

His Story

God's Story and Rebar

Introduction:

Although church membership is not explicitly mentioned in the Scriptures, the concept is assumed as individual believers were seen as family who engaged with and placed themselves under the authority of a local church. For four family at Kettlebrook, if you have professed faith in Jesus Christ and find yourselves in a small group of any kind, *spiritually* you are already member of the church, although *practically* and *technically* you may not be. Membership assumes that a person is wholly committed to the vision and values of Jesus and His church, and is engaging in the life and mission of the church in meaningful ways. It also means that a person agrees with the foundational beliefs of His church. ***God's Story and Rebar*** are our way of ensuring those foundational beliefs are made as clear as possible.

Curriculum:

The following document contains some discussion questions for you to consider. You will also note that each portion of "God's Story" include a link to a corresponding video that covers a theme of God's Story. This curriculum is also intended to be augmented by the book entitled *Christian Beliefs* by Wayne A. Grudem. This book is a wonderfully condensed guide to the topics that will be addressed. In approximately 5 short pages per topic, Grudem presents each foundational belief in easy to understand terms.

CLASS #1 PREP

What is the Bible?



God's Story Video

1. Watch the Bible Project's video entitled "What is the Bible" here: <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/>
2. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

What role, if any, has the Bible played in your life up to this point?

From the Skeptic:

Below are some comments that reflect a skeptical perspective of the Bible. Underline comments that might reflect thoughts that you have had about the Bible at some point in your life?

- “The Bible was written way after any of that stuff ever happened.”
 - “There is no evidence that what the Bible says happened actually happened.”
 - “The Bible is just one of many religious books... each pointing in it’s own way to the same God.”
 - “The Bible is full of contradictions.”
 - “The Bible is not relevant for my life.”
 - “The Bible was not written by God, but by men... fallible men...with their own agendas.”
 - “The Bible is good literature, just like any ancient mythology, but nothing more.”
 - (create your own here) “
-
-

Why did you underline the comments you did?

From the Bible:

In the New Testament, we find the apostle Paul wrote two letters of encouragement to his younger friend and fellow church planter Timothy. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul refers to the significance of the “holy Scriptures.” Take some time to read this in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

In what ways does Paul find Scripture to be practical?

Describe how you might use Scripture in any of these ways?

From the Book: Read chapter 1 (pages 13-20) in Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*.

In chapter 1, Grudem describes Scripture as having four characteristics. What are these characteristics and how would you describe them in your own words?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Moving Forward

For you, what are some of the biggest barriers to engaging with the Bible regularly? What steps would you want to take to remove these barriers?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled "What is the Bible?" that is found here:

<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Some Biblical passages that you may want to explore include:

- Nehemiah 8:1-18 – Israel rediscovers God's Word and celebrates
- Psalm 1 – God's word as the foundation of our lives and all 150 psalms
- Psalm 119:1-16 – The longest of all psalms and a celebration of God's law
- Isaiah 66:1-2 – God delights in those who tremble at his Word
- Matthew 4:4 – God's Word is the bread of life
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 – God has spoken through prophets by the Holy Spirit

Some other messages that you may want to listen to include:

- The Verdict (Parts 1,2&3) by Andy Stanley at:
http://startingpoint.com/members_audio_res.jsp

Some books that you may want to explore (and are available in the KBC office) include:

- *The Old Testament Documents: Are they Reliable and Relevant?* by Walt Kaiser Jr. (ISBN # 0-8308-1975-4)
- *The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce (ISBN # 0-8308-2736-6)

What is God like?



God's Story Video

1. Watch the Bible Project's video entitled "Holiness" here:
<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/holiness/>
2. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

Over the years, how have you formed your understanding of who God is and what God is like? (i.e. where does the above description come from?)

From the Skeptic:

Some people today claim that God doesn't exist. Have there been times in your own life when you have doubted either God's existence or his character? Please describe below.

From the Bible:

In the Old Testament book of Psalms we find a broad array of songs written to and about God. Psalm 100 is a song giving thanks to God for his character. Take some time to read Psalm 100.

What are some of the things that we can learn about God's character from this psalm? Make a list below:

In your opinion, is there a difference between knowing *about* God and knowing God? If so, what is the difference?

From the Book: Read chapter 2 (pages 21-36) and 3 (pages 37-41) in Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*

In chapter 2, Grudem describes from Scripture many of God's attributes. Which of these attributes (can be a combination) best describe your understanding of what God is like?

