

STUDY

Genesis Bible Study Questions and Answers (Free PDF)

Leader's Edition — with Answers

An 11-session walk through Genesis, from creation to Joseph, with open questions for your own answers. Free to print, no sign-up.

An 11-session study of Genesis for groups or solo reading.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27 (NIV)

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 (NIV)

The study guide

SESSION 1 • GENESIS 1:1-2:3

In the Beginning

God makes and orders all things by his word, calls it good, and rests on the seventh day. The opening chapter sets the rhythm for everything that follows.

1. What does God say about his creation at each stage, and what does the repeated word good tell you about the world he made?

After each day's work God calls what he made good (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), and when he finishes he calls it very good (Genesis 1:31). The repeated word tells us the world is no accident and no mistake. It was made with purpose and care, and God delights in it.

2. Why might it matter that God creates by speaking rather than by struggle or conflict, the way other ancient creation stories tell it?

God simply speaks, and it is so: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). Nothing rivals him and nothing has to be defeated first, which sets Genesis apart from ancient stories where gods fight over the raw materials of the world. It means our God rules over creation with complete ease, and that his word can be trusted.

3. Where in your own week do you most need to trust that the God who ordered creation can order what feels chaotic to you?

Leader's note: This question invites each person to name one area that feels formless or out of control. Genesis 1:2 describes an earth without form and dark, and then God speaks into it. Give people a quiet moment, then ask what it might look like to hand that one area to him this week.

SESSION 2 • GENESIS 2:4-3:24

The Garden and the Fall

God forms the man and woman, gives them work and marriage in Eden, and then watches the first sin pull the world out of joint and out of the garden.

1. What does God give the man and woman in the garden before anything goes wrong, including their work and their marriage?

God gives them life by his own breath (Genesis 2:7), a garden home with food to eat (Genesis 2:8-9), and meaningful work to tend it (Genesis 2:15). He gives the woman as a companion who is right for the man (Genesis 2:18-22), and marriage as a joining of two into one flesh (Genesis 2:24). They stand together without shame (Genesis 2:25), with only one boundary set for their good (Genesis 2:16-17).

2. How does the serpent reframe God's command, and what does that reveal about how temptation actually works?

The serpent begins with a question that casts doubt on God's word (Genesis 3:1), then flatly denies the consequence God gave (Genesis 3:4). Finally he hints that God is holding something back from them (Genesis 3:5). Temptation often works this way. It rarely starts with an open no to God. It starts by making us wonder whether he is really good.

3. Where do you recognize the same pattern of doubt, grasping, and hiding in your own life, and what would it look like to stop hiding?

Leader's note: The question is aiming at honesty. After the fall the man and woman hide, and God comes looking for them with the question, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). He is not hunting for someone to blame but calling them out of hiding. Invite people to name one place where they are hiding, and remind them that God still comes near.

SESSION 3 · GENESIS 4:1-5:32

Cain, Abel, and the Line of Promise

Sin spreads from the first family outward as Cain kills Abel, yet God preserves a line of promise running quietly through the generations.

1. What does God say to Cain before the murder, and how does Cain respond to the warning?

God asks Cain why he is angry and tells him that if he does what is right he will be accepted. He warns that sin is crouching at the door, wanting to have him, and that Cain must rule over it (Genesis 4:6-7). Cain does not listen. He takes his brother out to the field and kills him (Genesis 4:8).

2. Why do you think Genesis slows down to list whole generations here, and what is it showing you about how God keeps a promise alive?

The lists remind us that people die, yet the line goes on, one generation handing the promise to the next. Seth is born in place of Abel (Genesis 4:25), and Enoch walks faithfully with God (Genesis 5:24). Many read this thread as the outworking of the promise in Genesis 3:15. God keeps his promise alive through ordinary generations, even when sin seems to be winning.

3. When you feel like sin is winning in your family or your story, where can you look for the quiet line of grace God is still keeping?

Leader's note: This question is for the person who feels sin has the loudest voice in their family or story. Look at Genesis 4:25-26, where a new child is given and people begin to call on the name of the LORD, right after the darkest chapter. Ask where the group has seen small, quiet signs of grace they almost missed.

SESSION 4 · GENESIS 6:1-9:29

Noah and the Flood

Human evil grows until God brings judgment through the flood, preserves Noah's family, and binds himself by covenant to never again destroy the earth this way.

1. What reasons does Genesis give for the flood, and what does God's response show about how seriously he takes evil?

Genesis says the earth was corrupt and full of violence (Genesis 6:11), and that every inclination of the human heart was evil all the time (Genesis 6:5). God is not cold about it. Scripture says his heart was deeply troubled (Genesis 6:6). His response shows that evil is real, it costs the world, and God takes it seriously.

2. How does the covenant God makes after the flood, sealed with the rainbow, change the way you read the judgment that came before it?

