



# Series Overview and Guides

2019-2020 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 5

MARCH-APRIL 2020

## Objective

*what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study*

That we are continually shaped by belief in truth.

### STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"If you do not stand firm in your faith, then you will not stand at all."

—Isaiah 7:9

"But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

—John 20:31

"It is vital that we identify the essential foundation of [truth]...When our beliefs are aligned with truth, our lives become aligned with what is real, and that is powerful. Really powerful...In a world filled with lies and doubt, speaking truth is an important and natural extension of true belief – and I don't just mean speaking to other people. The most important person who needs to hear truth from you is you."

—Pete Briscoe  
*Belief Matters*

## Premise

*why we are studying this*

Every human exercises faith and does so all the time. We display our belief system in what we say, what posts we "like", how we vote, and how we use money. Unfortunately, these revelations of our beliefs are rarely examined. Thus, we are shocked when our actions seem at odds with what we think we believe. The solution is to deeply consider what we believe and let it continually reshape us.

### STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"When Jesus overheard what was said, he told the synagogue leader, 'Don't be afraid. Only believe.'"

—Mark 5:36

"Over my 20 years in the game, I've always taken pride in being a leader and doing things the right way, and in this situation, I failed. As a veteran player on the team, I should've recognized the severity of the issue [2017 Astros' sign-stealing scheme] and truly regret the actions that were taken. I am a man of faith and integrity and what took place did not demonstrate those characteristics that are so very important to me and my family. I'm very sorry. It's not who I am as a father, a husband, a teammate and as an educator. The Mets organization and I mutually agreed to part ways, moving forward for the greater good with no further distractions."

—Carlos Beltran  
*Upon his resignation as Mets' Manager*

## Theme

*what the study is about*

What we believe determines how we think, what we do, and every other aspect of our character lived out in daily life. As people being shaped by God, nothing is more significant than knowing what and why we believe.

### STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"And so we too constantly thank God that when you received God's message that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human message, but as it truly is, God's message, which is at work among you who believe." (NET)

—1 Thessalonians 2:13

"When you mail a letter, you are putting your faith in the postal service. When you fly in a plane, you are putting your faith in the airline and the professional skills of the flight and maintenance crews...Even if one claims to be an atheist, that has to be done by faith. Only faith can conclude there is no God. No one can gather enough facts to prove that conclusion... The point is this: everybody exercises faith every day."

—Charles Ryrie  
*Does it Really Matter What You Believe?*



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*a redeemed community*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## SCRIPTURE QUOTATIONS

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SERIES 5 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Like cars out of alignment, we often are unsafe as we move down life's highway. Belief in God changes that. It can align us with truth, root us in historic wisdom, and even comfort us.

OBJECTIVE

We trust God.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Amen.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we trust our Father to keep His word.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 1: I Believe in God

1. Tell about your history with the Apostles' Creed. Did you learn it before? If so, when and where and why?
2. Why is it important to know not only *what* we believe, but also *why* we believe it? Review the Theme of this series on page 1.
3. How do people, including sincere believers, become misaligned to the fundamental truths of God's Word?
  - How is sound theology comforting?
  - What Scripture supports and sustains your belief in who God is?
  - How does Isaiah 45:9 depict humanity in relation to God?
  - Read Psalm 103:8 – 14. How does this describe a believer's relationship with God?
  - In the Old Testament, God's name was YHWH, "I Am Who I Am." In the New Testament, what name did Jesus teach His disciples to use for God?
5. Read Romans 4:18-21. What was the essence of Abraham's faith?
  - How has your belief in God's faithfulness sustained you when faced with difficult situations?
  - If you are facing a difficult situation right now, how can this group pray for you?



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SERIES 5 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Everything in life is affected by God's role as Almighty Creator. The benefits that flow from His character and activity include: the material world has merit; humans bear dignity; God's witness will not bring shame (while all else will); He offers a reconciliation covenant to underserving humans.