Which (if any) of these attributes do you struggle to associate with God? Why?

Moving Forward:

Name one attribute of God that you would like to imitate more fully in your daily life and tell why.

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled “What is God like?” that is found here:

<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Grudem references numerous Bible passages in reference to God’s attributes:

- God’s exists:
 - Genesis 1:1
 - Romans 1:19-25
- God is beyond our knowledge:
 - Psalm 145:3
 - Psalm 147:5
 - Psalm 139:6-18
- Yet we can know God:
 - John 17:3
- God is Unchangeable
 - Psalm 102:27
 - Numbers 23:19
- God is Eternal
 - Ephesians 1:4
 - Revelation 1:8
- God is Omnipresent (all places)
 - Psalm 139:7-10
 - 1 Kings 8:27
- God is Spirit
 - John 4:24

- 1 Cor. 6:17
- God is Invisible
 - John 1:18
- God is Omniscient (all knowing)
 - 1 John 3:20
 - Hebrews 4:13
- God is Truthful
 - Jeremiah 10:10
 - Numbers 23:19
- God is Good
 - Luke 18:19
 - James 1:17
- God is Love
 - 1 John 4:8
- God is Holy
 - Psalm 99:9
 - Leviticus (yep, pretty much the whole book)
- Revelation 4:8
- God is Righteous and Just
 - Deut 32:4
 - Genesis 18:25
 - Romans 3:25-26
- God is Jealous
 - Exodus 20:5
- God is Wrathful toward Sin
 - John 3:36
 - Romans 3:25; 5:8-9
- God Wills What He Will
 - Ephesians 1:11
 - Revelation 4:11
- God is Omnipotent (all powerful)
 - Jeremiah 32:17
 - Matthew 19:26

There are many great books on the study and proper understanding of God. Some that we would recommend would be:

The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer (this is a short but comprehensive look at various attributes of God)

Knowing God by J.I. Packer (this is a more thorough theological study on the nature and character of God)

Some other messages that you may want to listen to include:

- A whole list of messages on the Trinity:
http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Trinity/Multimedia/

Who is Christ?



God's Story Video

1. Watch the Bible Project's video entitled "The Messiah" here: <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-messiah/>
2. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

How would you in your own words describe Jesus Christ to someone else who had never heard of him?

From the Skeptic:

Few people would disagree that Jesus is considered to be one of, if not the most influential human being that ever lived. Still, the magnitude of the claims that he made forces any rational person to explore him as a person. Below are some of the claims that Jesus made.

- “Be quiet!” “Come out of him” (Jesus speaking to an evil spirit) – Matthew 1:25
- “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” - Matthew 28:18
- “Quiet! Be still!” (Jesus speaking to a storm) – Mark 4:39
- “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” - Mark 13:31
- “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will be saved.” – Luke 9:23-24
- “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” – Luke 10:18
- “I who speak to you am he (the Messiah).” – John 4:26
- “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” – John 14:6

Which of these claims are you the most skeptical of and why?

From the Bible:

In the New Testament, Peter (one of Jesus’ closest disciples) describes Jesus to a large crowd in the book of Acts. Take some time to read Acts 2:22-36

Make a list below of the things we learn about Jesus from Peter in this text.

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If you had to give Jesus a title that would capture his current role in your life, what title(s) would you give him and why?

From the Book: Read chapter 9 (pages 67-71) in Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*

In Grudem's chapter on Christ, he presents Jesus as both fully God and as fully man. There is however, an exception. How is Jesus not like man? Why is that important?

Moving Forward:

Think of a current struggle that you are having. If Jesus was fully man, how might that allow him to empathize with you?

If Jesus is fully God, how might you engage him for help through this struggle?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled "Who is Christ?" that is found here:

<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Some other passages that you may want to explore include:

- Hebrews 2:17 – Jesus as human
- Hebrews 4:15 – Jesus was tempted just like we are
- Colossians 2:9 – Jesus as God
- Philippians 2:6-11 – Jesus as God and human

Another message that you may want to listen to includes:

- “Who is this Jesus” by Tim Keller
http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_in_frame.php?link=19782

Other books that you may want to explore includes:

- *Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ* by John Piper, ISBN # 1581346239

What is Man?



God’s Story Video

1. Watch the Bible Project’s video entitled “The Image of God” here:
<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/image-god/>
2. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

Why do you think that you exist? If you were created by God, why do you think God would have created you?