God promises never again to destroy the earth with a flood and sets the rainbow in the clouds as the sign (Genesis 9:11-16). Noah's family was already being saved through the ark, so many readers see mercy running through the judgment from the start (Genesis 6:8). The covenant confirms it. Judgment is real, and God's mercy is what carries his people through.

3. Where do you need to hold both God's seriousness about sin and his commitment to mercy at the same time in your own life?

Leader's note: This question asks us to hold two truths that we often split apart. Look at Genesis 8:21, where God says he will never again curse the ground, even though the human heart is still bent toward evil. Ask where each person tends to lean, toward making light of sin or toward doubting God's mercy, and how the other truth might steady them.

SESSION 5 • GENESIS 10:1-11:26

Nations and Babel

The nations spread across the earth, and humanity's pride at Babel scatters them, setting the stage for God to call one man out of the nations.

1. What are the people at Babel actually trying to do, and what does God's response tell you about their motives?

They want to build a city and a tower that reaches to the heavens so they can make a name for themselves and not be scattered (Genesis 11:4). God had told humanity to fill the earth (Genesis 9:1), so this is fear and pride dressed up as unity. God comes down to see the city (Genesis 11:5), confuses their language, and scatters them (Genesis 11:7-8). They wanted to secure themselves, and God did not let them.

2. How does the scattering of the nations prepare the way for God's call of Abram in the very next chapter?

After the nations scatter, the genealogy of Shem narrows down to Terah's family (Genesis 11:10-26). Then God speaks to Abram in the very next chapter, promising that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him (Genesis 12:1-3). People tried to make a name for themselves and ended up scattered. God answers by choosing one man, so that he could bless all the peoples.

3. Where are you tempted to build a name for yourself rather than trust the name God wants to give you?

Leader's note: This question is aiming at the quiet pull toward making ourselves secure and important. Compare Genesis 11:4 with Genesis 12:2, where God says, "I will make your name great." Ask each person where they are working to build their own name, and what it might mean to let God do that work.

SESSION 6 · GENESIS 11:27-14:24

The Call of Abraham

God calls Abram to leave everything for a promise, and Abram's early journey tests his faith through famine, separation from Lot, and conflict.

1. What exactly does God promise Abram in Genesis 12:2-3, and what does Abram have to give up to follow it?

God promises Abram a great nation, blessing, a great name, and that he will be a blessing, so that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him (Genesis 12:2-3). To follow, Abram must leave his country, his people, and his father's household (Genesis 12:1). He is seventy-five years old when he sets out (Genesis 12:4).

2. How does Abram's choice to let Lot take the better land show what he believes about God's provision?

Abram is the older man and could claim first choice, yet he lets Lot choose, and Lot takes the well-watered plain (Genesis 13:8-11). Abram can afford to be generous because he trusts that his inheritance comes from God and not from grabbing the best land. God then confirms the promise to him again (Genesis 13:14-17).

3. What would it mean for you to step toward a promise of God you cannot yet see the whole shape of?

Leader's note: This question is not asking people to make a big decision on the spot. It asks what step toward God we can take while the whole road is still hidden. Hebrews 11:8 says Abraham went out without knowing where he was going. Ask each person for one small step of trust they could take this week.

SESSION 7 · GENESIS 15:1-17:27

Covenant and Circumcision

God formally binds himself to Abraham by covenant, credits Abraham's faith as righteousness, and gives circumcision as the covenant sign.

1. How does God reassure Abraham when he doubts, and what does Abraham do that God counts as righteousness?

God tells Abram not to be afraid, and says, "I am your shield, your very great reward" (Genesis 15:1). He takes Abram outside and asks him to count the stars, promising that his offspring will be like them (Genesis 15:5). Then comes the verse Paul later leans on: "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).

2. Why does it matter that God, not Abraham, is the one who binds himself in the covenant ceremony of Genesis 15?

In the ceremony, animals are cut in two and a smoking firepot with a blazing torch passes between the pieces while Abram sleeps (Genesis 15:9-21). Most readers understand this as God alone taking on the covenant obligation. The promise rests on God's faithfulness and not on Abram's ability to keep his side. That is a comfort to anyone who knows how weak their own grip on faith can be.

3. Where do you struggle to believe God's promise simply on his word, and what helps your faith hold on?

Leader's note: This question invites honesty about doubt. Abram himself brought his questions to God (Genesis 15:2-3), and God met him with a promise and a sign. Read Genesis 15:6 together, then ask what helps each person keep trusting when God's word feels slow.

SESSION 8 · GENESIS 18:1-22:24

Promise, Mercy, and the Binding of Isaac

Isaac is born as promised, Abraham pleads for Sodom, and then God tests Abraham with the hardest command of his life on Mount Moriah.

1. How does Abraham plead with God over Sodom, and what does the exchange show you about God's justice and mercy together?