OBJECTIVE

We embrace the ministry of redemption.

THE FIRST AND THE LAST

"God says not only that He knew and created us, but also that He is eternal.

'I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God' (Isaiah 44:6). He asks, 'Who then is like me?'

The answer, of course, is no one. God is eternal and all-powerful. He is the Creator. We are His creation. That gives us a value, a worth that cannot be denied. We are purposefully made, purposefully created."

—Charles H. Spurgeon  
*Exposition of Isaiah*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we willingly plead with others on Christ's behalf.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 2: I Believe in the Almighty Maker

1. Has anyone ever tried to take credit for something you made or did? If so, describe your reaction.
  - What does God say about the universe in these verses?
  - What does He say about people?
  - Read verse 19. How does God speak?
3. Read Isaiah 44:6-9.
  - List the attributes of God in this section.
  - Discuss how these show that God is almighty.
4. In verse 6 of Isaiah 44, God is named Redeemer.
  - What did that title for God mean to a Hebrew in Isaiah's day?
  - What does that title for God mean to us as Christians?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.
  - How does God continue to show Himself as the Almighty Maker?
  - Why can only the Almighty God be our Redeemer?
  - What role in redemption has God given to believers?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Many Christians shy away from talking about Jesus or are unprepared to describe Him when asked. Even when we know what we know about Jesus, we forget why His life, death, and resurrection matter so deeply to our daily existence. The Apostles' Creed provides a short, memorable means of summarizing Jesus and reminding ourselves of the change He makes in us.

OBJECTIVE

We live in light of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

THE KING'S BUSINESS

"Jesus is the one person who brings God's truth to men...Jesus is the one person who can tell us what God is like, and what God means us to be...Jesus came to tell us the truth about God and the truth about ourselves."

—William Barclay  
*The Gospel of Matthew*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we live and love in the light of Jesus' resurrection. Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 3: I Believe in Our Lord

1. Review the Apostles' Creed together.
  - What are the four names or titles used of God the Son?
  - Discuss the meaning and significance of each one.
2. Read Matthew 1:18-21.
  - How would Joseph have understood "conceived of the Holy Spirit"? What were some of the activities of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament scriptures?
  - How do those activities relate to what we know of Jesus' life?
  - Why is it important that God the Son was born of a virgin?
3. Read 1 John 4:9-10 and 1 Peter 2:22-24 together. What is the significance of the death of the God the Son?
4. "On the third day He rose again."
  - What are some of the common "explanations" for Jesus' resurrection?
  - Why do you believe that Jesus physically and actually rose from the dead?
  - Why is the resurrection important to your hope?
5. How should the resurrection of God the Son impact your life and the life of every believer? See 1 Corinthians 15.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus' ascension sets in motion a critically important series of events. The Holy Spirit is granted to believers. Jesus begins His heavenly rule as God the Son. The Father starts His timetable for God the Son's earthly rule – which fulfills prophecy and brings judgment. Finally, Jesus' ascension completes His commission for believers to use His gifts and fulfill the ministry He's granted.

OBJECTIVE

We fulfill our ministry.

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM 52

- Q. What comfort is it to you that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead?
- A. In all my sorrow and persecution I lift up my head and eagerly await as judge from heaven the very same person who before has submitted himself to the judgment of God for my sake, and has removed all the curse from me. He will cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but he will take me and all his chosen ones to himself into heavenly joy and glory.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we serve in hope of the coming King.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 4: I Believe He Shall Come