Would someone observing your daily life come to the same conclusion?

From the Skeptic:

Based on discussions that you have personally had with other people, what are some options that other people give for the reason that we exist?

Do you wrestle with any of these options yourself? If so, which ones and why?

From the Bible:

In the first few pages of the Hebrew Bible (i.e., Old Testament) we learn of the creation of man. Take some time to read Genesis 1:27-31. Make a list below of the things you can learn about the Bible's perspective of mankind from this text?

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What do you think it means to be created in God's image?

From the Book: Read chapter 7 (pages 58-61) in Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*.

According to chapter 7 in Grudem's book, what are some of the responsibilities associated with being made in the image of God?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Moving Forward:

Think of a person that you currently do not view as made in the image of God. This week, how can you treat this individual as made in the image of God?

How does being made in God's image change the way that you view yourself? How does it change the way you are influenced by other peoples' opinions about you?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled "What is man?" that is found here:

<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Some other passages that you may want to explore include:

- Genesis 9:6 – man is made in God's image
- James 3:9 – mankind is made in the likeness of God
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 – do everything you do for God's glory

One book that you may want to explore:

- *The Search for Significance: Seeing your true worth through God's eyes* by Robert McGee (ISBN #0849944244)



CLASS #2 PREP

What is Sin?



God's Story Video

1. Watch the Bible Project's video entitled "The Law" here:
<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-law/>
2. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

How would you answer a person who asks you at work or school: "What do you think sin is?"

From the Skeptic:

Below are some comments that people have made regarding sin. Underline comments that reflect thoughts you have had about the concept of sin at some point in your life.

- Not sinning is unrealistic. You have to live in the real world. You can play by the goody-two-shoes rules and lose, or you can do what everyone else does & get ahead.
- If you only lived my life. No one could withstand the temptations I face.

- Sin is not difficult to defeat. It is entirely possible to live long periods of time without sinning.
 - We are all like the moon. We ALL have a dark side (even God) we want no one else to see!
 - We are punished BY our sins...God won't punish us FOR our sins.
 - I am sick of people trying to tell me that I am a sinner. I am a good person. I try to always do the right thing. I am not perfect, but there are sure worse offenders than me. Besides, who are they to judge?
 - Who is to say what is and is not sin? Everyone gets to define right & wrong for oneself.
 - Create your own:
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Why did you underline the comments you did?

From the Bible:

Read Romans 3: 9-20. Here Paul concludes his argument that runs from Rom 1:18 thru 3:20. His subject is the depth of the sinfulness of humankind. In these verses, Paul calls God Almighty to testify---to bear witness (from a number of Old Testament verses) against humankind as sinful by nature and deed. Read these verses to gain God's perspective on the human condition.

3:10-12

How does God describe the human condition (put into your own words)?

3:13-19

How does God describe the speech & conduct of humankind (put into your own words)?

Have you ever exhibited such behavior?

3:20

Why can no one be declared righteous in God's sight by obeying the law?

From the Book: Read chapter 8 (pages 62-66) in Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*.

How does Grudem define sin?

How does God feel about sin? Why?

If we receive Christ as Savior & Lord, how does subsequent sin affect us as we relate to God?

Moving Forward:

Psalm 51 is David's heart-broken plea to God asking for His forgiveness after David sinned by having an affair with Bathsheba. David has much to teach us about sin, God and forgiveness. Read Psalm 51.

51:1-2

What are three words that David uses in to describe his offenses?

51:5

Here David indicates that he was created with an inherent sin nature. How do you think our relationship with God is impacted as a result of this in-born inclination toward sin? (see Ps 51: 3, 8, 11-12)

How has your relationship with God personally been affected by sin? How is Jesus good news in light of this for you?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled “What is Sin?” that is found here:

<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Some other passages that you may want to explore include:

- Exodus 20: 1-17- Ten Commandments
- Ephesians 2: 1-10 - Once dead in sins, now made alive by grace thru faith in Jesus
- James 1: 13-15 - Life cycle of sin
- Genesis 2 & 3 - Humankind before and after the Fall
- Jeremiah 17:9 - Deceitfulness of our own hearts
- Isaiah 64:6 - Can righteous acts please the Lord?
- 1 Kings 8:46 - Are there any people who do not sin?
- Romans
 - 3:23 - Who has fallen short of God’s standards
 - 6:23 - What sin brings about & what can be done
 - 10: 9-11 - How can one be saved from one’s sins
- 1 John 1: 8 – 2: 6 - Confession and walking with God

