



...beginnings
the gospel according to Genesis

Genesis 1-4

the image of God

This discussion guide includes preparation BEFORE the group and some guidance DURING the group meeting. Preparation before the group will help you, your leader, and your group to engage and respond to the living and active Word of God.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE GROUP MEETS:

The aim of this preparation is to encourage good & prayerful observation of the text of God's word and the joyful experience of discovering its truth.

in the week leading up to growth group pray & read through Genesis 1-4

What stands out to you from these readings?

Are you puzzled about anything in these readings?

What do you **feel, think** or what might you **do** in response to these readings?

a taste of theology pre-reading: The Westminster Confession (modern version) chapter 4 states: "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom and goodness, in the beginning, to create-or make out of nothing-the world and everything in it, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good."¹ Reflect on what this statement tells us about God and pray in thanks and praise of who the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are and what they have done.

¹ In 'Confessing the Faith – a reader's guide to the Westminster confession of Faith', Chad Van Dixhorn, Banner of Truth Trust, 2014, p59

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS: Pray for your discussion time

What day to day examples of images can you think of? What is the purpose of an image?

1. the great and good God who creates and rules all things by his word | read Genesis 1.1-2.3

▸ Where does everything come from? What implications does this have for the meaning and purpose of everything?

2. everything is very good when people guard and serve God's rule | read Genesis 2.4-25

▸ reflect on the goodness of God that is evident in his provision and care of his people:

In his Creation, God gives special meaning and purpose to humans (see Gen 1.26-28, 2.15-16). In Genesis 2.15 the key descriptors of 'work' & 'take care' are better translated 'serve' and 'guard'. The garden setting anticipates the future setting of the temple where priests 'serve' and 'guard' God's rule. The God-given mandate for people is therefore not gardener but servant-guardians who represent God's rule.

▸ Why did God create humans? What implications does this have for the meaning and purpose of your life?

3. people reject being servant-guardians of God's rule and represent themselves instead | read Gen 3&4

▸ Is the world now more like Genesis 1&2 or Genesis 3&4? Discuss whether the beginnings story of Genesis 1-4 is a satisfying explanation of why you are here, and, why the world is the way it is. Reflect on examples of the world being a worse place because people represent themselves and not God.

4. the new creation of servant-guardian rulers who represent God's rule | read Romans 8.1-4; Philippians 2.1-16

▸ reflect on the wonder of Rom 8.1-4 that God would send his own son in our sinful likeness to be a sin offering:

▸ In Philippians 2.1-16 Paul again says that Jesus takes on our likeness and dies so that we might be made new in his likeness. Discuss your progress and aspirations in having the same attitude as Christ:

▸ Are you living for God's meaning and purpose for you (representing him), or your own (representing yourself)? Why is it inevitably necessary for all Christians to 'hold out the word of life' (v16)? How can you do this better or more?

PRAY!