

The 7 Big Questions

Does life have a purpose?



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Leader Check-in

Have you ever had a religious experience? Explain what the experience was like.

Discover

In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in the video? What did you find intriguing or compelling?

Read Matthew 6:19-21. What earthly treasures are you storing up for yourself today? What is the underlying theme of this section of Jesus's sermon?

In the video, Lysa said, *"If I could just discover the right thing...then I'd feel satisfied."* What things satisfy you? What brings you peace and joy?

Share a time when your life seemed like a random series of events. Now share a time when it seemed like there was an intentional plan unfolding in front of you.

Fully Own

Read Ecclesiastes 2:4-11. How would you summarize this passage of Scripture? Imagine you were in Solomon's shoes, how would you react to accomplishments like these?

In what ways does your view of eternity affect your sense of meaning and purpose?

What might be a solution to Solomon's issue in Ecclesiastes? What might be a solution to your issues with meaning and purpose?

If you believe we all have a purpose, what role does God play in that—if any?

Challenge

Read Matthew 7:7-12. How can this verse apply to your questions about meaning and purpose? Commit to living this verse out this week. Keep asking, keep searching, and keep knocking. We all have questions; we all wonder. Let us explore God together!

The 7 Big Questions

Is there a God?



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Leader Check-in

What truths revealed themselves to you this week in your pursuit of meaning and purpose?
What comes to your mind when you ponder the question, “Is there a God?”

Discover

Studies show that belief in God has declined by 11% in twenty years; to what do you attribute this decline in belief?

Read John 1:1-5. What is the Apostle trying to teach us in these first five verses? Why do you think he started his Gospel account this way?

What makes it easy to believe in God? What makes it hard to believe in God?

Dostoevsky said, “*Without God, everything is permitted.*” What is your response to that statement? What would happen if everyone lived by this principle?

Fully Own

How does your upbringing affect your belief in God? Tell the story of your family: what they believe and what kind of values they instilled in you about God.

What parts of the universe have convinced you that God does or does not exist?

Read Psalms 19:1-4a. What does this verse say about God’s revealed attributes in creation?

Corey suggested in the video, “If there is a God, I can’t prove Him, nor can I disprove Him with science.” Do you agree with this statement? What would it take for you to change you believe in God—be that unbelief or belief?

Challenge

Schedule some time this week to explore nature. Look for signs of an intelligent creator. Look for declarations of the glory of God. Come back next week to talk about what you saw, heard and felt.



The 7 Big Questions

Why does God allow pain and suffering?

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Leader Check-in

What did you experience this week during your nature walks?

Discover

Why do you think this question is often the hardest one to answer from a Christian perspective?

On a scale from 1-10, how difficult is it for you to reconcile the existence of both suffering and God (1 = Easy; 10 = Impossible)? Why?

Read Genesis 3:8-24 and Revelation 21:3-7. Compare and contrast these two passages of Scripture. What commonalities do you see between them? What is different?

What kind of pain and suffering have you experienced in life? What have you learned as a result of the pain and suffering?

Fully Own

If there is a God, why do you think He allows evil to exist in the world?


Read John 6:35. How does this verse affect your views on pain and suffering? How can you bring this message of hope to your community that might be going through series pain and suffering?

Read Hebrews 2:10. What does this verse say about Jesus's experience with suffering? Do you agree that we have a Savior who understands our suffering? What can we do to empathize with the sufferings of others?

In what ways might your pain and suffering reveal something good and beautiful in the world one day?

Challenge

Memorize **Romans 8:18**, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."



The 7 Big Questions

Is Christianity too narrow?

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Leader Check-in

Can you recite last week's memory verse to the group? What types of thoughts came to mind this week after our discussion on pain and suffering?

Discover

What are your thoughts on the statistic that nearly half of all US adults believe it does not matter what religion you follow because they all teach the same thing?

Read John 14:1-6. What does this verse have to say about Christianity being narrow? How do you feel about Jesus's claim in these verses?

What is the difference between "narrow" and "intolerant?" Can Christianity be one without the other?

Read John 5:24-30. In what way is Jesus' teaching exclusive and in what way is it inclusive? How can specificity set us free from intolerance?