Another message you may also want to listen to:

- <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/mp3s/tk091105.mp3>

Another article you may want to read: Cornelius Plantinga Jr. *Sin: Not the Way it’s Supposed to Be*

- <http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/cci/Pantinga.pdf>

Some books that you may want to explore include:

- *Sin: Not the Way it’s Supposed to Be* by Cornelius Plantinga Jr. (ISBN-10: 0802842186)
- *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller (especially Chapter 10 on sin) (ISBN # 052595049)
- *Temptation and Sin* by John Owen (ISBN# 0851511260)
- *Speaking of Sin: The Lost Language of Salvation* by Barbara Taylor (ISBN# 1561011894)

What is Death?



God's Story Video

1. Watch the Bible Project's video entitled "Heaven and Earth" here: <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/heaven-earth/>
2. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

Why is death so difficult to talk about?

From the Skeptic:

Below are comments that reflect different perspectives on death. "Underline the comments below that reflect thoughts you have had about death at some point in your life."

- *"Begin with the end in mind."* – author Stephen Covey (1932 -)
- *"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."* – Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790)

- *"I want to die in my sleep like my grandfather... Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car."* – Comedian Wil Shriner (1953 -)
- *"Death does not concern us, because as long as we exist, death is not here. And when it does come, we no longer exist."* – Greek Philosopher Epicurus (341 BC – 270 BC)
- *"Death is one of two things... Either it is annihilation, and the dead have no consciousness of anything; or, as we are told, it is really a change: a migration of the soul from one place to another."* - Greek philosopher Socrates (469 BC–399 BC)
- *"Of course you don't die. Nobody dies. Death doesn't exist. You only reach a new level of vision, a new realm of consciousness, a new unknown world."* – novelist Henry Miller (1891-1980)
- *(create your own here)*
 “

 _____.”

What people, personal experiences, or philosophy influenced your above choices?

From the Bible:

What happens when you die? This is not a question you expect to come up in the course of everyday conversation. It’s a question that can be loaded with fear and laden with misconceptions. Perhaps you might get this question from a child or from someone on their deathbed. But how would you answer it? Where would you go to explain death and dying? Most people don’t realize that the Bible has a lot to say about the topic.

In John 11 Jesus goes to visit a friend who has died four days prior. Read Jesus’ interaction with his friend’s sister in John 11:17-26.

What is Jesus’ incredible promise in verse 25?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-9. What does this text have to say about death?

When Christ-followers die what happens with their souls in relation to their bodies? Paul uses the term “tent” to describe his physical body now. Why do you think he uses that word? What word does he use to describe his final body?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-57. How are we to grieve for those Christ-followers who “fall asleep”?

From the Book: Read chapter 16 (pages 108-112) in Wayne Grudem’s *Christian Beliefs*.

In chapter 16, Grudem describes why Christians die, what happens when Christians die, what happens when non-Christians die, and the resurrection of the dead.

1. What happens to your soul when you die?
2. What happens when Jesus returns to earth?

Moving Forward

What fears, concerns, or questions do you have about your own death? How is Jesus good news to these fears and concerns?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled “What is Death?” that is found here:

<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Some other passages that you may want to explore include:

- Eternal Life: John 3:14-16, John 3:36, 1 John 5:11-12
- A Guarantee: 1 Peter 1:3-9
- More on Resurrection: Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Corinthians 15:12-23 and 35-57
- No More Death: Revelation 21:1-4

Another message that you may want to listen to:

- <http://ez13.com/doorcreek/>
Click on the December 5th, 2004 “Born to Die” mp3 link. The pastor giving this sermon unexpectedly passed away about one month later.

One book that you may want to explore:

- *Final Exam: A Surgeon’s Reflections on Mortality* by Pauline Chen (ISBN # 030727537X). This book does not explore death from a Biblical perspective, but provides valuable insights that could lead to great discussion on the topic of death.

What is the Atonement?



God's Story Video

3. Watch the Bible Project's video entitled "Sacrifice - Atonement" here:
<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/sacrifice-atonement/>
4. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

Describe a time in your life when you wish that you would have been able to have someone else switch places with you... or when you wish you could have had a stunt double?

From the Skeptic:

Below are some comments that people have made regarding the Atonement of Jesus. Underline comments that reflect thoughts you have had about the concept of Christ's atoning sacrifice at some point in your life.

