



**EQUIPPED!**

Tools for Exploring the Bible

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

## **Lesson 1**

1. As you read through the New Testament, why should you be sure to consider the “plot context” of a story or the “logical” context of a passage? What can you do to avoid the mistake of taking Scripture out of context?
2. The lectures talked about the 4 Ds: the drama, the doctrine, the doxology, and the discipleship. How does the drama of Scripture lead us to understand the doctrines of God?
3. Are there any books of the New Testament you’ve read before that have confused or interested you? What are they? What are you looking forward to learning in this course?

## **Lesson 2**

1. What is a “testament”? When we talk about the books that are in the “New Testament,” what does this title tell us about these books?
2. Who are some of the apostles behind the books of the New Testament? What is an apostle?
3. Why is it important to have a readable, understandable translation of the New Testament? Do you think the translation you are using is readable?

## **Lesson 3**

1. Luke's prologue describes Luke's research process for his gospel narrative. What was that process?
2. Why does Luke include the story of Jesus' message to his hometown synagogue where he does in his narrative?
3. At the height of Jesus' fame in Galilee, Peter confesses that he believes Jesus is the Christ. But Jesus immediately follows this with a startling prediction. What is that prediction and why would it have been so startling?
4. One of the main themes of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is how he displays his divine authority. What sorts of stories does Luke tell in Luke 9-13 that demonstrate this?

## **Lesson 4**

1. One of the big themes Luke develops in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is his criticism of the depravity of the Pharisees. In chapters 15 and 16, what parables does Jesus tell and how do they speak to this theme?
2. Another big theme in the last half of Luke's gospel is eschatology: the study of last things. What does Jesus have to say about events leading up to the end, and what does he say will happen when he returns?
3. According to Luke, why does Jesus have to die on the cross?



## **Lesson 5**

1. The early chapters of the book of Acts contrast the new temple of the community of Jesus' disciples with the old temple. Name the ways in which you see how the new temple of disciples and old temple are contrasted.
2. Consider the story of Peter speaking with Cornelius and name the ways God made it obvious to Peter that the Gentiles were to receive the gospel and be fully accepted as disciples of Jesus.
3. Give examples from Acts 1-12 of the times the apostles or church in general was persecuted and how it led to the gospel spreading. Give examples of times when persecution ceased and how this led to the spread of the gospel.





## **Lesson 6**

1. During Paul's first missionary journey, each place he goes he starts by preaching to the Jews in that region, but each time he does this, he ends up encountering Jewish opposition as well. How does this end up leading to Paul preaching the gospel to more Gentiles?
2. What do some of the party of the Pharisees in the church think the Gentiles need to do to be saved? What evidence is brought forward at the Jerusalem Council to disprove them?
3. In the last half of the Book of Acts, the apostle Paul appears before different civil courts and rulers 9 times. Why does Luke include all of these court appearances? Of these, which event was your favorite to read about?

## **Lesson 7**

1. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, we see him more upset than we do in many of his other letters, and yet the cause of his alarm was not ethical—the Galatians weren't engaging in any obviously immoral behavior. The cause of his frustration was what the Galatians believed about the gospel. How does this offer us a model for the weight we give certain problems that can arise in the church?
2. In the letter to the Galatians, Paul places a big contrast between the law of Moses and the gospel. According to this letter, why can't we be justified by the Mosaic covenant?
3. According to this letter, how can a Christian properly use the Torah?

## **Lesson 8**

1. Describe why idleness was a particular temptation in Thessalonian culture and what Paul writes in both 1 and 2 Thessalonians to combat this tendency.
2. Using just the text of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, list the events leading up to and including the time of Christ's return.

## **Lesson 9**

1. Describe how Paul speaks about Jesus' crucifixion to help the Corinthians understand how their behavior is out of step with Christ.
2. A couple of times, Paul alludes to the church as the temple. What applications does he draw from this in the first 6 chapters of 1 Corinthians?

## **Lesson 10**

1. Summarize Paul's message to the "weak" of conscience who were offended at the notion of Christians eating meat sacrificed to idols.
  
