

*Rethinking
Life With God*



TRADING UP
a different way to do life with God.



Session One: Rethinking God

Notes

"To experience the amazing life that God created for you to live, we are going to have to rethink God from the ground up. "

"What drives us are not the conclusions we have about God that we SAY, it is the conclusions about God that we ACT on."

"God wants us to relate to Him not just read about Him."

"Re-thinking your image of God from the ground up will lead to a vastly better life and dramatically shift how you see everything."



Session One: Rethinking God Discussion Questions

We heard the two versions of the story of the Bible, the incorrect view and the accurate view. We laughed about this but part of our laughter was that it touched home for us in more ways than we want to admit.

**What about the first view has been a part of your thinking either now or in the past?
What false notions of God are you most tempted to believe?**

God created the world with rules. He expected people to obey. When they did not He kicked them out of the Garden.

Later He gave them more rules, which they broke and made Him angry again, so He kicked them out of the Promised Land and sent them into exile and was silent for 100's of years. Then, one day, He had to do something or His anger would get the best of Him so He sent His Son to die for us so we would keep His rules. Now in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit who helps us keep the rules.

Still we fail often and He is often disgusted with us and overwhelmed by our failure. He watches us carefully with a grumpy, critical disposition and is very distant emotionally. You know you will NEVER fully please Him.

While Jesus paid our debt to God, we then have a huge debt to Jesus. Each time you read your Bible or give your time, talent, or treasure to the church, you pay down this big debt just a little. While it is true that you live life mostly feeling guilty, ashamed and defeated-you still should tell others the good news of the life they could have.

But soon, life will be over and you will be free of sin, so you can keep the rules. In Heaven you won't see much of God but you will find a wonderful concierge service where you can do all your favorite hobbies. Remember, the more you keep the rules on earth, the more fun things you get to do in Heaven!



Doug taught us that the truth about God has no value unless we LIVE as though it is true in the circumstances of daily life. **Read the following truths about God and share which of them are hard for you to believe and/or hard to live as though you believe?**

John 15:4 He is a Father who takes infinite delight in Fathering you. He is always friendly, eager to talk, active in every way.

John 10:10 He is relentless in His desire to give you the best life possible.

Psalms 32:8 He is infinitely wise and loves mentoring you and giving you the secrets of success in life.

Numbers 23:19 He never waivers in keeping His promises. He means what He says, never lies and will never fail to be faithful to keep a promise.

Romans 8:1 His anger is reserved for His enemies and He will never condemn us, never leave in disgust, and never lose His temper with us.

1 John 5:14,15 He is the best listener in the universe and will always answer every prayer like a perfect Father would.

Matthew 6:25-34 He is a Father who provides for us.

1 Corinthians 3:9 He is a Father who cares enough to employ us in the Family business; giving us significant and noble things to give our life to.

Psalms 139:1-12 He is always paying attention, never gets distracted, always present, and is always in control.

John 17:3 He is not hard to know but is open, honest, and eager to reveal what is in His heart and mind.

Doug told his story of encountering Jesus and inviting Him to lead his life. **What is your story? Are you willing to share a three-minute version with your group?** For example: What you were like before Christ, how you came to Christ, and what changed after that decision?

Come prepared next week to talk about a letter from God that stood out to you.



Session Two: What is He Like?

Notes

"Every truth about God is disruptive and designed to create a fundamental shift in how you see yourself, see God, see life, see everything, and will transform the way you live."

"It does no good to observe the attributes of God unless we live as though those attributes are true."

"To actually trade up and experience a richer life, we have to learn to live as though God is much bigger and much better than we ever imagined."

"The more we act as though God is real, the more real He will seem to us."

"To read about the truth, to study the truth is of no value unless we act as if it's true in specific situations."

"We have to expect God to be the kind of person that He says He is in scripture, not just study scripture."



Session 2: What is He Like? Discussion Questions

The majesty of God points us to our Creator and changes us. Doug talked about his experience with the mountains in Alaska. **Can you think of a time when you had a similar experience with the awesome majesty of God?**

As a group, list as many attributes of God that you can think of.

Doug taught us that every attribute of God has three aspects to it:

The Attribute is without limits

The Attribute has the word Always in front of it

The Attribute is disruptive.

Apply these to several of the attributes listed and talk about how that impacts you. For example: God is always loving and we are loved without limits.

Share an example from your own life when you have believed an attribute of God was true, but you didn't ACT as though it was true.

Think about Doug's illustration of the delay in New York.

How do you normally respond when your plans are blocked or disrupted?

Share a time in your life when a disruption of your plan ended up being the better plan?

Do you believe that God will always give you what you want or something better?

Select a letter from God, which stood out to you and share that with your group.



Session Three: The Perfect Father

Notes

"God's goal is to trade us up from a self-focused life to a much better God-focused life so that we can enjoy life with Him."

"This journey involved small steps on a trajectory towards a God centered life and every small step matters."

"Every time we take a step to turn from a self-focused life to a God focused life God is empowering us to see Him the way He really is."



Session 3: A Perfect Father Discussion Questions

What is your level of awareness to God's presence?

- I feel Him with me at every moment
- I feel His presence several times during the day
- I feel His presence when I have a scheduled time to pray or worship
- I can go all day without recognizing His presence

What would have to change to enjoy His presence more?