- Why did Jesus have to die anyway? Why couldn't God just forgive us directly?
- In light of the crucifixion story, the Christian God sounds like the vengeful gods of primitive times who needed to be appeased by human sacrifices.
- Why can't God just accept everyone or at least those who are truly sorry for their wrongdoings?
- Why call Jesus the Savior? If he couldn't even save himself from the hands of his executioners, then how can he save me?
- Why do Christians always speak of "being saved"? I am doing just fine: nice job, family & home. Why would I need saving? From what? From whom?
- *"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul!" - "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley*
- (create your own here)
"

_____."

Why did you underline the comments you did?

From the Bible:

Read Romans 3:20-26---Here Paul describes the essence of the Atonement of Christ. Some writers have called v. 21-26 the most important paragraph in the entire Bible!

What is the only source of true righteousness (v.21-22)? Does that surprise you? Why or why not? How can we receive this righteousness from God? (v.22)

The phrase “sacrifice of atonement” in v. 25 means that Jesus absorbed God’s just wrath for our sins so that God can now look upon us with favor.
How does v. 25 reveal God’s perfect justice for sin?

How does v. 25 reveal God’s perfect love for sinners?

From the Book:

Read chapter 10 (pages 72-75) in Wayne Grudem’s *Christian Beliefs*.

How does Grudem sum up the concept of the atonement? (see p.72)

In the last paragraph on p. 75, Grudem gives four ways in which Jesus saved people from their sins. Complete these below:

- a. Jesus _____ the _____ we deserved to pay for our sins.
- b. Jesus _____ the _____ we deserved to bear.
- c. Jesus _____ the _____ our _____ caused between God & us.
- d. Jesus _____ us from the _____ caused by sin.

Moving Forward:

If Christ bore all the guilt for our sins, all the wrath of God against sin and all the penalty of death we deserved, then will God ever turn his wrath against you as a believer? Explain. (see Rom 8: 31-39)

Why is the gospel the “good news”?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled “What is Atonement?” that is found here:
<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Read and meditate on Isa 52:13 - 53:12 and see how all that Jesus accomplished on the cross was foretold 700 years before Jesus was born! Go slowly through each verse. Think about Jesus and what he did for you so that you might live with in the fullness of life forever!

Read Romans chapters 1-8. These are not easy chapters but provide the believer with a deep understanding of our sin and God’s response. Make note of your questions and ask your group leader, one of the elders or pastors to help you understand and apply these truths.

Another message that you may want to check out:

- http://www.universityreformedchurch.org/teaching/sermons.html?sermon_id=40

Some books that you may want to explore include:

- *The Cross of Christ* by John R.W. Stott (ISBN: 0-8308-3320-X)
- *The Holiness of God* by R.C. Sproul (ISBN: 0-8423-1493-8)
- *Death by Love: Letters from the Cross* by Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears (ISBN: 1433501295)
- *The Death of Christ. Its Place and Interpretation in the New Testament* by James Denney (ISBN: 1-1168-0152-3)
- *In my Place Condemned He Stood* by J.I. Packer and Mark Dever (ISBN: 1433502003)
- *The Message of Romans* by John R.W. Stott (ISBN: 0-8308-1246-6)

What is the Resurrection?



God's Story Video

3. Watch the Bible Project's video entitled "The Gospel of the Kingdom" here: <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/gospel-kingdom/>
4. Below share one thing that was new to you from this video:

From Your Perspective:

There are many accounts of people saying they have died and come back from the dead. Do you tend to believe these accounts? Why or why not?

From the Skeptic:

Why is it so hard for us to believe in someone rising from the dead?

What part of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is especially hard for you to believe and why?

From the Bible:

In John 11:25 Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." What do you think he meant by that?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. Paul lists that the resurrection of Jesus was one of the things "of first importance" (v.3). Why do you think Paul makes such a big deal of the resurrection?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:14-20.

If Jesus has not been raised from the dead, what is our situation?

What difference does it make that Christ has been raised from the dead?

From the Book: Read chapter 11 (pages 76-78) in Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*.

On page 77 Grudem lists several results of the resurrection. Which one is most significant for you? Why?

