God in Real Life

STUDY GUIDE

A FREE downloadable version of this study guide is available at rose-publishing.com. Click on “News & Info,” then on “Downloads.”

This study guide covers each chapter of this book and includes a reproducible worksheet and/or discussion questions for each chapter.

What participants will gain from this study:
• Learn answers to their questions about God, Jesus, Christianity, and worldviews.
• Be encouraged to grow closer to Jesus through learning about his life and what it means to have a relationship with God.
• Know what the Bible teaches about the choices and issues they face daily.

Spend time in prayer before each study session and pray for each participant.
CHAPTER 1: TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

Main Idea
God exists and he has shown himself through Jesus.

Teaching Tips
If your group is new to each other, be sure to leave plenty of time for getting to know each other first. The questions in this chapter are heavy, so consider designating the first session as an icebreaker or introduction time and save this chapter for the second session.

Introduce participants to the purposes of the study. Ask them what they hope to gain from the study or what interests them about it. Be sure to state the “ground rules” for discussion (For example: Personal things said in this room stay in this room. No put-downs, sarcasm, or rude remarks. There is no such thing as a dumb question.) Do this before each session.

Participants may have strong feelings about some of these topics. If you have a disruptive participant remember these things: (1) Don’t get angry; It will only escalate tensions and become personal; (2) Tell the participant how you appreciate his/her input and participation; (3) Don’t start a debate between you and the participant; Rather, open up the discussion with the group; (4) See it as a teaching moment; You can show the group by your example how to have a respectful conversation.

The discussion questions correspond to the list of “tough questions” in this chapter. The chapter contains more discussion questions than can be covered in a typical session, so pick only four questions and discuss those.

Digging Deeper
www.BeThinking.org has short easy-to-understand articles that you can print out and make available to participants who want to learn more.

CHAPTER 2: WORLDVIEWS COMPARISON

Main Idea
Christianity’s answers to the big questions in life are far more hopeful and meaningful than the other worldviews.

Teaching Tips
Under the section What Is a Christian Worldview? there are many scripture references. Pick one for each question, and ask participants to read each verse and explain how the verses answer the big questions. Suggest using: Isaiah 45:18–19; Isaiah 40:26; Genesis 1:27–28; Mark 12:28–29; 1 Corinthians 15:42–44.

Digging Deeper

Worksheet Key
(1) b (2) e (3) d (4) True (5) f

CHAPTER 3: WHO IS JESUS?

Main Idea
Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. He came to save the world, and made that salvation possible through his death and resurrection.

Teaching Tips
Open this session by having participants brainstorm all the words they think of when they hear the name Jesus. Write all the words on a whiteboard or easel pad. What themes do you see emerging?

Digging Deeper
For a video segment to show during this session check out the DVD The Real Jesus: A Defense of the Historicity & Divinity of Christ (The Apologetics Group: 2008).

Worksheet Key
(1) False (2) e (3) d (4) False (5) d
CHAPTER 4: PURSUING JESUS

Main Idea
God loves you always! He has an amazing journey ahead for you as part of God’s family.

Teaching Tips
Explain to participants how to complete the 10 Things about Your Journey: This is not a quiz; There are no right or wrong answers; It’s a time for sharing about yourself. Have everyone write down their answers and share them in small groups.

Digging Deeper
Have additional material available for participants who want to learn more about how to begin reading and understanding the Bible on their own. See How to Study the Bible pamphlet available at www.rose-publishing.com.

CHAPTER 5: KNOWING GOD’S WILL

Main Idea
We can trust God to love us and work all things in our lives out for good.

Teaching Tips
Lead by example. You can encourage participants to open up and share their stories by you giving your own testimony. Remember to include specifics and concrete examples of how you have seen God’s will in your life.

Make the Four Things You Can Do list into something participants can do as a group. For example: create the cards or prayer journals together; organize a volunteer service; pick names out of a hat and each person prays for one another each day until the next meeting.

CHAPTER 6: WHAT CHRISTIANITY HAS DONE FOR THE WORLD

Main Idea
God loves justice and is concerned for the poor and defenseless. He wants us to be part of his plan to bring hope to a hurting world.

Teaching Tips
As a practical application, have the group pull their money together monthly to sponsor a child through a Christian relief and development agency; Or hold a one-time collection to purchase building supplies, farm animals, or health care supplies for people in need (for example, see www.worldvision.org key word: “Gift Catalog”).

