



Series

Who Am I?

Lake Erie Church

The GROW series of teaching is designed to allow believers to understand the basics of Christian faith. If discipleship is a life-long journey to know God, then it is our prayer that this series will contribute to that. We all have things to learn regardless of how long we have been a believer.

To the new believer...these materials are provided to help you grow in your faith and they are being taught in community with other believers so that you can ask questions, listen to the dialogue of others and find the answers to the questions you may be asking yourself. The format is very relaxed and open so feel free to soak up everything and be sure to ask questions if you don't understand something.

I'm now more than four decades a follower of Jesus and yet as I read my Bible, I'm still learning things I never knew! I think that's the way God wants it—we must constantly pursue Him, lean in to hear His voice and follow Him for the remaining days of our lives.

I hope you learn something each time you attend and engage this amazing God we serve.

Pastor Bill
(2022)

Today's message....

Who Am I?

As we go through the next few weeks let's remember this important principle

EVERYTHING BEGINS WITH WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT GOD.

(Psalms 8:1-8)

O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you. When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents. O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Introduction:

Of all of God's creation, nothing compares to His creation of man and woman. He made the stars, the mountains, the rivers but when He created man and woman—He was doing something very special.

(Genesis 2:7)

Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

(Genesis 2:21-22)

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

What is happening in our world today was predicted in Romans...

(Romans 1:21-32)

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

It is **through God that we have our identity**—we carry the very image of God as His creation.

God C_____ You

- Your origin is divinely initiated. There is no evolution of life that creates human beings.
- You are created body, soul, spirit.
 - Your **B**_____ is called by Paul in Scripture the “tabernacle” in which you dwell.
 - Your **S**_____ is the eternal creation of God that is uniquely you—it lives forever.
 - Your **S**_____ is the breath of God that gives you life and you die when it is taken away. At death it returns to God who gave it.

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

God Created You Like H_____

Genesis 5:1-2

When God created human beings, he made them to be like himself. He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.

- **When we say we are created in God's image and likeness, what does that mean?**

- The image of God refers to the immaterial part of human beings. It sets us apart from the animal world, fits us for the dominion God intended us to have over the earth (Genesis 1:28), and enables us to commune with God. We can understand this “likeness” in 3 ways...
 - **M**_____, humans are created with the ability to reason and choose.
 - This is a reflection of God’s intellect and freedom.
 - Anytime someone invents a machine, writes a book, paints a landscape, enjoys a symphony, calculates a sum, or names a pet, he or she is proclaiming the fact that we are made in God’s image.
 - **M**_____, humans are created in righteousness and perfect innocence, a reflection of God’s holiness (think babies).
 - God saw all He had made (humanity included) and called it “very good” (Genesis 1:31).
 - Our conscience or “moral compass” is a vestige of that original state. Whenever someone writes a law, recoils from evil, praises good behavior, or feels guilty, he or she is confirming the fact that we are made in God’s own image.
 - **S**_____, human beings are created for fellowship.
 - This reflects God’s triune nature and His love. In Eden, humanity’s primary relationship was with God (Genesis 3:8 implies fellowship with God), and God made the first woman because “it is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18).
 - Every time someone marries, makes a friend, hugs a child, or attends church, he or she is demonstrating the fact that we are made in the likeness of God.
- When we say “created in the image of God” we are referring to a human being’s unique role to be God’s representatives in a created world.

God Created You For A P_____

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground. So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.

- What do the phrases “be fruitful and multiply...fill the earth and govern it...reign over...” mean?
 - While reproduction of human life seems obvious but it may also imply that God wants spiritual reproduction—meaning our lives reflect the fruit of our relationship to Him—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - We are to have A_____ over Satan.

- As God’s representatives we have God’s authority to subjugate the work of Satan on earth—
 - To take away poverty
 - To lift the burden of oppression
 - To take away ignorance and lack of faith.
 - He expects us to bring a blessing to others.
- We are to have R_____ over the earth.
 - We are supposed to be intelligent stewards, under God, of all these things.
 - God wants us to manage the world as His sons and daughters.
 - He wants us to bring about righteousness in this world.
- We are to be S_____ of God's creation and to function as God's sons and daughters.
 - *The chief aim of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. (Westminster Catechism)*

(Micah 6:8)

And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

Conclusion:

The enemy wants to steal our identity because it reflects God, our Creator. So confusion about identity is a subtle attempt to thwart God’s original design.

