the imagery of the sun, moon, and earth. Challenge members to consider what kind of moon their relationship with God reflects: full, half, quarter, or barely visible. Challenge them to deepen their relationship with God through Bible study and prayer. Emphasize that a strong foundational relationship with God will serve members well as they move through this study. Close with prayer.

## Teaching Plan—Lecture and Questions

---

### Connect with Life

1. After members have arrived, ask, *Why are you on earth at this particular time in history?* After several have responded, ask them: *What kind of answers would you expect to hear from people on the main street in own town?* Briefly review the introduction to the study found in the *Study Guide* and remind members that one of the overarching themes in the Bible is relationships, and that God created humans for a relationship with him and others. Acknowledge that relationships can provide the most rewarding and meaningful experiences in life, as well as some of the most trying and frustrating experiences. Point out the thirteen categories of relationships in the study and challenge members to compare the condition of their relationships in each area with what God desires based on Scripture.
2. Transition to today's subject by stating the Question to Explore: *What does it mean to be created in God's image, and how has Jesus reconciled our relationship with God?* Explain that of all the relationships we experience, a right relationship with God affects all the others. This is why a personal relationship with God is the first topic of this study on relationships.

### Guide Bible Study

3. Explain that today's study will include two Bible passages. The first set of verses come from Genesis and describe the creation of humanity and God's perfect plan (including blessings and responsibilities) for human relationships with God and each other. Explain that the second set of verses come from Romans and describe God's plan for redeeming humanity's broken relationship with him. Explain that the Bible tells the story of a personal God who created human beings in his image with a unique capacity to live in relationship with each other and with himself.
4. Read Genesis 1:26–31. Lecture briefly on the phrase "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness" using the information in the

section “God is a Complex Being” from the *Study Guide*. Conclude by highlighting that God’s image and likeness within us enable us to relate to God and represent him on earth like no other part of his creation.

5. Introduce Romans 5 by explaining the introduction of sin and rebellion in Genesis 3. Say: *God’s response to humanity’s rebellion was personal and sacrificial and involved his Son, Jesus Christ.* Read Romans 5:1–11. Explain the concept of justification using the information in the section “The Answer to Our Brokenness” from the *Study Guide*. Ask: *What concept or thought in these verses illustrates the importance God placed on our having a right relationship with him?* Conclude by asking a volunteer to read the sidebar “*The Imago Dei*” from the *Study Guide*.

### Encourage Application

6. Say: *This session is foundational to the other twelve areas of relationships we will consider. If you have not reconciled your relationship with God, please give that your prayerful attention today. I will be glad to visit with you after the session to talk about how you can accept God’s gift of salvation.*
7. Continue by saying: *If you have accepted God’s salvation and you live in right relationship with him, consider the depth of your commitment to God. Ask God what you can do to strengthen your relationship with him and listen for his answer.* Close the session in prayer, thanking God for creating human beings in his image and likeness, and for loving humans so much that he would provide a way to restore their broken relationship with him.

### NOTES

---

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 1-4 are from the New International Version (1984 edition).