Digging Deeper
Check out the book Good News About Injustice by International Justice Mission founder Gary Haugen (InterVarsity Press: 1999). It’s packed with stories of justice and practical application of God’s Word. You can read one of the stories to open the session.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reformers</th>
<th>Who Said It?</th>
<th>Starts with “C”</th>
<th>Grab Bag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi</td>
<td>Chariots of Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Mother Teresa</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>Carmichael, Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>William Wilberforce</td>
<td>Mother Teresa</td>
<td>Child Labor Laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>Basil the Great</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln</td>
<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>Afra of Augsburg</td>
<td>John Calvin</td>
<td>Callistus of Rome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Game Key**

For the Jeopardy Game: If you have a large group break them up into teams. Draw a Jeopardy board on a whiteboard or easel pad and mark off the boxes as participants choose them. Have someone keep track of points and decide who “buzzes” in (or raises their hand) first to answer. And don’t forget to remind participants to answer in the form of a question. Give out prizes to the winning team.
CHAPTER 7: ANSWERS TO EVOLUTION

Main Idea
There are scientific reasons to doubt Darwinian evolution.

Teaching Tips
Participants may already have strong feelings about this topic, so remind participants of these two things: (1) If you want someone who disagrees with you to listen, you must treat them respectfully and be willing to listen to them; Being rude or belittling closes off meaningful conversation; (2) It’s OK if you don’t have know all the answers; God loves you even when you aren’t sure what you believe.

Digging Deeper
For more resources on this topic see Creation & Evolution and Intelligent Design pamphlets available at www.rose-publishing.com, and be sure to check out the websites at the end of the chapter under “Resources.”

Worksheet Key
(1) False (2) False (3) False (4) False (5) True (6) False

CHAPTER 8: 10 Q&A ON MAGIC, SPELLS & DIVINATION

Main Idea
God forbids us to use occult practices. He wants us to trust him to meet our needs.

Teaching Tips
Participants who have had experiences with the occult may feel frightened or uncomfortable about discussing this topic. Be sure to explain how God loves us and is in control—even over the spirit-world (see “The Authority of God...” at the beginning of the chapter).

Digging Deeper
Check out the author’s testimony about how she was lured into the occult and how God rescued her from it (available free at www.rose-publishing.com, keyword: “magic”). Print it out and make it available to participants who want learn more.

Worksheet Key
(1) b (2) e (3) False (4) c (5) False

CHAPTER 9: WHY WAIT?

Main Idea
There are many reasons to follow God’s plan to wait until marriage to have sex.

Teaching Tips
The discussion questions can be used for co-ed groups, but consider holding additional discussion time for girls only and guys only, where gender-specific questions can be asked and shared.

Digging Deeper
Check out the books at the end of the chapter under “Resources.”

FEEDBACK
To improve future studies, be sure to get feedback from the group about teaching style, meeting location, discussion time, material covered, length of study, and group size. Choose a method that best suits your group: e-mail response or questionnaire, online social networking site, or group discussion. See the questions at the end of this study guide.
TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

Discussion Questions

1. Name one relationship, one activity, and one thing in your life that is really important to you. How does your belief about God influence each of those areas of your life—or how should it?

2. Think of someone you know who has converted to another religion or converted from another religion to Christianity. How did it change their life and choices?


4. Do most non-Christians you know see the lives of Christians as being different? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

5. How important is it for people to know what they believe about evolution? Can someone be a Christian and believe in evolution?

6. What does it mean to trust people in your life (like your father, your best friend, your sister) when your relationship with them isn’t going so well? What does it mean to trust God?

7. What would you say are the biggest challenges Christians have to seeking justice today? What are some ways you have seen God use people to bring “good news” to the poor or freedom to the oppressed?

8. If a friend confided to you that he/she believed in God and the Bible but would never again go to church because of religious hypocrites, what would you say?

9. According to John 3:16 what is required of someone to have eternal life? Is there anything else people need to do to be saved?

