

Foundations of Faith Bible Study

Session 1: Who Is God? (The Nature of God)

Key Verse:

“The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, ‘Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.’” —Exodus 34:6 (NLT)

Discussion Outline:

1. God is Love (1 John 4:8)

- a. *“But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”* (NLT)
- b. He isn't just loving; His very nature is love.

2. God is Just (Psalm 89:14)

- a. *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants.”* (NLT)
- b. Justice is balanced with mercy.

3. God is Personal (Jeremiah 29:13)

- a. *“If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.”* (NLT)
- b. He wants a relationship, not just religious rules.

Discussion Questions:

1. Before today, how would you have described God? Where did that idea come from?
2. Have you ever felt like God was punishing you? How does Exodus 34:6 change that perspective?

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3. How does it make you feel knowing God wants a relationship with you, even in here?
4. Some people think God keeps a list of their wrongs. How does Psalm 103:12 challenge that? (*“He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.”*)
5. If God is just, why do bad things still happen? (See Romans 8:28 for a possible answer.)

Points to Ponder:

- What’s one way you can seek God this week, even in jail?
- How might seeing God as loving (not just angry) change how you view your situation?
- Who in here needs to hear that God offers second chances?

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Session 2: Who Is Jesus? (The Savior We Needed)

Key Verse:

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” —John 3:16 (NLT)

Discussion Outline:

1. Jesus is Fully God & Fully Man (John 1:1, 14)

- a. *“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1, NLT)*
- b. *“So the Word became human and made his home among us.” (John 1:14, NLT)*
- c. He understands our struggles (Hebrews 4:15).

2. Jesus Died for Our Sins (Romans 5:8)

- a. *“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” (NLT)*

3. Jesus Offers New Life (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- a. *“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (NLT)*

Discussion Questions:

1. Before today, what did you think about Jesus?

2. Why did Jesus have to die? Couldn't God just forgive us?

3. How does it feel knowing Jesus experienced betrayal and injustice too?

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4. Some say, “I’ve done too much for God to forgive me.” How does 1 Timothy 1:15-16 answer that?
5. What does “new life in Christ” look like for someone in jail?

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Session 3: Sin & Repentance (Breaking Chains, Finding Freedom)

Key Verse:

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." - Romans 3:23 (NLT)

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." - 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

Participant Discussion Outline:

1. What Sin Really Is

- a. Not just "big crimes" - includes pride, hatred, lust

"You have heard the commandment that says, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

- b. It's a heart condition before it's an action

2. The Consequences of Sin

- a. Separates us from God

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. (Isaiah 59:2)

- b. Leads to death

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

3. The Gift of Repentance

- a. More than guilt - a change of direction

Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. (Acts 3:19)

- b. God's mercy is immediate

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So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. (Luke 15:20)

Discussion Questions:

1. When you hear "sin," what's the first thing that comes to mind? How does Romans 3:23 expand that?
2. Why do you think small sins matter just as much as big ones to God?
3. What's the difference between feeling guilty and truly repenting?
4. How can someone know if God has really forgiven them? (Use 1 John 1:9)
5. What's one thing you need to confess to God today?

Points to Ponder:

- What chains is God asking you to let go of?
- How could daily confession change your time in here?
- Who do you need to make things right with?

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Session 4: The Holy Spirit (God's Presence With You)

Key Verse:

"But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you." - John 14:26 (NLT)

Participant Discussion Outline:

1. Who the Holy Spirit Is

- a. Not a "force" - God's personal presence (Acts 5:3-4)
- b. Our helper in weakness (Romans 8:26)

2. What the Spirit Does

- a. Convicts us (John 16:8)
- b. Produces godly character (Galatians 5:22-23)

3. How to Respond

- a. Don't grieve the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)
- b. Be filled daily (Ephesians 5:18)

Discussion Questions:

1. Before today, what did you think about the Holy Spirit?

2. How might your life change if you relied on the Spirit's strength instead of your own?

3. Which fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) do you need most right now? Why?

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4. What does it look like to "pray in the Spirit" when you're locked in a cell?
5. How can we tell the difference between our thoughts and the Spirit's voice?

Points to Ponder:

- What's one area where you need the Spirit's help this week?
- How could you practice listening to the Spirit during lockdown?
- Who in your pod needs the peace only the Spirit gives?

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Session 5: The Church & Community (Family Behind Bars)

Key Verse:

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another." - Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

Participant Discussion Outline:

1. What the Church Really Is

- a. People, not a building (1 Peter 2:5)
- b. Christ as the head (Colossians 1:18)

2. Biblical Brotherhood

- a. Bear each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- b. Speak truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)

3. Spiritual Growth in Confinement

- a. Paul wrote epistles from prison (Philippians 1:12-14)
- b. Your pod can be your "church" now

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you experienced "church" since being incarcerated?

2. What makes Christian fellowship different from regular jail friendships?

3. How can we practice Hebrews 10:24-25 in here?

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4. What's one way you can encourage a brother this week?
5. How can we handle conflict biblically in close quarters?

Points to Ponder:

- Who needs your encouragement today?
- What spiritual gift might God want to use in you here?
- How will you stay connected to believers after release?

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Session 6: Freedom in Christ (Beyond the Walls)

Key Verse:

"So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free." - John 8:36 (NLT)

Participant Discussion Outline:

1. Two Types of Captivity

- a. Physical chains vs. heart chains (Proverbs 4:23)
- b. Paul's freedom in prison (Acts 16:25)

2. What Real Freedom Means

- a. Freedom *from* sin's power (Romans 6:6)
- b. Freedom *for* God's purpose (Galatians 5:13)

3. Living Free in Confinement

- a. Renewing the mind (Romans 12:2)
- b. Guarding your new freedom (Galatians 5:1)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does "freedom" mean to someone behind bars?
2. How have you seen people act free even while incarcerated?
3. What thought patterns keep you in mental bondage?
4. How can you practice Romans 12:2 in here?

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5. What's one way you'll live differently because of this study?

Points to Ponder:

- What mental jail have you been living in that Christ wants to break open?
- How can you protect your spiritual freedom daily?
- Who needs to hear this message of freedom?