Moving Forward:

What difference does the resurrection of Jesus Christ make in your life? How does that change how you live, work, parent, date, spend your time and money?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Listen to the message entitled “What is the Resurrection?” that is found here:

<http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

Some other passages that you may want to explore include:

- Romans 6:1-14 - Implications of the resurrection for believers.
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 - The ultimate significance of the resurrection for believers.
- Hebrews 7: 23-28 - The resurrected Jesus as a permanent priest for us.
- 1 Peter 1:3-9 - The hope offered out in the resurrection of Jesus.

Another message that you may want to listen to:

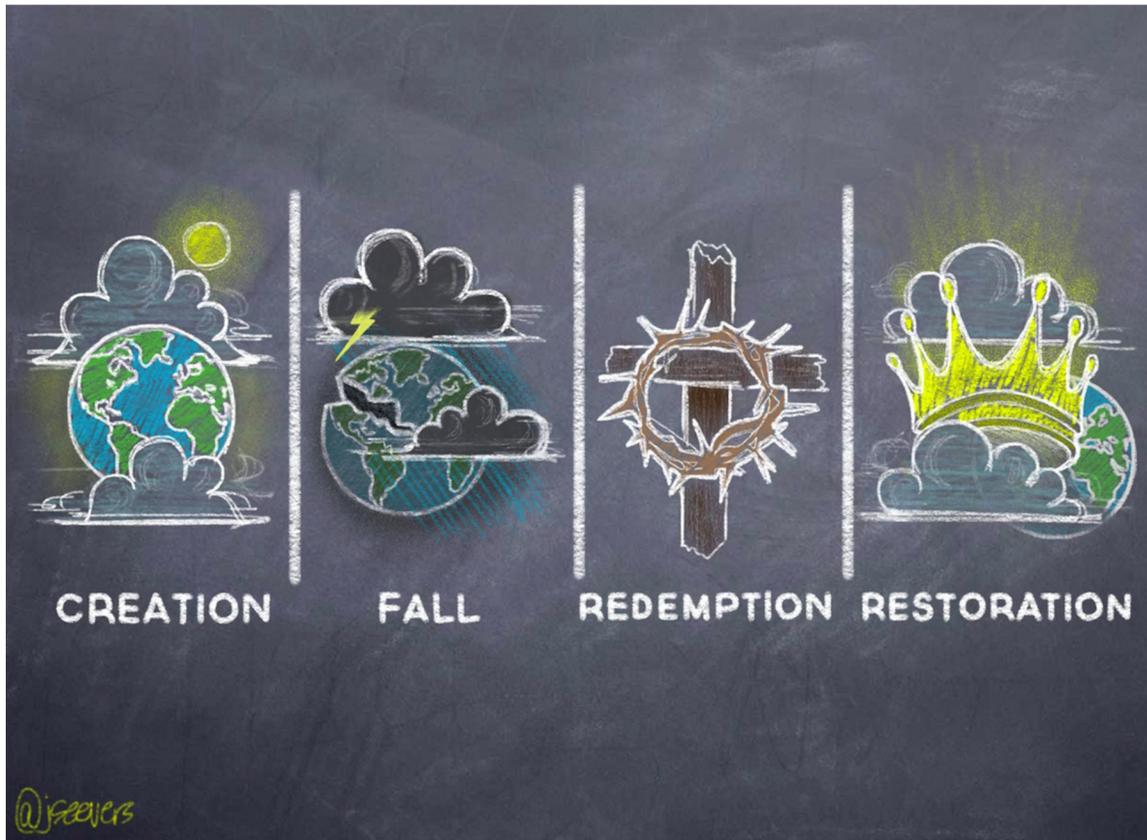
- http://sgm.edgeboss.net/download/sgm/next/2009/next09.5_ferguson.mp3

Some books that you may want to explore (and are available in the KBC office) include:

- *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller (Chapters 12-13) (ISBN # 052595049)
- *The Cross of Christ* by John Stott (ISBN# 978-0-8308-3320-7)
- *The Resurrection of the Son of God* by N.T. Wright (ISBN # 0800626796)
- An article by N.T. Wright on the Resurrection
<http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/2008/april/13.36.html>
- *The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce (ISBN # 0-8308-2736-6)

Your Story

There are four grand movements in God's story. Creation, fall, redemption, and restoration (see below).



Everyone who follows Jesus also has these movements in our own stories. Each of us has been impacted by the good news of the gospel, and therefore we each have our own gospel story. It is important as followers of Jesus that we are able to understand our own gospel story so that we can share it with others. Below are some leading questions for you to consider. After considering those questions, (on a separate page or two) write out your story and be prepared to share it.