10. When you’re feeling sad or depressed, how do you usually deal with it? Does God seem close or far away during those times? Name two things you can do that might help you trust God during those times.
WORLDVIEWS COMPARISON

1. A worldview is:
   a. A mental model of the world that does not influence your life
   b. A set of presuppositions about the makeup of the world
   c. Something that is always true
   d. A view from outer space

2. Which of the following worldviews says that physical matter and energy are the only reality?
   a. Deism
   b. Finite Godism
   c. Monotheism
   d. Energyism
   e. Atheism

3. Pantheism says that we know God by looking ________.
   a. To holy scripture
   b. In his Creation
   c. Outside ourselves
   d. Within ourselves
   e. On Facebook

4. True or False?
   Monotheism is the belief in only one God.

5. What are the big questions of life?
   a. Is there a God?
   b. Where did we come from?
   c. How should we live?
   d. Where are we going?
   e. Who won last season’s American Idol?
   f. All of the above (except “e”)

Discussion Questions

1. What was the most interesting insight in this chapter?

2. What does it mean to have a “Christian worldview”? And why is it important?

3. Think of a typical day in your life. Which “worldviews” do you encounter (at school, at work, or on your favorite TV shows or music)? How are these different from a Christian worldview?

4. How do we develop a Christian worldview?
WHO IS JESUS?

1. True or False?
   Jesus was human while on earth and became divine after his resurrection.

2. Which is part of Jesus’ message?
   a. Repentance
   b. Belief
   c. Himself
   d. (a) and (b)
   e. All of the above

3. Jesus referred to himself in the Gospels as:
   a. The gate
   b. The bread
   c. The book
   d. (a) and (b)
   e. All of the above

4. True or False?
   Jesus’ betrayal and execution came as a surprise to Jesus.

5. The eternal life that Jesus promised is ____________.
   a. To know God
   b. To be freed from condemnation
   c. To be raised up in the last day
   d. All of the above

Discussion Questions

1. Books and movies portray Jesus in many ways: Jesus the revolutionary, Jesus the martyr, Jesus the teacher, Jesus the healer, etc. When you read the Gospels what kind of person does Jesus seem like to you?

2. Look at the Beliefs about Jesus chart. Are some of the beliefs more difficult than others for you to accept? Which ones and why?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12–18. Why is Jesus’ resurrection important?

4. Jesus came to save the world. What do you think it means to “be saved”?

5. How can someone receive the salvation Jesus offers?
PURSUING JESUS

10 Things about Your Journey

1. I first realized Jesus was important when ____________________________________________.

2. An important spiritual gift is ________________________________________________________.

3. Prayer is ________________________________________________________________________.

4. When I hear the word church I think of ________________________________________________.

5. When I read the Bible I ________________________________________________________________.

6. An important Bible verse is __________________________________________________________.

7. When I feel afraid, the first thing I do is ________________________________________________.

8. God loves me even when ______________________________________________________________.

9. I thank God for ______________________________________________________________________.

10. The journey of life is __________________________________________________________________.

Discussion Questions

1. Share about your church background: Did you grow up going to church? What are your earliest memories of church?

2. What have you liked about being part of a church—and what have you disliked about it?

3. Have you ever used a devotional book or a prayer journal before? If so, did you find it helpful? Why or why not?

4. What are some things you can do to be more purposeful about participating in church, giving, and using your spiritual gifts?

5. What is one thing about your life that reminds you that God loves you?
KNOWING GOD’S WILL

Four Things You Can Do

1. **Create daily reminders.** On 3x5 cards, write each of the headings in the section *What do I need to remember about God’s leading?* (For example: write “#2. I won’t miss God’s plan if my heart is set on pleasing him.”) Place them in a location where you will see them easily and often (for example: On your notebook, in your locker, on your mirror, your closet.)

2. **Keep a prayer journal.** On the first day of each week write down your prayer requests and consistently pray about them. At the end of the month look back on your requests and see how God answered them. Was it a “yes” answer, a “no” answer, or “wait”? This will help you see how God is working in your life.

3. **Start serving others.** Sometimes you need time alone with God to listen to him, but remember that God also works in your life through your service to others. Don’t let uncertainty about God’s will paralyze you from helping others. Find opportunities to volunteer in your church or community.

4. **Ask someone to pray for you.** As a part of the body of believers, you are not alone! When you have a tough decision to make, find a friend, pastor, church leader, or a family member and ask him or her to pray for God to show you his will.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think that God sometimes has us wait for him, rather than just answering our prayers right away?