Fully Own

How have people used religion for good? For bad? Have you ever used religion in a bad way?

What might be a solution to this issue? What would happen if Christians preached this message like Jesus did?

Read Matthew 28:16-20. How can we live this command out and still treat people with respect and dignity?

What are some examples of situations in which most people believe that narrow ideas are good?

What exclusive claims do you hold? How are you vulnerable about these claims?

Challenge

Work on finding a tone of gentleness in the midst of conversations and even disagreement. The truth is we all make exclusive claims; even with religion. Know what you believe and why you believe it. Learn to express those claims with gentleness and love.

The 7 Big Questions

Is Jesus really God?



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Leader Check-in

In what ways were you challenged about some of your exclusive claims this week?

Discover

Read Mark 8:27-30. How would you respond to this question if you were in Peter's shoes? What can we learn about the crowds that followed Jesus from this passage?

What is your opinion on the statistic that says, "67% of US adults say they have a personal relationship with Jesus?"

What did Leonce mean when he said, "Religion says 'I do, therefore I'm loved.' Jesus says, 'You're loved, therefore you do'"?

Read Luke 24:13-35. What does this story reveal about Jesus? Develop a theory for why Jesus interacted with these disciples in the way He did.

Fully Own

What do you think about Jesus's claim to be God?

Why do you think Jesus had to die in order to redeem humanity? Why was there only one option for our salvation?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What does this passage reveal about Jesus? What is the underlying theme?

What would have happened if Jesus were a liar or lunatic? What shows you that Jesus was actually telling the truth about Himself being God?

Challenge

Watch these two videos this week.

- How Is Jesus Different? (<http://www.exploregod.com/video-how-is-jesus-different>)
- Can You Like Jesus but Hate Religion? (<http://www.exploregod.com/can-you-like-jesus-but-hate-religion-video>)

Come back ready to discuss these videos.

The 7 Big Questions

Is the Bible reliable?



Leader Check-in

What did you find interesting about the videos from last week? What did they teach you about Jesus? Do you agree or disagree with their statements about Jesus?

Discover

Other than the Bible, what other sources of truth do people consider? If you were not a Christian today, where would you go for truth?

Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17. What does this passage reveal about the Bible? How do we know for sure if the Bible is accurate and true?

What would happen to Christianity if we did not have the Bible, but Jesus still came to earth, died, and rose again?

What would you say if someone asked you to describe the overall story of the Bible?

Fully Own

Read Psalm 119:105-112. How many times does the passage mention God's Word? How should we view the Bible according to this passage?

How relevant is the Bible to your everyday life? How often do you rely on the Bible for guidance and instruction?

How could you develop a better understanding of the Bible? What would you be willing to do in order to find truth?

Read Proverbs 4:10-19. What happens to those who do not follow the path of the righteous? What principles and disciplines can you live by in order to avoid the path of the wicked?

Challenge

Memorize **Isaiah 40:8**, which says, "The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God remains forever."

The 7 Big Questions

Can I know God personally?



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Leader Check-in

Can you recite last week's verse from memory? How did it help you understand God's Word better?

Discover

Is it surprising to know that 75% of adults desire to have some sort of relationship with God? Why or why not?

In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in the video? What did you find intriguing or compelling?

Read John 1:1-18. How is God trying to communicate with us according to these verses? How is God moving in personal ways?

Why might someone resist knowing God personally?

Fully Own

How does one have a personal relationship with God? How does one develop this relationship?

Read John 10:7-15. Describe the type of relationship talked about in this passage. How does this make you feel? Why would Jesus use the illustration of a shepherd and his sheep?

In the video, Propaganda stated that, "sin...has broken that covenant with God." What do you think he meant by that?

Read John 12:44-50. What kind of relationship can we have with the Father through Jesus? What in Jesus's teaching is different from all other religions?

Challenge

One of the speakers said in the video, "Our problem is not that we're bad; it's that we're dead." Jesus brings us life by entering into a relationship with us. Who are you going to talk with this week about this good news? Who are the dead people in your life that need a relationship with Jesus?