Creation: How did your life begin? What was your early life like? Describe your family life, experiences, joys and traumas that have shaped your life before you began to be a disciple of Jesus. What people and/or experiences most shaped your understanding of who you are?

Fall: When and how did you recognize brokenness in your own life? How was your relationship with God and others not the way God created it to be and why?

Redemption: When and how did you come to realize that you needed the good news of the gospel in your own life? How is Jesus the hero of your story? In what ways did Jesus save you?

Restoration: How is Jesus continuing to restore and save you today? What are a couple of specific examples of how Jesus is at work in your life through the Holy Spirit, changing and re-creating you. Who is the focus of your life today? And why?

As you write your gospel story, below are some tips:

- Try to keep your story to about 2 pages.
- Try to keep Jesus as the main character and the hero

Appendix 1:

What does it mean to become a Christian?

Listen to the message entitled “What does it mean to become a Christian?” that is found here: <http://kettlebrook.org/next-steps/membership>

From the message:

What was your takeaway from the message?

From Your Perspective:

When someone states that they have become a Christian what do you interpret that to mean?

What life experiences have led you to feel this way about what it means to become a Christian?

From the Skeptic:

Below are some thoughts or comments that a skeptic may have regarding becoming a Christian.

- “I accepted Christ as my Savior over and over and it never seemed to work.”
 - “I hear people say they have become Christians but nothing ever changes in their life.”
 - “Becoming a Christian is all about rules and regulations. It’s about what I can’t do.”
 - “I’m a good person and do a lot of good things, why do I need to become a Christian?”
 - “Yeah, I’m a Christian because I’m a good person.”
 - “Christians are the same as all the rest of us, I see it everyday with the people I work with....what’s the point?”
 - (create your own here) “
-
-

Have you ever made any of these above comments? Why?

Each of the above comments makes some assumptions. Pick two of them and try to discover the underlying assumptions.

From the Bible:

Scripture has given us the roadmap to becoming a Christian including the well known verse of John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, that whoever *believes in Him* should not perish but have eternal life.” But is that all it takes to become a Christian? Let’s look at some passages to find out.

Romans 10:9. What role do we play in becoming a Christian?

Read Acts 20:21. Paul preaches here that to have true saving faith there must be

_____ and _____. Why not just one or the other?

Read Galatians 5:19-26. According to this passage, how is our faith evidenced?

Based on this description, how well is your faith evidenced in your life? Would your spouse/kids/friends/ agree?

From the Book Read chapter 13 (pages 90-94) in Wayne Grudem's *Christian Beliefs*.

In chapter 13, Grudem states *"...simply stating facts isn't enough. There must be an invitation to repent and believe this good news personally."*

Do you remember a time when you heard a clear presentation of the good news of Jesus and were given an invitation to repent and believe personally? What did that look like?

On page 93 Grudem says, *"...one who has true saving faith has moved from investigating Jesus' claims to believing that these claims are true and from believing these claims are true to trusting in Jesus for forgiveness of sin and eternal life with God. If I have true saving faith, I no longer simply believe facts about Jesus; instead I personally trust Jesus to save me."*

Have you ever moved from investigating Jesus' claims to believing those claims and ultimately to trusting Jesus to save *you*? Describe the event or process. If you have not, why not?

Moving Forward

Is it possible that you thought you had become a Christian and have not? Reflect on what is missing or holding you back from having true saving faith.

Many times we think we need all the “answers” when sharing the Gospel. How has this study altered your view of this, if at all?

What holds you back from sharing the Gospel?

Who is the one person that needs to hear the message of the Gospel that you can share it with? Is it you? Can your group help you with this?

Digging Deeper (Optional):

Some other passages that you may want to explore include:

- Romans 10:14-17- How faith comes
- 1 Peter 1:23 - The seed which gives birth to spiritual life
- John 5:24 - The promise to those who trust in the Lord
- Acts 16:14 - Lydia’s story of God opening her heart

Some other messages that you may want to listen to include:

- Voddie Baucham from No Regrets at Elmbrook February 2010 available at: http://www.noregretsconference.org/MP3/2010/NR10_999.mp3
- Becoming a Christian by Alistair Begg available for download at: <http://www.truthforlife.org/resources/message/becoming-a-christian/>

Two books that you may want to explore:

Finally Alive by John Piper (ISBN # 1845504216)

The Gospel for Real Life by Jerry Bridges (ISBN # 1576835073)

Appendix 2:

What is Baptism?