2. Share with the group about a time when God changed a bad situation in your life to a good outcome. Looking back, what do you know now that you didn’t know then about how God works?

3. Read Romans 8:38–39. In your own words, how would you describe this kind of love?

4. Your church is hosting a short-term missions trip in the summer. If you go it will mean giving up a summer job you’ve been waiting for. You pray about it, but still aren’t sure whether it’s God’s will that you should go—and you have to make a decision soon. What would you do in a situation like this?

5. The consequences of getting another low grade seemed like too much to handle, so you cheated on your exam. You feel really guilty afterward because—even though no one else found out—you know that God knows. What would you do in a situation like this?
WHAT CHRISTIANITY HAS DONE FOR THE WORLD

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the people in this chapter caught your attention, and why?

2. What do you think it means to be made in the “image of God”? Why is being in God’s image important?

3. Many times Jesus commanded his followers to serve and give to the poor. What does this reveal about God’s character?

4. What would you say to a friend who asked you, “How can you be a Christian when religion has caused so many injustices throughout history?”

5. Name one thing you can do to be intentional about giving to and serving others.
ANSWERS TO EVOLUTION

1. True or False?
   The Miller-Urey experiment proved that organic life can be built by a natural process.

2. True or False?
   Charles Darwin said that natural selection’s most convincing example was the eye.

3. True or False?
   All scientists accept Darwin’s theory of evolution at the cell level?

4. True or False?
   The fossil record shows many gradual changes between animal types.

5. True or False?
   The small changes in the Galapagos finch beaks are an example of microevolution.

6. True or False?
   All scientists today accept Darwinian evolution.

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the information in this chapter was new to you?

2. What would you like to learn more about?

3. Why do you think the theory of evolution is so popular today?

4. When you hear about the evidence for and against evolution, does it make a difference in your faith in God? Why or why not?

5. Read Isaiah 45:18 and Psalm 19:1. In your own words, what do these verses tell us about God’s relationship to the world?
10 Q&A ON MAGIC, SPELLS & DIVINATION

1. What is the difference between white magick and black magick?
   a. Only black magick is forbidden by God.
   b. God makes no distinction between white magick and black magick.
   c. White magick is stage magic.
   d. White magick causes only good things.

2. What can make astrology seem valid?
   a. People who use astrology want to hear accurate things.
   b. A person’s astrological “birth chart” has many areas open for interpretation.
   c. Astrologers may be guided by spirit beings (demons).
   d. (a) and (b)
   e. All of the above

3. True or False?
   The only difference between psychics and biblical prophets is that prophets did not receive money for their predictions.

4. What happens to people after they die?
   a. They become angels.
   b. They linger on earth as spirits.
   c. They face judgment before God.
   d. They are in frequent contact with mediums.

5. True or False?
   Most occultists do not respect Jesus as a person.

Discussion Questions

1. Occult practices are condemned many times in the Bible. What do you think are some reasons why God so strongly forbids occult practices—even things that people may think are harmless like horoscopes, charms, and crystals?

2. Read Philippians 1:21–23 and 1 Corinthians 15:42–54. What happens to believers in Jesus after they die?

3. Read Acts 8:9–24. How is the power of the Holy Spirit through Philip, Peter, and John different from the sorcery of Simon?

4. How is the gospel of Jesus “good news” for people involved in the occult?

5. You hear that a grieving friend of yours is thinking about using a medium to contact her deceased mother. What would you say or do?
WHY WAIT?

Discussion Questions

1. People face many pressures about sex and being sexy. What kinds of pressures do girls face? What kinds of pressures do guys face?

2. What is the relationship between love and sex? Do they go together or do they ever conflict?

3. Do you think that waiting until marriage to have sex is realistic or unrealistic? Does God ever ask us to do things that seem unrealistic?

4. Who decides when it is right for you to have sex?

5. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and Ephesians 5:3. What does it mean to be “sanctified” or “holy”? What can Christians do to keep away from sexual immorality?
FEEDBACK

1. What did you learn through this study that deepened your relationship with God and/or helped you understand biblical teachings better?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What was your favorite thing about this study, and why?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How could the meeting location, setting, length, or time be improved?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Did you think the material covered was too difficult, too easy, or just right?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. What would you like to see different about the group discussions?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What would you like to see different about the activities?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

7. What topic would you like to learn more about?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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