

Small Group Study Guide



In the Beginning **Nov 10, 2019**

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for preserving this ancient document we call the book of Genesis. We thank you for making us the pinnacle of your creation and not an afterthought. May we never forget that we are all created in your image. Forgive us for the times we treat others as less than us and help us remember that the dignity of every man, woman, and child was established in the very beginning. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:1, 26-27

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..... 26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

INTRODUCTION

"In the beginning" can be a loaded phrase – one that forces us into debate and doubt. But many were missing the point of Genesis 1:1 – a point made to a world where the violence and injustice of the gods justified and legitimized the violence and injustice of human rulers. Genesis introduces a radically different, unparalleled, and untested worldview.

You're here on purpose for a purpose. You are not the result of a cosmic conflict between the gods. You were not created by the universe. God wanted image-bearers who could know him and one another. And, in the beginning, we were introduced to the God who saves, redeems, delivers, and never gives up on us. He gave us freedom to choose, and he honors our choices.



QUESTIONS

- 1) Read Genesis 1:1. What do you think about when you read that sentence? Have you or someone you know tried to explore faith by using “In the beginning” as a starting point of faith? What obstacles come with that approach.
- 2) The author of Genesis is not trying to explain how God created the heavens and the earth. He is making the case that God (not the gods) created the universe. How does this distinction change the way someone can approach reading Genesis?
- 3) Do you see anything in nature or life that supports the idea that God created the universe with purpose and intent? What would change if you embraced the idea that everyone is here on purpose or for a purpose?
- 4) Many civilizations had creation stories that supported the idea that the human race was an afterthought of the gods. Consequently, individuals had no rights, hope or intrinsic value. How did those beliefs shape the cultures of that time? Do you see evidence of that kind of view now?
- 5) In the beginning, God decided every man, woman, and child, would be born with dignity because they were made in his image. If you took this perspective on the purpose of Genesis, what would change about:
 - How you view the Bible.
 - Your faith or your willingness to explore faith.
 - How you view yourself.
 - How you see and treat others.

FINAL APPLICATION

This week read Genesis chapter 1.