Doug talked about a practical way to live like Jesus is present with you at all times. He called it: Before/During/After

Before an event (What do I expect God to do or how He could help?)

During (How do I respond or interact with God?)

After (Gratitude for what God did or what lies did I believe)

Identify an event, meeting, conversation, or task that you have on your calendar this week that you can apply this practice to. Share that with the group and come prepared next week to talk about the experience.

Doug talked about two realities: Living a God-led life or a self- led life.

Self-Led

Self-Absorbed

Self -Talk

Self-Will

Self-Reliant

Self-Righteous

Self-Focused

God-Led

Seeing Him Clearly

Rich Conversation

Active Surrender

Resolute Trust

Humble Apology

Bold Representation

What steps can you, or have you taken to move to a more God- led life than self- led life and what are some next steps you would like to take?

Select a letter from God, which stood out to you and share that with your group.



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Session Four: Embracing the Truth and Rejecting Lies

Notes

"We are not on a quest for Bible knowledge; we are on a quest to embrace the truth and live as though it is true, rejecting the lies we face."

"Your image of God is a mixture of truth and error. The more you live the truth and reject lies, the more joy, strength, and freedom you will experience."

"For most of us, our view of God and our view of life with God is shaped much more by lies than by the truth."

"The main verb in the New Testament is not **reading**, it's **relating** to a Person."

"All fear, all stress, all conflict, all distraction and all distance from God can be traced back to a lie or lies we have believed about Him."



Session 4: Embracing the Truth and Rejecting Lies

Discussion Questions

Our image of God is a mixture of truth and error. Every truth about God has one or more corresponding lies and those lies hinder our relationship with Him and with others. Doug taught us that it's important to name the lie and then reject it, embracing and living the truth about God instead.

Reflect on the following lies about God and share with your group which ones have hindered or are hindering your relationship with God.

God is not interested in me, or the small details of my life

God doesn't care about my daily activities

If I work hard enough, God might be pleased with me and bless my life

I am not good enough for God's love, attention, or loyalty

God's plans are capricious, whimsical, and without focus

God is angry, distant, or frankly not very interesting

God fails to keep His promises

We also believe lies about life with God. Which of the following do you struggle with or have struggled with?

Life on my terms is so much better and richer than life on God's terms

What really counts, satisfies, and is truly meaningful is worldly success

It is all up to me. I am in charge and fully responsible for my destiny

I have the right to have what I want without considering what God may want for me

I have a right to judge God's leadership and direction for my life

The main thing I need from God is to help me accomplish my plans

Share your experience with applying the Before, During, After Practice over the last week.

What are some steps you took over the last week to be God led rather than self-led?

Which letter from God stood out to you? Share that with your group.



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Session Five: God's Passion to Reveal Himself to Us

Notes

"God is passionate to reveal His true character and nature to us. "

"Learning to see God's glory, to see His greatness and His goodness, and then respond to Him in gratitude and adoration changes us."

"God's goal for us in reading the Bible is for us to encounter the author and have a personal connection with Him."

"The more we see and respond to God's revelation of Himself, the closer you'll be to Him and the more we will enjoy a God-centered life. "



Session 5: God's Passion to Reveal Himself to Us

Discussions Questions

Share something from one or more of the Letters from God that has made an impact on you.

Share your experience with the practice with Before, During, After.

Share an example from this week of being God-led rather than self-led.

How have the text messages impacted your day and thinking over the last few weeks?

Doug talked about three ways God reveals Himself to us:

- We see His heart in the Bible where God reveals His attributes
- We see His hand in our circumstances
- We see His hand in nature and His majesty

One way of responding to God revealing Himself to us, is to share our God stories with others. It's important to tell stories of seeing God's wisdom, favor in circumstances, His provision, protection or anything else.

Share with the people in your group some of your stories where you experienced God revealing Himself to you either in the Bible, circumstances or in nature in recent days.



Session Six: Trusting God When Life is Hard

Notes

"Keeping your eye on God, no matter the circumstances, is a big part of walking with God."

"God never distances Himself from us, but we can choose to not be present with Him."

"Every difficulty, every injustice, every betrayal, every disease, everything that is hard in our lives is redemptive."

"Most of the wisdom, goodness, and power of God is unseen. We have to trust the unseen goodness as well as admire Him for the goodness that we see. "

"God will never promote evil, He will never promote difficulty, He will never tempt us. He will never promote anything that is wrong, but He may permit it for His good purposes."



Session 6: Trusting God When Life is Hard

Discussion Questions

The following are true statements about what you can expect from God in difficult circumstances. Read through them as a group and talk about when any of them have been true in your own life.

God will give me the strength I need

God allowed this because it is necessary for the best life possible for me

He will weave difficult circumstances into His perfect plan

God will use this difficulty for good purposes for others and me

God gives me gifts that only come in trials

He never makes mistakes

God will do a deep work in my heart through pain if I cooperate with Him

God has been and will be infinitely loyal to me no matter what the circumstance

Much of my fear, grief and pain is self-inflicted and not from God

God is not indifferent but compassionate in my pain

Which of the truths above are more difficult for you to ACT as though they are true?

Discuss with your group how your view of God is changing and how that is affecting life situations you are facing right now.

What God story would like to share?



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