2. Summarize Paul's message to the "strong" of conscience who had no scruples about eating meat sacrificed to idols.
  
3. If a skeptic raised the following objections to Christianity, how could you use 1 Corinthians 15 to respond to them?
  - a. **It's doubtful Jesus ever even existed.**
  
  - b. **It's doubtful Jesus' tomb was empty. Only the gospels mention it, and it's probably just a legend or fabrication.**
  
  - c. **It's doubtful Jesus was seen alive after he died. Maybe people were just hallucinating, if they saw anything at all.**

## **Lesson 11**

1. What are the major similarities and differences between the old covenant of Moses and the new covenant?
2. What were Paul's critics boasting about in Corinth?
3. Why does Paul "boast" about his weaknesses?

## **Lesson 12**

1. In the first section of Romans, Paul lays out the problem of human sinfulness. How is a proper understanding of this problem proof that justification cannot be by works?
2. How does Paul prove from the story of Abraham that justification is by faith?
3. How does the resurrection of Jesus prove to us justification is by faith?

## **Lesson 13**

1. What would lead a reader to ask the question in Romans 6:1 “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” What has Paul said in chapter 5 that might give someone that impression?
2. There are almost no imperatives in Romans 1-11. Why is this fact significant? The first of very few imperatives is in Romans 6:11, which states, “You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” What does this mean?
3. How does Paul address the “strong” and “weak” in Romans 14?



## **Lesson 14**

1. In the inclusion of Paul's letter to the Philippians (1:1-26; 4:4-23), Paul writes about how to have joy, peace, and contentment amidst anxieties, especially persecution. How does Paul maintain joy?
2. From the letter to the Philippians, how do we know Paul believed Jesus is God?

## **Lesson 15**

1. How does the section of rhythmic prose in Colossians 1:15-20 address the heresy the Colossians were facing? Think in terms of the specific false teachings being promoted: an emphasis on Jewish holy days and rituals, and an emphasis on visions and the worship of angels.
2. What's the difference between the unhelpful asceticism mentioned in Colossians 2:20-23 and putting to death what is earthly mentioned in Colossians 3:5?

## **Lesson 16**

1. In the opening poem of Ephesians (1:3-14), what does Paul say each divine person did? What did the Father do? What did the Son do? What did the Spirit do? Pay close attention to the verbs associated with each person.
  
2. Pick just one of the main application sections in chapters 4-6 and connect the ideas in that section to theological ideas Paul teaches in chapters 1-3. When you pick a section, look at Paul's internal logic—not just what he commands, but *why* he commands it. Then go back to the first 3 chapters to look for traces of those ideas.
  - Walk in unity (4:1-16)
  - Walk not as the Gentiles (4:17-24)
  - Walk in love (4:25-5:2)
  - Walk in light (5:3-14)
  - Walk in wisdom (5:15-6:9)
  - Put on the armor of God (6:10-20)

## **Lesson 17**

1. In both 1 Timothy and Titus, Paul singles out the training up of qualified elders as a high priority. According to both of these letters, what is the job of an elder, and why would that job be important in both Timothy and Titus' respective situations?
2. Read 1 Timothy 4:7-10 and Titus 2:11-14. According to Paul, should be our motivation for doing good works?

## **Lesson 18**

1. What was Paul's charge to Timothy in this last letter?
2. Compare and contrast Paul's outlook in Philippians 1:19-26 and 2 Timothy 4:6-8.
3. Second Timothy is a great reminder that Paul did not operate alone. He worked with many people in his long ministry. Paul asks Timothy to greet three old friends in Ephesus for him: Aquila, Priscilla, and the house of Onesiphorus. From Paul's letters and the book of Acts, what do we know about these three people (Acts 18:1-4, 18-28; Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 1:15-18; 4:19)?

## **Lesson 20**

1. Jesus has many brushes with the unclean world in the Gospel of Mark. Name some of the ways in which Jesus makes the ceremonially unclean clean. How does this relate to what Peter learned in Acts 10:1-11:18?
2. Peter would later say, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Using the first half of the Gospel of Mark, list the ways Mark demonstrates these things.

## **Lesson 21**

1. Knowing how Peter is portrayed in the Gospel of Mark, and knowing he is the primary source for the Gospel's contents, what does this tell us about how Peter reflected back on his time with Jesus during his earthly ministry?
2. Why does Jesus say he must die in Mark 10:32-45?