(Ephesians 2:10)

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

I am original.

I am intentional.

There is no one like you, no one who can take your place on the earth.

There is a lot of talk about self-worth today but we cannot find our worth in the things of this world or in the discussions of the age—we find our worth in Him!

My big question about God is _____

I’d love for you to text that question to me—I promise I will respond. My text number is 330.212.9656.

**Thank you for staying connected throughout the message. I have a gift for you—text the word “GOD” to 440.557.2822 and be sure to include your name in the text and I’ll get the gift to you in the coming week.

Who is God?

1. *If someone were to stop you at work or in your neighborhood and ask you to explain salvation to them...could you?*
2. *Could you explain what sin is to a person who had never gone to church or read a Bible. Do you know why God hates it?*

How would you start that conversation? There is a Biblical and spiritual illiteracy in America that we have never known.

- Only _____ of persons (50-up) say they believe in the biblical God
 - ___% of adults (30s--40s) believe in the God of the Bible
 - Only ___% (under 30) believe in the God of the Bible.
- Only ___% of Americans of all ages believe the Bible is the literal word of God (down from 24% in 2017)
 - In 1984, (38 years ago) 40% of all adults in the US believed the Bible was the literal Word of God.
 - ___% of adults say the Bible is a collection of "fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man."
- According to Gallup polling ___% of adults (30 and under) identify their faith as "atheist," "agnostic" or "nothing in particular."

(Ephesians 3:14-19)

For this reason, I bow my knees and pray to the Father. It is from Him that every family in heaven and on earth has its name. I pray that because of the riches of His shining-greatness, He will make you strong with power in your hearts through the Holy Spirit. I pray that Christ may live in your hearts by faith. I pray that you will be filled with love. I pray that you will be able to understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep His love is. I pray that you will know the love of Christ. His love goes beyond anything we can understand. I pray that you will be filled with God Himself.

There is no question bigger than whether an all-powerful God exists. The question we must come to grips with is whether God is simply a human construct or a divine concept?

- **If God does not exist**, then life holds no divine purpose. We are each free to live as we choose.
- **But if He does exist**, then it is appropriate to attempt to discover who He is, what He is like, and if and how He can be known.

Does God Exist And If So, How Do We Know?

- God exists and we know this because **He _____ it.**

(Psalm 90:1-2)

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God,

(Job 38:4 ESV)

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

- God exists because **He is** _____ the eternal existence of God.

(Romans 1:20 ESV)

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

- God exists because **He is** _____ of all that is.

(Revelation 4:11 ESV)

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

(Isaiah 40:26 ESV)

Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

(Hebrews 11:3 ESV)

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

(Psalms 19:1-2)

The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.

(Hebrews 1:3)

He sustains everything by the mighty power of his command.

- **We struggle to believe in a who does not fit our circumstances** and so some conclude He doesn't exist or at least for them God is irrelevant.

If God Does Exist, Then Where Did God Come From?

- The truth about God's origins is that **He has existed for all time and eternity.**
- The difference between believers and skeptics/atheists has to do with **F** _____.

(Hebrews 11:6 ESV)

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God **must believe that he exists** and that he rewards those who seek him.

Jesus spoke to this...

(John 3:8)

The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit.

- Scripture assumes the existence of God.
- Scripture teaches that God is self-existent.

(Hebrews 13:8)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

(Exodus 3:13-15)

If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, The God of your ancestors has sent me to you, they will ask me, What is his name? Then what should I tell them? God replied to Moses, I AM who I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you. God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.

The truth is **God wants to know you** and **He invites you to know Him**.

How can I know God? Your challenge this week...

- Read your Bible and look for Him—He loves to reveal Himself
- Raise your sensitivity to the many things around that point to God

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Today we continue our GROW series as we seek to understand the foundations of our faith. We are asking how much do we know about what we say we believe? Would we be able to explain what your faith in Jesus Christ means to our friends or someone who asks?

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We don't look for our answers to life in social media posts, YouTube influencers—but through what God has revealed to us in His Word.

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