Abraham draws near and asks, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). He pleads for the city step by step, from fifty righteous people down to ten (Genesis 18:23-32). God listens patiently and does not rebuke him. Justice is real, and so is his willingness to spare, and God rescues Lot when the city falls (Genesis 19:29).

2. What is being tested when God asks Abraham to offer Isaac, and how does God provide in the end?

God is testing whether Abraham will hold even the promised son loosely and trust God above everything (Genesis 22:1-2). Hebrews 11:19 says Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead. God stops his hand and provides a ram (Genesis 22:12-13), and Abraham names the place The LORD Will Provide (Genesis 22:14). Many readers see in this a picture of the way God would later provide his own Son, and we can hold that gently.

3. When obedience to God costs you something you love, where do you find the trust to take the next step?

Leader's note: This question is not about a command anyone should expect to receive. It is about the moments when obedience costs us something dear. Abraham told Isaac, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (Genesis 22:8). Ask each person where they need to trust that God will provide as they take the next step.

SESSION 9 · GENESIS 23:1-28:9

Isaac's Household and Jacob's Early Years

The promise passes to a new generation through inheritance, blessing, and the long struggle between Jacob and Esau over the birthright.

1. How do Jacob and Esau each treat the birthright and the blessing, and what do their choices reveal about them?

Esau treats his birthright lightly and sells it for a bowl of stew (Genesis 25:29-34), and Scripture says he despised it (Genesis 25:34). Jacob values the blessing but tries to grab it by scheming, and with his mother Rebekah's help he deceives his blind father (Genesis 27:1-29). Esau lives for the hunger of the moment, and Jacob reaches for the right thing in the wrong way.

2. Why do you think God lets the promise pass through Jacob, the younger and the deceiver, rather than Esau?

Before the boys were born, God had said the older would serve the younger (Genesis 25:23). His choice rests on his own purpose and grace and not on birth order or merit. Genesis does not excuse Jacob's deceit, and he pays for it with years of exile and being deceived himself (Genesis 29:25).

3. Where have you seen God work through flawed and complicated people, including yourself, to keep his purposes moving?

Leader's note: This question invites gratitude more than comparison. Paul writes that God chooses what the world overlooks so that no one can boast before him (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). Give people a moment to name a time God worked through someone flawed, and to receive that grace for themselves.

SESSION 10 · GENESIS 28:10-36:43

Jacob's Journey

Jacob meets God at Bethel, works and is deceived in turn, wrestles with God through the night, and is renamed Israel as the covenant continues.

1. What does God promise Jacob at Bethel, and how does Jacob respond to the encounter?

God promises Jacob the land, descendants like the dust of the earth, and that all peoples will be blessed through him. He also says, "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go" (Genesis 28:13-15). Jacob wakes and says, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it" (Genesis 28:16). He is afraid, sets up a stone as a pillar, and makes a vow (Genesis 28:17-22).

2. Why does the all-night wrestling match leave Jacob both wounded and blessed, and renamed Israel?

The man who wrestles with Jacob wrenches his hip, and Jacob limps from then on (Genesis 32:25, 31). Yet Jacob will not let go until he is blessed, and he is given a new name, Israel (Genesis 32:26-28). Many readers see a man who has relied on his own cleverness coming to the end of it, and learning to lean on God. The wound marks the place where his own strength gave way, and the blessing came after.

3. Where are you wrestling with God right now, and what would it look like to hold on until the blessing comes?

Leader's note: This question is for the person who is in a long struggle with God over something. Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (Genesis 32:26), and God did not turn him away. Ask what each person is holding on to God about right now, and remind them that honest wrestling is not the same as walking away.

SESSION 11 · GENESIS 37:1-50:26

Joseph and the Providence of God

Joseph is betrayed, enslaved, and imprisoned, then raised to power in Egypt, where he preserves his family and forgives the brothers who wronged him.

1. How does Joseph respond to each setback, from the pit to Potiphar's house to prison, and where does he keep his trust?

Joseph is thrown in a pit and sold (Genesis 37:24-28), yet in Potiphar's house it is said that the LORD was with him (Genesis 39:2). When tempted he asks, "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). In prison the LORD is still with him and shows him kindness (Genesis 39:21). Before Pharaoh he says the answer will come from God and not from himself (Genesis 41:16).

2. What does Joseph mean in Genesis 50:20 when he tells his brothers that what they meant for evil, God meant for good?

Joseph does not say the brothers' act was good. It was evil, and he names it as evil. But God used even that to save many lives through the famine (Genesis 45:5-8; 50:20). This is what the church has long called providence. God's purposes are not defeated by human wrongdoing, though wrongdoing is never excused.

3. Where do you need to trust that God is weaving good through a chapter of your life that still feels like harm?

Leader's note: This question does not ask anyone to call their pain good. It asks whether we can believe God is still at work inside it. Genesis 39:21 says the LORD was with Joseph in prison, and he is with us too. Invite each person to name a chapter that still hurts, and pray together that they would see God's hand in it over time.