

## Small Group Questions | September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*Explore God – Does Life Have a Purpose?*

*Passages Referenced: John 19:5; 20:30–31; Ecclesiastes 1:1–2, 12–14; Genesis 1:1–4, 26–28*

**Introductory Comments to Group Leaders:** Before we get started, I'd like to see if I can clarify a bit about our two-pronged approach during these 7 weeks of Explore God. If you've gone onto [exploregod.com](http://exploregod.com) to look at the resources, you hopefully have found the two video segments for each session as well as the Discussion Guide for groups. This is the recommended approach if you have people coming to your group who are not yet followers of Jesus and who would feel out of place or intimidated by a Bible study. The second prong is aimed toward those who are already convinced of the gospel, attend church, and are comfortable with the Bible and prayer. For those groups, we have the sermon-based resources you'll find below. However, there is a possibility that you may be preparing for the second kind of group and find that you have people attending who would benefit more from the first type of discussion group. We encourage you to seek the Lord's wisdom, which in that case might mean shifting gears to use the Discussion Guide and the two recommend videos. If you have trouble locating the discussion guide on the website, email me at [dsouth@wcchapel.org](mailto:dsouth@wcchapel.org) and I will send you a .pdf file.

Here are links to each of the videos:

Introductory 2.5 minute video – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhHjjFnbBrM&t=0s&index=3&list=WL>

Main 9.5 minute video – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GM76f6SiaWw&t=6s&index=2&list=WL>

We encourage all of our groups to use the introductory video as the Hook section to begin your groups. After the video you may simply ask a question like, "Did you identify with any of the respondents in the video?" or "What do you think about these person-on-the-street responses?"

Again, some of you may find the 9.5 minute video to be a good option to show in your group if you are not referring to the sermon. In any case, making that link available to your members to watch before or after your meeting will give them more information to use in discussions about the question.

You will find more information and questions below than you will likely be able to meaningfully discuss in your group meeting. Please review the material beforehand and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to what will be most helpful for your group. Having said that, the sections on Sermon Recap, Reading the sermon's focal passage and interacting with the passage using some if not all of the questions, and the Application section are priorities.

**Sermon Recap:** If you believe that life does have purpose and meaning, the challenge is "where do you find it?" If you believe human life is merely the result of atoms coming together by random cause and effect, you are left with the challenge of "How do I live my life? Why not live as selfishly as I can?" The Big Idea to take away is "According to the Bible, life does have a purpose. That purpose is not concealed or created; rather it is revealed in creation. Human beings were intended to serve as angled mirrors reflecting God's image into the world and reflecting a world ordered by God's image back to God."

**Hook:** *These questions can help encourage conversation.*

1. Please show the 2.5 minute video found on the link above.
2. According to the survey mentioned in the video, 64% of people strongly agree that they are clear about the meaning and purpose of their lives. How does that percentage strike you?

**Look:**(Please read this to your group.) As we look at the Bible passages each week, we want to continue developing skills that will help us "rightly handle the word of God" (2 Tim 2:15). We want to make sure we see what the passage means and rightly apply it. A first step is to ask questions like: "Who, what, when, where, why, how." We'll also look for repeated words/phrases.

**Read the central sermon passage—John 1:1–8. Answer the following textual questions.**

1. Who are the main characters introduced in verses 1–8? ... **Logos/Word ... God ... a man name John.**
  - a. **Logos/Word** – “Heraclitus saw the Logos as the divine agency and principle by which order is wrought out of chaos and unity is created within flux...It is the Logos that integrates and reconciles all opposites” —Paul N. Anderson
  - b. **John** – Depending on your group, you may want to point out that it can be a challenge to know who is being referred to by the name John. This man named John is not the author of the gospel you’re reading. There is also John Mark, yet another John who is most often referred to as Mark.
2. What are three affirmations made in John 1:1 about the Logos/Word “in the beginning”?
  - a. **The Word ...**
    - i. **Was in the beginning**
    - ii. **Was with God**
    - iii. **Was God**
3. In the original creation story of Gen 1:1 we read, “In the beginning God created ...”
  - a. What do you see as the significance of John introducing his gospel with “In the beginning ...”? (**Pointing to Jesus—the pre-existent Word—as participating in the original creation**)
    - i. Is John’s gospel talking about the same “beginning” as Gen 1:1? (**IF NO ONE MENTIONS IT, NOTE THAT THIS BEGINNING IN JOHN 1:1 WAS BEFORE CREATION—the beginning before our beginning—WHICH POINTS TO JESUS’ PREEXISTENCE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ORIGINAL CREATION.**)
4. Besides “the Word” what other words do you see repeated in this passage? (**HOPEFULLY THE GROUP WILL POINT OUT “LIFE ... LIGHT ... DARKNESS”**)
  - a. What further connections is John making with the original creation by using these repeated words? (**JESUS THE LIVING WORD SPEAKS LIFE AND LIGHT INTO EXISTENCE AS PART OF A NEW CREATION, JUST AS HE BROUGHT LIFE AND LIGHT IN THE ORIGINAL CREATION,**)
5. Read Gen 1:27–28. How does the illustration of reflecting God’s image as angled mirrors speak to you?
6. In 1:6 readers are introduced to “A man [who came] sent from God whose name was John.”
  - a. Who was this man?
  - b. Why did God send him? ...or in other words, “What was John’s purpose?”
    - i. Does the purpose of John the Baptist speak to our purpose? How so or not so?
    - ii. **This may be an opportunity to connect the dots with what the Spirit has been saying to the Chapel leaders recently in their emphases on movement and being called to explore as witnesses. The mandate to be fruitful and fill the earth is a call to movement and witness, just as last week’s sermon on Acts 1:8 was a call to be Jesus’ witnesses.**

#### **Illustrations:**

- You may want to look at the sermon slides to review the illustrations. One that I found especially helpful in interacting with those who are not yet followers of Jesus was this quote from C. S. Lewis: If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.” — C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

**From our study of the passage we see the basis for the truths communicated in the sermon.**

**RECAP—The Big Idea to take away is “According to the Bible, life does have a purpose. That purpose is not concealed or created; rather it is revealed in creation. Human beings were intended to serve as angled mirrors reflecting God’s image into the world and reflecting a world ordered by God’s image back to God.”**

**Took:** *Applying the message to our lives.*

1. *How does the big idea that purpose is revealed in creation rather than something concealed we must find within or something that we must create relate to your experience of answering the question: "Does life have purpose?"*
2. *Has the new creation that Jesus the Logos/living word accomplished become a reality in your life?*
  - a. *If not, what is holding you back?*
  - b. *If yes, will you embrace his purpose for your life of reflecting his image like an angled mirror shining his light in the darkness?*
  - c. *How might your life need to be realigned to focus that reflection more clearly?*
3. *How have God's word and Spirit spoken to you through this message? Is there someone who would benefit from you sharing what God is teaching you? Will you pray for God to give you an open door to share with them?*

**Practical Applications:**

1. Can you think of some practical ways God is directing you toward His purpose for your life?

**Prayer/Verse:** "Lord, please enable us as individuals and as a group to reflect your image so that others see you more clearly and find their purpose in you."