From Your Perspective:

Why in your opinion do people get baptized?

Have you been baptized? If so, describe your baptism. Was it significant to you? Why or why not?

Verbatim:

Below are some thoughts or comments that you may have said or heard regarding baptism.

- “Of course I’m a Christian; I got baptized when I was a baby.”
- “Why would I need to be baptized if I already was baptized as a baby?”
- “We need to get our child baptized so that they don’t go to hell.”
- “Baptism is kind of like heaven insurance for babies.”
- (create your own here) “

Have you ever made any of these above comments? Why?

From the Bible:

Below are some texts (from the NIV unless otherwise noted) that reference baptism in the New Testament. Please take some time to read these different texts. As you read,

be looking specifically for what you can learn about baptism from each text. In the space provide after each text, summarize what you learn about baptism from that text.

Matthew 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 2:37-41

When the people heard this, **they were cut to the heart** and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." **Those who accepted his message were baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

Acts 8:12

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:36-38 - NKJV

Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch **went down into the water**, and he baptized him.

Acts 16:14-15

One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Acts 16:27-34

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved** — you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God — he and his whole family.

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized. NIV

Acts 22:15-17

You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

What are some of the themes that emerged from your study of these texts regarding baptism? Did you learn anything new?

Overview of Baptism:

Below is a brief overview of baptism, trying to address the how, who, what & why of baptism.

Mode of Baptism (How is it performed?)

- Baptism comes directly from the Greek word “baptidzo” which means “to immerse” or “to dip.”
 - The word was often used for material being dipped and saturated in dyes.
 - There are other Greek words that are not used when referring to baptism:
 - Rantidzo = “sprinkling”
 - Epicheuo & Proschusis = “pouring”
- Early New Testament Jews baptized their converts by means of immersion
 - John the Baptist used immersion as he baptized in the Jordan River
 - It would seem clear that in the New Testament context baptism by immersion is the way baptism was performed by Jesus and his followers in the New Testament church.
- Immersion is symbolic and illustrative of one’s identification with Jesus:
 - Immersion → Death of Jesus
 - Submersion under water → Burial of Jesus
 - Emergence from water → Resurrection to new life of Jesus

Recipients of Baptism (Who is to be baptized?)

- The New Testament reveals that believers in Jesus were baptized
 - All the relevant passages discussing baptism reflect that faith in Jesus was the indispensable pre-requisite to baptism.
 - F.F. Bruce notes that “The idea of an unbaptized Christian simply was not entertained in the New Testament.”

Meaning of Baptism (What does baptism mean?)

- Two uses of the word “baptism.”
 - **Spirit Baptism** = the act by which the Holy Spirit places believers within the Body of Christ
 - 1 Corinthians 12:13--For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
 - Spirit Baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit happens at the moment of conversion
 - Matthew 3:11 - Jesus came to baptize with the Holy Spirit
 - Romans 8:9b – “And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”
 - **Water Baptism** = the visible and outward symbol of previous occurrence of Spirit baptism
- Things to Note regarding the meaning of baptism:

- Water baptism is not necessary to receive the Holy Spirit (see Acts 10:43-48 of Cornelius)
- Water baptism is not necessary to receive God's forgiveness of sins
- Baptism does not save a person from the penalty of their sins
 - A person is saved thru faith alone in the completed work of Jesus
 - Baptism is the outward visible confession of faith, expressed in action
 - In the absence of saving faith in Jesus, baptism is an empty ritual
- Baptism Illustration: Baptism is symbolic like a wedding ring
- Baptism symbolizes:
 - that one has entered into a personal relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord
 - that one possesses an assurance of their salvation in the saving work of Jesus
 - that one becomes a member of the Body of Christ (the Church of all true believers in Jesus throughout time and space)
 - that one has been released from slavery (mastery) to sin. They will still sin, but are no longer enslaved by it.

Reasons for Baptism (Why get baptized?)

- Jesus commands it in Mt 28: 16-20→ He relates it directly to becoming a disciple
- Baptism is ordered by apostles for believers: Peter ordered Cornelius in Acts 10:48
- Baptism was universally practiced by early church—no such thing as unbaptized believer
- It is a wonderful symbol of obedience & identification with Jesus as one's Savior & Lord

Have you learned anything new about baptism from this discussion?

If you have not yet been baptized as a follower of Jesus Christ, what is keeping you from doing so?