1. What did the apostles witness in Acts 1:4-11?
2. Where is Jesus now and for what is He waiting? Read Psalm 110:1, Hebrews 8:1-2 and 10:11-13.
3. Why did Jesus say He must return to the Father? See John 16:5-7.
  - What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, would do? See John 14:26, 15:8-11, and 16:12-15.
  - What are some of the things the Holy Spirit does in and for us as believers? For examples see Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:17-24, John 16:12-15.
  - How does the Holy Spirit glorify Jesus (John 16:14)?
4. When Jesus returns, He will rule and judge.
  - Discuss the various judgments mentioned in Scripture, such as:
    - Israel (Ezekiel 20:37-38)
    - The nations (Joel 3:2, Matthew 25:31-46)
    - Satan and demons (Jude 6, 1 Corinthians 6:13)
    - Unbelievers (Revelation 20)
    - Christians (1 Corinthians 3; 2 Corinthians 5)
  - Read the question in Heidelberg Catechism 52 (see sidebar).
    - How would you answer this question?
    - Now read the answer given in the catechism. How does your answer compare?
5. Why are the facts of Jesus' ascension, return, rule, and judgment important to us?
  - Read Ephesians 4:10-12. What is our goal in serving?
  - Have you found a way to serve in your local church? If not, discuss with your group some of the ways you could do so.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul's great prayer in Ephesians 1 relates the desire of God for Christians to perceive these truths and live differently because of them:

- The invisible church is universal, because of cross and tomb.
- Believers are bound together, because of cross and tomb.
- Believers are made holy, because of cross and tomb.
- Sins are forgiven, because of cross and tomb.

OBJECTIVE

We live in light of cross and tomb.

WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

"Paul does not say [Ephesians 5:8] that we used to be *in* the darkness, whereas now we are *in* the light (although this is true). Rather, he says that we used to be *darkness*, but now we *are light* in the Lord. Being *children of light* implies that this profound change comes from God's power in the new birth. Just as He at the first created light out of the darkness, so now He has changed us from being darkness itself into being light in the Lord."

—Steven J. Cole  
*Children of Light in a Dark World*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we may know the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe.

## Session 5: I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins

1. Have you ever experienced a spirit of kinship with believers very different from yourself?
  - Where were you?
  - What made you feel like you were with family?
2. When the Apostles' Creed mentions "the holy catholic church," what does "catholic" mean?
3. Read Ephesians 1:18-23.
  - Who is the head of the universal church?
  - How does that impact every local fellowship of believers?
4. Why do believers struggle with believing their sins are forgiven?
5. Read Ephesians 1:7.
  - What does "redemption" mean?
  - On what does our forgiveness depend?
  - What is the source of our forgiveness?
6. Read 1 Peter 2:9-11 and Ephesians 5:8-10.
  - How are all believers to live differently, regardless of where they live?
  - Why are we to live differently?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2019-2020

NO STONE UNTURNED

SCRIPTURE READING

Selected Scriptures

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Because Jesus resurrected from the dead in a physical body, Christians know the same blessing awaits us. Because we are in Jesus by faith, the Christians knows that perfection of body and soul couples with environmental sinlessness to produce a pain-free, grief-free, death-free eternity.

OBJECTIVE

We believe in the resurrection and the life.

VICTORY THROUGH JESUS

"When this corruptible is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

Death has been swallowed up.  
 Death, where is your victory?  
 Death, where is your sting?

Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

—1 Corinthians 15:54-57

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we live now like we believe we will live forever with Christ.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

## Session 6: I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body

1. Review the Apostles' Creed together. In this session we will discuss the final part: "I believe in...the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."
2. What are you looking forward to in "the life everlasting" that will be different from your time on earth?
3. Read John 14:1-3 and 1 Corinthians 15:12 – 20, 50-55.
  - How is our resurrection related to Jesus' resurrection?
  - How does our present body compare with our resurrected body? What changes?
4. Read Revelation 21:1-5.
  - What do these verses tell us about our forever dwelling place?
  - What are some of the things which will be eliminated when God dwells with us?
5. Read John 11:25. Describe what Jesus meant by "even if he dies, [he] will live."
6. Review the Theme of this series (on page 1). Discuss with your group what you have learned through this study of the Apostles' Creed.

