



## SERMON STUDY GUIDE

### “Googling God”

For the sermon preached on  
1/5/2020:

“Is God Real?”

From a selection of texts preached

### How to use the Groups Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method. In summary, this method stresses “**Observation**” (what the reader can see from the text), “**Interpretation**” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “**Application**” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group. It’s recommended that you rephrase the questions to match your voice and have an understanding of the interpretive questions as you prepare to lead and facilitate.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the Group Life Team

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**[Note to Group Leaders:** This study is a little different from our normal Inductive Bible Study method. The sermon Pastor Bryan gave us had four different texts with minimal verses to create anchor points throughout the message. This study will focus on the points made and also the “Big Idea” given.]

Welcome to 2020! It’s good that we are beginning the new decade in Christian community, and may we continue to draw nearer to the Lord Jesus and build our relationships together. We learned in Advent to follow the wonder of Jesus and in this new year, we want to continue the

wonder in this new series entitled “Googling God.”

It’s normal ... in fact, it’s healthy to wonder about the mysteries of life, faith, and God. It’s part of the human experience to doubt, question, and wrestle with these big topics. Hopefully, we’ll utilize the authority of Scripture, consider the wisdom of the past, and also the wisdom available to us now. And lastly, may we engage in helpful discussion with one another. So welcome to our new series, may each of us grow in our faith as a result of these words and from our time here with one another.

As a discussion starter, what questions have you googled about God and/or spirituality?

The first message focused on the question, “Is God real?” Pastor Bryan listed four compelling evidences as we consider whether or not God is real. And if so, how do we live according to God being real in our lives? Now we know that God’s existence cannot be empirically proven, but there is great logic, helpful science, historical human observances, and our own personal experiences that will help each of us come to our own conclusion.

The first point was the cosmological argument which asks, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” This also included the Second Law of Thermodynamics which tells us that the universe moves from order to disorder. Does anyone remember the first law of thermodynamics? We’re just teasing you, it’s a church small group, not a pop-quiz in physics. (But in case you’re wondering now, it’s “When energy passes, as work, as heat, or with matter, into or out of a system, the system's internal energy changes in accord with the **law** of conservation of energy.”)

But before we ask the real question, let’s read Romans 1:20

*For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Romans 1:20*

The real discussion question is simply this – what comes to your mind when you consider God’s existence in relation to the cosmological argument (why is there something rather than nothing?) and what connection can you see between Romans 1 and the cosmological argument?

(Note to Group Leader, I’d keep this talking point the brief as the upcoming questions likely have more to discuss).

Now read Romans 2:14-15:

*Indeed, when [people], who do not have the law, do the things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and sometimes even defending them. Romans 2:14-15*

The second point centered around the moral law which focused on asking, from where do we get our sense of right and wrong and our overall sense of morality from. The passage we just read says that law has been “written on our hearts” and Pastor Bryan used certain examples from Tim Keller’s book *Reason for God*. Included were the examples such as we know the oppression of women or a particular ethnic minority is wrong, but how do we know this?

*(Logically, there must be a Moral Law-Giver that informs the human heart)*

We might ask two questions, if there is no Moral Law-Giver, then on what basis does a society govern itself? And second, how informing is the Moral Argument to your faith in the reality of God?

Third, was the existential evidence that observes the soul-defining questions that we as humans ask ourselves, “Who am I?” and “Why am I here?” and “Why are these sunsets so amazing?” Pastor Bryan mentioned that we do not observe squirrels marvel at the acorn, nor do they seem to ponder their ‘squirrelness’. Why do we ask ourselves these questions and how important have they been to you?

*(Perhaps one of the answers is when we discover our identity and purpose, our lives have foundation and direction and this informs countless other decisions and pathways for us.)*

Let’s dive into the discouragement together quickly and read Ecclesiastes 2.

*What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving for which they labor under the sun? All their days their work is grief and pain, even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless. A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This, too, I see is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? Ecclesiastes 2:22-25*

First, aren’t you glad you weren’t a philosophy major? It’s pretty much this for four years. And second the Teacher of Ecclesiastes is trying to tell that life can be meaningless. Now the message of Ecclesiastes is a bit complicated but to cut to the chase and be more practical for us today, how can we find meaning in this life?

The last point was the argument from our own personal experience. What have our own lives told us about the reality of God? Why do we trust (or distrust) our experience so much?

As we read our final passage, I John 1-4, let’s close our eyes for a moment and receive these words:

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us...and with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:1-4*

And finally and previously mentioned, Bryan’s “Big Idea” was: “The evidence is compelling, but in the end, you’ll have to decide and discover for yourself if God is real.” Perhaps you have decided, or maybe you are in the process of discovering faith, what is one thing you are considering today when it becomes to living in the realness of God or considering if God is real?

As we continue in our series of Googling God, we'll be tackling some other questions regarding the authority of the Bible and the problem of suffering. Is there someone that is coming to mind as we discuss these questions and is it possible that you might share this sermon with or invite them to an upcoming Sunday? In the meantime, let's pray that for them and that we would live faithfully to the real, and true, and living God.

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- a. Please note that not all these questions might be able to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your group the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your group.
  - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
  - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
  - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
  - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.