## **Lesson 22**

1. In the Gospel of Mark, Peter was opposed to the idea of Jesus going to the cross to die. But in the letter of 1 Peter, he has come to understand powerful truths about Jesus' death. What are those truths?
2. Throughout the letter, Peter alludes to the hope we have by believing in Christ. How does Peter describe that hope? What sort of future does Peter anticipate for believers?



## **Lesson 23**

1. Looking at both 2 Peter and Jude, what characteristics of the false brothers do both authors mention?
2. Both Peter and Jude mention various ungodly characters and groups from the Old Testament as parallels to the false teachers in the church. What characters and groups do they mention?

## **Lesson 24**

1. During the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus promotes a righteousness that exceeds that of the religious leaders of the day. In Matthew 5:17-48, Jesus corrects 6 common misunderstandings of the Old Testament law. What were those misunderstandings?
2. Summarize in your own words Jesus' parable of the weeds and Jesus' interpretation of it (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).

## **Lesson 25**

1. Some of the big questions answered in Matthew 13:53-18:35 are “Who is Jesus?” and “What kind of Messiah is he?” Looking over this section, how does Matthew answer these questions, both through Jesus’ words and actions?
2. During Jesus’ “great commission” (Matthew 28:16-20), he commands his followers to bring his message to all the nations of the world. Despite being a book for a Jewish audience, how does Matthew’s Gospel prepare us for this global mission?

## **Lesson 26**

1. As you read through James' letter, according to the author, what is God's character like? What has God done and what has he promised to do? Most importantly, how does *not* understanding the author's vision of God lead to the various sins he writes about?
2. James refers to several characters from the Old Testament as examples. Who are these characters and how does James use them?

## **Lesson 27**

According to the author of Hebrews, in what ways is Jesus similar to other high priests? In what ways is he dramatically superior?

## **Lesson 28**

1. Jesus returns to the temple over and over in John's Gospel, but more importantly, the beloved disciple laces his narrative with a clear message: *Jesus is the new temple of God*. What are the ways the first half of John's Gospel (chapters 1-10) show this?
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## **Lesson 29**

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2. Throughout John's Gospel, he mentions various "signs" performed by Jesus. There are six specifically enumerated in chapters 1-12 (2:11; 4:54; [5:1-15]; 6:14,26,30; 7:21,31; 9:16; 11:47; 12:18). What are those 6 signs? Additionally, John 2:18 mentions another sign Jesus would later perform. What is this sign? How do all of these signs fulfill the purpose stated in John 20:30-31?

## **Lesson 30**

1. The Beloved Disciple writes of the faith that was revealed “from the beginning” (1:1; 2:7,24; 3:11): that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who has come in the flesh to be the propitiation for our sins. According to 1 John 1:1-4 and 5:6-8, how does the author know for sure that this is true?
2. The Beloved Disciple writes about the new commandment from Christ to show love (2:7-11; 3:10-18; 4:7-5:3). Summarize his statements about this: what does it mean to show love and why do we show it?



## **Lesson 31**

1. Summarize what the Elder says about the concept of “antichrist” in both the epistles of 1 & 2 John. What does an antichrist believe and how are we to respond to them?
2. The epistles of 2 & 3 John highlight the importance of hospitality for itinerant missionaries. Name examples from the New Testament of hospitality in action.

## **Lesson 32**

1. Each of the 7 churches in Revelation are given a promise of what awaits them if they remain faithful. What are these 7 promises? Collectively, what do all these promises mean?
2. Pick *one* of the 7 churches and note how Jesus describes himself to them. Why is that description fitting for that specific church?  
[Students need only discuss one of the examples from Revelation 2-3.]

## **Lesson 33**

1. Both the 7th bowl (Revelation 16:17-21) and songs of Babylon (Revelation 18:1-19:8) give a chorus of voices, singing songs of judgement and lament over the fall of Babylon. Read these passages and summarize what this great city was like before and after it fell.
2. One of the clear doctrines that emerges from the book of Revelation is God's sovereignty: his absolute governance and direction of historical events. Give examples from Revelation that demonstrate this idea.

## **Lesson 34**

After hearing about the four approaches to interpreting the book of Revelation, which one stands out to you as the one you want to learn more about because you think it sounds convincing?